

CONNOLLY BOOKS

Stalin

ON

Trotsky

Michael
Hannon
1970

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S T A L I N O N T R O T S K Y

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|---|----------------|
| 1. Introduction (by I.C.O.) | page one |
| 2. Some questions concerning the history of Bolshevism (1931) | page five |
| 3. Reply to Olekhnovich and Aristov (1932) | page seventeen |
| 4. Trotskyism or Leninism (1924) (Extract) | page twenty |

CONNOLLY BOOKS.....September 1969

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The history of the Communist movement is a subject of continuous distortion by opportunist propagandists. In the letters reprinted here Stalin exposes distortions of the history of the struggle between Communism (Bolshevism) and opportunist Social-democracy (the forerunner of the modern bourgeois 'Labour Parties', in the years 1903-17.

Until the triumph of Bolshevism in Russia in 1917 it was the common practice of social-democracy, including its left wing, to brand the Bolsheviks as splitters, disrupters, sectarians etc., and to represent Lenin as a bureaucratic factionalist. (At the birth of Bolshevism in 1903, both Trotsky, representing the left of Russian social-democracy (called Menshevism), and Rosa Luxemburg representing the left of German social democracy, published vicious attacks on Lenin). But after the October revolution and after the rapid spread of the influence of Bolshevism in the European working class movement which resulted from it, left social democracy had to adopt a different tactic in its efforts to limit the influence of Leninism. Now it began to be hinted that Lenin, far from being an inveterate splittist, had not struggled with sufficient determination against European social-democracy, and against "Centrism" (i.e. the tendency that stood between Communism and opportunism and tried to reconcile them. Trotsky was the greatest exponent of this variety of opportunism.)

A jibe that is commonly heard in trotskyist bourgeois intellectual circles, such as the 'International Socialism' group in Britain, is that Lenin did not break with Kautsky, the theorist of German social democracy, until Kautsky openly abandoned proletarian internationalism at the outbreak of the 1914 war, while Rosa Luxemburg had been in opposition to Kautsky in the German party since about 1904. This is intended to suggest that Lenin was an excellent man of action and practical organiser once things had been made clear to him, but that he was no great shakes as a theorist: Rosa Luxemburg, the brilliant theorist, realised ten years

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earlier than Lenin that Kautsky was an opportunist, and she took up the struggle against him while Lenin continued to hang onto Kautsky's coat tails until Kautsky's opportunism became obvious in 1914. And of course that suggests that Leninism is theoretically inadequate and needs to be supplemented by the theories of R. Luxemburg and Trotsky.

But the historical truth is very different. In 1903 the insistence of the group led by Lenin on developing the revolutionary Marxist position caused a decisive and final split in the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Two parties emerged, between which clear theoretical and organisational boundaries were drawn: the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. Formally this split only occurred in 1912. In reality it occurred in 1903. Both Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg tried to 'restore unity'. Their attempts were effectively obstructed by Lenin.

Beyond resisting Kautsky's efforts to merge Bolshevism with Menshevism, Lenin did not struggle directly against Kautsky before 1914. The fact is that before 1914 Kautsky functioned as a Marxist and produced some valuable theoretical works. The outbreak of war transformed the situation. A sharp and inescapable dividing line between Marxism and opportunism was drawn. The various parties were subjected to intense pressures. At this point political weaknesses were either rapidly overcome, or they led to rapid degeneration. Under this pressure Kautsky became an opportunist, and since he was the most influential theorist of the German party and of the Second International Lenin produced clear, sharp and comprehensive exposures of his position. And he obstructed every effort to reconcile Bolshevism and Kautskyism, and refused to tone down his exposure of Kautsky. (Trotsky was again in the 'Centrist' position between Bolshevism and Kautskyism).

Rosa Luxemburg had, it is true, been an opponent of Kautsky in the German Party for many years before the war. And it is true that she was the leader of a group in the German party which opposed the war effort of the German bourgeoisie. But her opposition to Kautsky before the war had been personal and subjective rather than political. She may have had insights into his subjective weaknesses, and into the possibility of his betrayal. But even after Kautsky's degeneration in 1914 she was, because of the strong element of subjectivism and revisionism in her own position, unable to break decisively with Kautskyism and to develop a coherent political opposition to it. When the German party split in 1916 it was not a split between Communism and opportunism, but between two varieties of opportunism. Kautsky, with a more sophisticated form of opportunism and an eye to the future, split with the right wing leadership of the party (Ebert, etc, who were to form a counter-revolutionary bourgeois government in 1918) who had become blatant imperialist jingoes. Rosa Luxemburg's group remained within the Kautsky faction. They did not break with it until 1918 when the influence of Bolshevism began to make itself felt in the German working class movement. But Rosa Luxemburg never overcame her

political indecisiveness and subjectivism.

Trotsky joined the Bolshevik party in July 1917. The Mensheviks had become a bourgeois government Party. The vague Centrist grouping led by Trotsky (the Mezhdrazontsy) were failing to gain support even though the revolution was in progress. So Trotsky and his group applied for membership of the party he had been attacking hysterically for 15 years. Under the influence of the great historical events that were occurring trotskyism became, as Stalin puts it, a 'faction of Communism'. Until 1923 he remained a useful member of the Bolshevik leadership. His agitational oratory in the period leading up to the October Revolution, and his administrative ability in organising the Red Army, were his most positive contributions. When it came to the formulation of policy, however, his subjectivism and phrasemongering came to the fore. On two critical occasions his subjectivism led him into prolonged obstruction of Lenin's Marxist policies. These were the controversies over the peace treaty with Germany in March 1918, and the trade union question in 1920-21. The latter provoked Lenin into making two very sharp speeches 'On The Mistakes of Trotsky', in which he expressed his exasperation with trotskyist phrasemongering and obstruction.

When Lenin became incapable of political activity early in 1923 a strong restraining influence on Trotsky's subjectivism was removed. At the same time the decline of the revolutionary movement in W. Europe led to the isolation of revolutionary Russia and to an increase in the difficulties facing the revolution, and this could not but intensify Trotsky's vacillation. In 1923 the subjectivist element in trotskyism began to flourish even more than it had before 1917, and by 1928 Trotsky had worked his way out of the Communist movement. In March 1929 his hysterical anti-Communist articles for the Daily Express and other right wing imperialist newspapers began, and continued until his death.

But opportunism is never at a loss for a new trick. No sooner was Trotsky out of the Communist movement than an attempt was made within it to spread the absurd view that he had never been part of it. At the present moment this absurdity is being circulated by opportunist cliques in Britain (such as the Manchanda clique) who claim to be 'Maoist'. On this view Trotsky was from first to last a bourgeois agent, who in some inexplicable way appeared in the leadership of the Bolshevik party in the summer of 1917. The one thing that opportunism cannot stomach is a sober, reasonable recognition of historical fact. With regard to Trotsky's position in 1917-23 historical fact is clearly stated by Stalin in these letters. This exposes not only those who try to deny that trotskyism ever functioned as a revolutionary tendency, but also those trotskyists who allege that after Trotsky's expulsion from the Comintern Stalin tried to deny that he had ever been a communist.

Parvus is also mentioned in these letters. Parvus (Alexander Helphand) was a Russian exile who rose to prominence in the German

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Social-Democratic Party. In 1905, along with Trotsky, he propagated the theory of permanent revolution in Russia. Lenin's strategy was that a democratic revolution led by the working class would create favourable conditions for a socialist revolution. Parvus and Trotsky, appearing much more revolutionary than Lenin, held that the stage of democratic revolution was unnecessary in Russia and that the immediate struggle should be for a proletarian dictatorship (but not for socialism!). In the event, of course, Lenin's view was shown to be the correct revolutionary view.

One of the Menshevik leaders, Potresov, wrote to another, Axelrod: "How is Lenin to be beaten, that is the question. I think that one should, first of all, let loose on him authorities like Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg, and Parvus."

When the revolutionary movement subsided in 1906 Parvus devoted himself to commerce and became one of the earliest millionaire 'socialists'. During the war he became an agent of the German government. After the war he went to Russia and offered his services to the revolution. Lenin sent him packing, saying that 'the cause of the revolution should not be touched by dirty hands.' So Parvus then published a Russian paper from outside Russia in which he attacked the Bolsheviks and declared that in the conditions existing in Russia the building of socialism was impossible, (a line which Trotsky was to take up a few years later). He died in 1924, the year when Trotsky launched his attack against the aim of building socialism in Russia. (A bourgeois biography of Parvus was published in Britain in 1965: The Merchant of the Revolution by Z. Zeman and W. Schlarlau.)

Irish Communist Organisation.

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"Proletarskaya Revolutsia"

I emphatically protest against the publication in the magazine Proletarskaya Revolutsia (No. 6, 1930) of Slutsky's anti-Party and semi-Trotskyist article, "The Bolsheviks on German Social-Democracy in the Period of Its Pre-War Crisis," as an article for discussion. *What is the purpose of this article?*

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war Second International be further analysed in the pages of Proletarskaya Revolutsia." That means that you intend once again to draw people into a discussion on questions which are axioms of Bolshevism. It means that you are again thinking of converting the subject of Lenin's Bolshevism from an axiom into a problem requiring "further analysis". Why? On what grounds?

Everyone knows that Leninism was born, grew up and became strong in relentless struggle against opportunism of every brand, including Centrism in the West (Kautsky) and Centrism in our country (Trotsky, etc.). This cannot be denied even by the downright enemies of Bolshevism. It is an axiom. But you are dragging us back by trying to turn an axiom into a problem requiring "further analysis". Why? On what grounds? Perhaps through ignorance of the history of Bolshevism? Perhaps for the sake of a rotten liberalism, so that the Slutskys and other disciples of Trotsky may not be able to say that they are being gagged? A rather strange sort of liberalism, this, exercised at the expense of the vital interests of Bolshevism...

What, exactly, is there in Slutsky's article that the editorial board regard as worthy of discussion?

1) Slutsky asserts that Lenin (the Bolsheviks) did not pursue a line directed towards a rupture, towards a split with the opportunists in the Second International of the pre-war period. You want to open a discussion on this Trotskyist thesis of Slutsky's. But what is there to discuss? Is it not obvious that Slutsky is simply slandering Lenin, slandering the Bolsheviks? Slander must be branded as such and not made the subject of discussion.

Every Bolshevik, if he really is a Bolshevik, knows that long before the war, approximately since 1903-04, when the Bolshevik group in Russia took shape and when the Lefts in German Social-Democracy first raised their voice, Lenin pursued a line directed towards a rupture, towards a split with the opportunists both here, in the Russian Social-Democratic Party, and over there, in the Second International, particularly in the German Social-Democratic Party.

Every Bolshevik knows that it was for that very reason that even at that time (1903-05) in the ranks of the opportunists of the Second International the Bolsheviks won for themselves honourable fame as being "splitters" and "disrupters". But what could Lenin do, what could the Bolsheviks do, if the Left Social-Democrats in the Second International, and above all in the German Social-Democratic Party, were a weak and powerless group, a group without organisational shape, ideologically ill-equipped and afraid even to pronounce the word "rupture," "split"? It cannot be demanded that Lenin, the Bolsheviks, should have, from inside Russia, done the work of the Lefts for them and brought about a split in the parties of the West.

That is apart from the fact that organisational and ideological weakness was a characteristic feature of the Left Social-Democrats not only in the period prior to the war. As is well known, the Lefts retained this negative feature in the post-war period as well. Everyone knows the appraisal of the German Left Social-Democrats given by Lenin in his famous article, "On Junius's Pamphlet,"* published in October 1916 - that is, more than two years after the beginning of the war - in which Lenin, criticising a number of very serious political mistakes committed by the Left Social-Democrats in Germany, speaks of "the weakness of all German Lefts, who are entangled on all sides in the vile net of Kautskyist hypocrisy, pedantry, 'friendship' for the opportunists"; in which he says that "Junius has not yet freed himself completely from the 'environment' of the German, even Left Social-Democrats, who are afraid of a split, are afraid to voice revolutionary slogans to the full."

Of all the groups in the Second International, the Russian Bolsheviks were at that time the only one which, by its organisational experience and ideological equipment, was capable of undertaking anything serious in the sense of a direct rupture, of a split with its own opportunists in its own Russian Social-Democratic Party. Now, if the Slutskys attempted, not even to prove, but simply to assume that Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks did not exert all their efforts to organise a split with the opportunists (Plekhanov, Martov, Dan) and to oust the Centrists (Trotsky and other adherents of the August bloc), then one could argue about Lenin's Bolshevism, about the Bolsheviks' Bolshevism. But the whole point is that the Slutskys dare not even hint at such a wild assumption. They dare not, for they are aware that the universally known facts concerning the resolute policy of rupture with the opportunists of all brands pursued by the Russian Bolsheviks (1904-12) cry out against such an assumption. They dare not, for they know that they would be pilloried the very next day.

But the question arises: Could the Russian Bolsheviks bring about a split with their opportunists and Centrist conciliators long before the imperialist war (1904-12) without at the same time pursuing a line directed towards a rupture, towards a split with the opportunists and Centrists of the Second International? Who can doubt that the Russian Bolsheviks regarded their policy towards the opportunists and Centrists as a model for the policy of the Lefts in the West? Who can doubt that the Russian Bolsheviks did all they could to push the Left Social-Democrats in the West, particularly the Lefts in the German Social-Democratic Party, towards a rupture, towards a split with their own opportunists and Centrists? It was not the fault of Lenin and of the Russian Bolsheviks that the Left Social-Democrats in the West proved to be too immature to follow in the footsteps of the Russian Bolsheviks.

2) Slutsky reproaches Lenin and the Bolsheviks for not supporting the German Left Social-Democrats resolutely and wholeheartedly, for supporting them only with important reservations, for al-

*Junius was Rosa Luxemburg

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lowing factional considerations to hinder them from giving all-out support to the Lefts. You want to discuss this fraudulent and utterly false reproach. But what is there indeed to discuss? Is it not obvious that Slutsky is manoeuvring and trying, by means of a false reproach against Lenin and the Bolsheviks, to cover up the real gaps in the position of the Lefts in Germany? Is it not obvious that the Bolsheviks could not support the Lefts in Germany, who time and again wavered between Bolshevism and Menshevism, without important reservations, without seriously criticising their mistakes, and that to act otherwise would have been a betrayal of the working class and its revolution? Fraudulent manoeuvres must be branded as such and not made a subject of discussion.

Yes, the Bolsheviks supported the Left Social-Democrats in Germany only with certain important reservations, criticising their semi-Menshevik mistakes. But for this they ought to be applauded, not reproached.

Are there people who doubt this?

Let us turn to the most generally known facts of history.

a) In 1903, serious differences arose between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia on the question of Party membership. By their formula on Party membership the Bolsheviks wanted to set up an organisational barrier against the influx of non-proletarian elements into the Party. The danger of such an influx was very real at that time in view of the bourgeois-democratic character of the Russian revolution. The Russian Mensheviks advocated the opposite position, which threw the doors of the Party wide open to non-proletarian elements. In view of the importance of the questions of the Russian revolution for the world revolutionary movement the West-European Social-Democrats decided to intervene. The Left Social-Democrats in Germany, Parvus and Rosa Luxemburg, then the leaders of the Lefts, also intervened. And what happened? Both declared for the Mensheviks and against the Bolsheviks. They accused the Bolsheviks of having ultra-centralist and Blanquist tendencies. Subsequently, these vulgar and philistine epithets were seized upon by the Mensheviks and spread far and wide.

b) In 1905, differences developed between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia on the question of the character of the Russian revolution. The Bolsheviks advocated an alliance between the working class and the peasantry under the hegemony of the proletariat. The Bolsheviks asserted that the objective must be a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry for the purpose of passing immediately from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, with the support of the rural poor secured. The Mensheviks in Russia rejected the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution; instead of the policy of an alliance between the working class and the peasantry they preferred the policy of an agreement with the liberal bourgeoisie, and they declared

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that the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry was a reactionary Blanquist scheme that ran counter to the development of the bourgeois revolution. What was the attitude of the German Left Social-Democrats, of Parvus and Rosa Luxemburg, to this controversy? They invented a utopian and semi-Menshevik scheme of permanent revolution (a distorted representation of the Marxist scheme of revolution), which was permeated through and through with the Menshevik repudiation of the policy of alliance between the working class and peasantry, and they counterposed this scheme to the Bolshevik scheme of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. Subsequently, this semi-Menshevik scheme of permanent revolution was seized upon by Trotsky (in part by Martov) and turned into a weapon of struggle against Leninism.

c) In the period before the war, one of the most urgent questions that came to the fore in the parties of the Second International was the national and colonial question, the question of the oppressed nations and colonies, the question of the liberation of the oppressed nations and colonies, the question of the paths to be followed in the struggle against imperialism, the question of the paths to the overthrow of imperialism. In the interests of developing the proletarian revolution and encircling imperialism, the Bolsheviks proposed the policy of supporting the liberation movement of the oppressed nations and colonies on the basis of the self-determination of nations, and developed the scheme of a united front between the proletarian revolution in the advanced countries and the revolutionary-liberation movement of the peoples of the colonies and oppressed countries. The opportunists of all countries, the social-chauvinists and social-imperialists of all countries hastened to take up arms against the Bolsheviks on this account. The Bolsheviks were baited like mad dogs. What position did the Left Social-Democrats in the West adopt at that time? They developed a semi-Menshevik theory of imperialism, rejected the principle of self-determination of nations in its Marxist sense (including secession and formation of independent states), rejected the thesis that the liberation movement in the colonies and oppressed countries is of great revolutionary importance, rejected the thesis that a united front between the proletarian revolution and the movement for national liberation is possible, and counterposed all this semi-Menshevik hotchpotch, which is nothing but an underestimation of the national and colonial question, to the Marxist scheme of the Bolsheviks. It is well known that this semi-Menshevik hotchpotch was subsequently seized upon by Trotsky, who used it as a weapon in the struggle against Leninism.

Such are the universally known mistakes committed by the Left Social-Democrats in Germany.

I need not speak of the other mistakes of the German Lefts, mistakes which were severely criticised in various articles by Lenin.

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Nor need I speak of the mistakes they committed in appraising the policy of the Bolsheviks in the period of the October revolution.

What do these mistakes of the German Lefts taken from the history of the pre-war period indicate, if not that the Left Social-Democrats, despite their Leftism, had not yet rid themselves of Menshevik lumber?

Of course, the record of the Lefts in Germany does not consist only of serious mistakes. They also have great and important revolutionary deeds to their credit. I have in mind a number of their services and revolutionary actions in relation to questions of internal policy and, in particular, of the electoral struggle, questions of the struggle inside and outside parliament, the general strike, war, the Revolution of 1905 in Russia, etc. That is why the Bolsheviks reckoned with them as Lefts, supported them and urged them forward. But it does not and cannot obliterate the fact that at the same time the Left Social-Democrats in Germany did commit a number of very serious political and theoretical mistakes; that they had not yet rid themselves of the Menshevik burden and therefore were in need of severe criticism by the Bolsheviks.

Now judge for yourselves whether Lenin and the Bolsheviks could have supported the Left Social-Democrats in the West without serious reservations, without severely criticising their mistakes, and whether it would not have been a betrayal of the interests of the working class, a betrayal of the interests of the revolution, a betrayal of communism, to act otherwise?

Is it not obvious that in reproaching Lenin and the Bolsheviks for something for which he should have applauded them if he were a Bolshevik, Slutsky fully exposes himself as a semi-Menshevik, as a camouflaged Trotskyist?

Slutsky assumes that in their appraisal of the Lefts in the West, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were guided by their own factional considerations and that, consequently, the Russian Bolsheviks sacrificed the great cause of the international revolution to the interests of their faction. It scarcely needs proof that they can be nothing more base and disgusting than such an assumption. There can be nothing more base, for even the basest of Mensheviks are beginning to understand that the Russian revolution is not a private cause of the Russians; that, on the contrary, it is the cause of the working class of the whole world, the cause of the world proletarian revolution. There can be nothing more disgusting, for even the professional slanderers in the Second International are beginning to understand that the consistent and thoroughly revolutionary internationalism of the Bolsheviks is a model of proletarian internationalism for the workers of all countries.

Yes, the Russian Bolsheviks did put in the forefront the fundamental questions of the Russian revolution, such questions as those of the Party, of the attitude of Marxists towards the bourgeois-democratic revolution, of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, of the hegemony of the proletariat, of the struggle inside and outside parliament, of the general strike, of the growing over of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of imperialism, of the self-determination of nations, of the liberation movement of the oppressed nations and colonies, of the policy of support for this movement, etc. They advanced these questions as the touchstone by which they tested the revolutionary stamina of the Left Social-Democrats in the West. Had they the right to do so? Yes, they had. They not only had the right, but it was their duty to do so. It was their duty to do so because all these questions were also fundamental questions of the world revolution, to whose aims the Bolsheviks subordinated their policy and their tactics. It was their duty to do so because only through such questions could they really test the revolutionary character of the various groups in the Second International. The question arises: Where is there here any "factionalism" of the Russian Bolsheviks and what have "factional" considerations to do with this?

As far back as 1902 Lenin wrote in his pamphlet What Is To Be Done? that "history has now confronted us with an immediate task which is the most revolutionary of all the immediate tasks that confront the proletariat of any country," that "the fulfilment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European, but also (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction, would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat." Thirty years have elapsed since that pamphlet, What Is To Be Done?, appeared. No one will dare deny that the events during this period have brilliantly confirmed Lenin's words. But does it not follow from this that the Russian revolution was (and remains) the nodal point of the world revolution, that the fundamental questions of the Russian revolution were at the same time (and are now) the fundamental questions of the world revolution?

Is it not obvious that only through these fundamental questions was it possible to make a real test of the revolutionary character of the Left Social-Democrats in the West?

Is it not obvious that people who regard these questions as "factional" questions fully expose themselves as base and degenerate elements?

3) Slutsky asserts that so far there has not been found a sufficient number of official documents testifying to Lenin's (the Bolsheviks') determined and relentless struggle against Centrism. He employs this bureaucratic thesis as an irrefutable

argument in favour of the proposition that Lenin (the Bolsheviks) underestimated the danger of Centrism in the Second International. And you are ready to discuss this nonsense, this rascally chicanery. But what is there indeed to discuss? Is it not obvious any-way that by his talk about documents Slutsky is trying to cover up the wretchedness and falsity of his so-called conception?

Slutsky considers the Party documents now available to be inadequate. Why? On what grounds? Are not the universally known documents relating to the Second International, as well as those relating to the inner-Party struggle in Russian Social-Democracy, sufficient to demonstrate with full clarity the revolutionary relentlessness of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in their struggle against the opportunists and Centrists? Is Slutsky at all familiar with these documents? What more documents does he need?

Let us assume that, in addition to the documents already known, a mass of other documents were found, containing, say, resolutions of the Bolsheviks once again urging the necessity of wiping out Centrism. Would that mean that the mere existence of written documents is sufficient to demonstrate the real revolutionary character and the real relentlessness of the Bolsheviks' attitude towards Centrism? Who, except hopeless bureaucrats, can rely on written documents alone? Who, except archive rats, does not understand that a party and its leaders must be tested primarily by their deeds and not merely by their declarations? History knows not a few Socialists who readily signed all sorts of revolutionary resolutions, just for the sake of satisfying importunate critics. But that does not mean that they carried out these resolutions. Furthermore, history knows not a few Socialists who, foaming at the mouth, called upon the workers' parties of other countries to perform the most revolutionary actions imaginable. But that does not mean that they did not in their own party, or in their own country, shrink from fighting their own opportunists, their own bourgeoisie. Is not this why Lenin taught us to test revolutionary parties, trends and leaders, not be their declarations and resolutions, but by their deeds?

Is it not obvious that if Slutsky really wanted to test the relentlessness of Lenin and the Bolsheviks towards Centrism, he should have taken as the basis of his article, not individual documents and two or three personal letters, but a test of the Bolsheviks by their deeds, their history, their actions? Did we not have opportunists and Centrists in the Russian Social-Democratic Party? Did not the Bolsheviks wage a determined and relentless struggle against all these trends? Were not these trends both ideologically and organisationally connected with the opportunists and Centrists in the West? Did not the Bolsheviks smash the opportunists and Centrists as no other Left group did anywhere else in the world? How can anyone say after all this that Lenin and the Bolsheviks underestimated the danger of Centrism? Why did Slutsky ignore these facts, which are of decisive importance in

characterising the Bolsheviks? Why did he not resort to the most reliable method of testing Lenin and the Bolsheviks: by their deeds, by their actions? Why did he prefer the less reliable method of rummaging among casually selected papers?

Because recourse to the more reliable method of testing the Bolsheviks by their deeds would have instantaneously upset Slutsky's whole conception.

Because a test of the Bolsheviks by their deeds would have shown that the Bolsheviks are the only revolutionary organisation in the world which has completely smashed the opportunists and Centrists and driven them out of the Party.

Because recourse to the real deeds and the real history of the Bolsheviks would have shown that Slutsky's teachers, the Trotskyists, were the principal and basic group which fostered Centrism in Russia, and for this purpose created a special organisation, the August bloc, as a hotbed of Centrism.

Because a test of the Bolsheviks by their deeds would have exposed Slutsky once and for all as a falsifier of the history of our Party, who is trying to cover up the Centrism of pre-war Trotskyism by slanderously accusing Lenin and the Bolsheviks of having underestimated the danger of Centrism.

That, comrade editors, is how matters stand with Slutsky and his article.

As you see, the editorial board made a mistake in permitting a discussion with a falsifier of the history of our Party.

What could have impelled the editorial board to take this wrong road?

I think that they were impelled to take that road by rotten liberalism, which has spread to some extent among a section of the Bolsheviks. Some Bolsheviks think that Trotskyism is a faction of communism - one which makes mistakes, it is true, which does many foolish things, is sometimes even anti-Soviet, but which, nevertheless, is a faction of communism. Hence a certain liberalism in the attitude towards the Trotskyists and Trotskyist-minded people. It scarcely needs proof that such a view of Trotskyism is deeply mistaken and harmful. As a matter of fact, Trotskyism has long since ceased to be a faction of communism. As a matter of fact, Trotskyism is the advanced detachment of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, which is fighting against communism, against the Soviet regime, against the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R.

Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie an ideological weapon against Bolshevism in the shape of the thesis that building socialism in our country is impossible, that the degeneration of

the Bolsheviks is inevitable, etc.? Trotskyism gave it that weapon. It is no accident that in their efforts to prove the inevitability of the struggle against the Soviet regime all the anti-Soviet groups in the U.S.S.R. have been referring to the well-known Trotskyist thesis that building socialism in our country is impossible, that the degeneration of the Soviet regime is inevitable, that a return to capitalism is probable.

Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in the U.S.S.R. a tactical weapon in the shape of attempts at open actions against the Soviet regime? The Trotskyists, who tried to organise anti-Soviet demonstrations in Moscow and Leningrad on November 7, 1927, gave it that weapon. It is a fact that the anti-Soviet actions of the Trotskyists raised the spirits of the bourgeoisie and let loose the wrecking activities of the bourgeois experts.

Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie an organisational weapon in the form of attempts at setting up underground anti-Soviet organisations? The Trotskyists, who organised their own anti-Bolshevik illegal group, gave it that weapon. It is a fact that the underground anti-Soviet work of the Trotskyists helped the anti-Soviet groups in the U.S.S.R. to assume an organised form.

Trotskyism is the advanced detachment of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

That is why liberalism in the attitude towards Trotskyism, even though the latter is shattered and camouflaged, is blockhead-ness bordering on crime, on treason to the working class.

That is why the attempts of certain "writers" and "historians" to smuggle disguised Trotskyist rubbish into our literature must meet with a determined rebuff from Bolsheviks.

That is why we cannot permit a literary discussion with the Trotskyist smugglers.

It seems to me that "historians" and "writers" of the Trotskyist smuggler category are for the present trying to carry out their smuggling work along two lines.

Firstly, they are trying to prove that in the period before the war Lenin underestimated the danger of Centrism, thereby leaving the inexperienced reader to surmise that, in consequence, Lenin was not yet a real revolutionary at that time; that he became one only after the war, after he had "re-equipped" himself with Trotsky's assistance. Slutsky may be regarded as a typical representative of this type of smuggler.

We have seen above that Slutsky and Co. are not worth making much fuss about.

15.

Secondly, they are trying to prove that in the period prior to the war Lenin did not realise the necessity of the growing over of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution, thereby leaving the inexperienced reader to surmise that, in consequence, Lenin at that time was not yet a real Bolshevik; that he realised the necessity of this growing over only after the war, after he had "re-equipped" himself with Trotsky's assistance. Volosevich, author of A Course in the History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), may be regarded as a typical representative of this type of smuggler.

True, as far back as 1905 Lenin wrote that "from the democratic revolution we shall at once, and just to the extent of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organised proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution," that "we stand for uninterrupted revolution," that "we shall not stop halfway," True, a very large number of facts and documents of a similar nature could be found in the works of Lenin. But what do the Voloseviches care about the facts of Lenin's life and work? The Voloseviches write in order, by decking themselves out in Bolshevik colours, to smuggle in their anti-Leninist contraband to utter lies about the Bolsheviks and to falsify the history of the Bolshevik Party.

As you see, the Voloseviches are worthy of the Slutskys.

Such are the "highways and byways" of the Trotskyist smugglers.

You yourselves should realise that it is not the business of the editorial board of Proletarskaya Revolutsia to facilitate the smuggling activities of such "historians" by providing them with a forum for discussion.

The task of the editorial board is, in my opinion, to raise the questions concerning the history of Bolshevism to the proper level, to put the study of the history of our Party on scientific, Bolshevik lines, and to concentrate attention against the Trotskyist and all other falsifiers of the history of our Party, systematically tearing off their masks.

That is all the more necessary since even some of our historians - I am speaking of historians without quotation marks, of Bolshevik historians of our Party - are not free from mistakes which bring grist to the mill of the Slutskys and Voloseviches. In this respect, even Comrade Yaroslavsky is not, unfortunately, an exception; his books on the history of the C.P.S.U.(B.), despite all their merits, contain a number of errors in matters of principle and history.

With communist greetings,

J. Stalin

Proletarskaya
Revolutsia, 1931

Reply to Olekhnovich and Aristov

With Reference to the Letter "Some Questions
Concerning the History of Bolshevism" Addressed
to the Editorial Board of the Magazine
"Proletarskaya Revolutsia"

To Comrade Olekhnovich

I received your letter. I am late in replying owing to pressure of work.

I cannot possibly agree with you, Comrade Olekhnovich, and the reason is as follows.

1. It is not true that "Trotskyism was never a faction of communism." Since the Trotskyists broke organisationally - even if temporarily - with Menshevism, put aside - even if temporarily - their anti-Bolshevik views, were admitted to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) and the Comintern and submitted to the decisions of these bodies, Trotskyism was undoubtedly a part, a faction, of communism.

Trotskyism was a faction of communism both in the broad sense of the word, ie, as a part of the world communist movement while retaining its individuality as a group, and in the narrow sense of the word, ie, as more or less organised faction within the C.P.S.U. (B.), fighting for influence in the Party. It would be ridiculous to deny the generally known facts about the Trotskyists as a faction of the C.P.S.U.(B.), that are recorded in resolutions of C.P. S.U.(B.), congresses and conferences.

The C.P.S.U.(B.), does not tolerate factions and cannot agree to legalise them? Yes, that is so; it does not tolerate them and cannot agree to legalise them. But this does not mean that the Trotskyists did not really constitute a faction. Precisely because the Trotskyists actually did have a faction of their own, which they fought to have legalised, precisely for this reason - among others - they were later on thrown out of the Party.

You are trying to score a point in reply by an attempt to draw a distinction between Trotskyism and the Trotskyists, on the supp-

17.
osition that what applies to Trotskyism cannot apply to the Trotskyists. In other words, you mean to say that Trotskyism was never a faction of communism, but that Trotsky and the Trotskyists were a faction of communism. That is scholasticism and self-deception, Comrade Olekhovich! There can be no Trotskyism without exponents of it, ie, without Trotskyists, just as there can be no Trotskyists without Trotskyism - maybe veiled and put aside, but nevertheless Trotskyism - otherwise they would cease to be Trotskyists.

What was the characteristic feature of the Trotskyists when they were a faction of communism? It was that they "permanently" wavered between Bolshevism and Menshevism, these vacillations reaching a climax at each turn made by the Party and the Comintern and finding vent in a factional struggle against the Party. What does this mean? It means that the Trotskyists were not real Bolsheviks, although they were in the Party and submitted to its decisions, that they could not be called real Mensheviks either, although they frequently wavered to the side of Menshevism. It was this wavering that formed the basis of the inner-Party struggle between the Leninists and the Trotskyists during the period when the latter were in our Party (1917-27). And the basis of this wavering of the Trotskyists lay in the fact that although they put aside their anti-Bolshevik views and thus entered the Party, they nevertheless did not renounce these views. As a result these views made themselves felt with particular strength at each turn made by the Party and the Comintern.

You evidently do not agree with this interpretation of the question of Trotskyism. But in that event you are bound to arrive at one of two incorrect conclusions. Either you must conclude that when they entered the Party Trotsky and the Trotskyists made a clean sweep of their views and turned into real Bolsheviks, which is incorrect, for on that assumption it becomes impossible to understand and explain the continuous inner-Party struggle of the Trotskyists against the Party which fills the entire period of their stay in the Party. Or you must conclude that Trotskyism (the Trotskyists) "was all the time a faction of Menshevism," which again is incorrect, as Lenin and Lenin's Party would have committed a mistake in principle had they admitted Mensheviks into the Communist Party even for one minute.

2. It is not true that Trotskyism "was all the time a faction of Menshevism, one variety of bourgeois agency in the working-class movement," just as it is incorrect on your part to attempt to draw distinction between "the attitude of the Party to Trotskyism as the theory and practice of a bourgeois agency in the working-class movement" and the "attitude of the Party at a definite historical period to Trotsky and the Trotskyists."

In the first place, as I stated above, you are making a mistake, by artificially separating Trotskyism from the Trotskyists and, conversely, the Trotskyists from Trotskyism. The history of

our Party tells us that such a separation, in so far as some section or other of the Party did make it, was always and entirely to the advantage of Trotskyism, making it easier for the latter to cover up its traces when launching attacks against the Party. I may tell you confidentially that you are performing a very great service to Trotsky and the Trotskyist smugglers by introducing into our general political practice the method of artificially separating the question of Trotskyism from the question of the Trotskyists.

In the second place, having made this mistake you are compelled to make another that follows from the first, namely the assumption that "at a definite historical period" the Party regarded Trotsky and the Trotskyists as real Bolsheviks. But this assumption is quite wrong and altogether incompatible with the historical facts of the inner-Party struggle between the Trotskyists and the Leninists. How are we to explain in that case the unceasing struggle between the Party and the Trotskyists throughout the period in which they were in the Party? Are you not supposing that it was a squabble and not a fight based on principle?

So you see that your "correction" to my "letter to the editorial board of Proletarskaya Revolutsia" leads to an absurdity.

As a matter of fact Trotskyism was a faction of Menshevism until the Trotskyists entered our Party; it became temporarily a faction of communism after the Trotskyists entered our Party, and it became once more a faction of Menshevism after the Trotskyists were driven out of our Party. "The dog returned to his vomit",

Hence:

a) it cannot be asserted that "at a definite historical period" the Party considered Trotsky and the Trotskyists real Bolsheviks, for such a supposition would flatly contradict the facts of the history of our Party during the period 1917-27;

b) it cannot be considered that Trotskyism (the Trotskyists) "was all the time a faction of Menshevism," for such a supposition would lead to the conclusion that in 1917-27 our Party was a bloc between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks and not a monolithic Bolshevik party, which is quite wrong and at variance with the fundamentals of Bolshevism;

c) the question of Trotskyism cannot be artificially separated from the question of the Trotskyists without one running the risk of becoming involuntarily an instrument of Trotskyist machinations.

What conclusion then remains? This one thing: to agree that "at a definite historical period" Trotskyism was a faction of communism, a faction which wavered between Bolshevism and Menshevism.

J. Stalin

January 15, 1932

To Comrade Aristov

19.

You are under a misapprehension, Comrade Aristov.

There is no contradiction between the article "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists" (1924) and the "Letter to the Editorial Board of Proletarskaya Revolutsia" (1931). These two documents concern different aspects of the question, and this has seemed to you to be a "contradiction" here.

The article "The October Revolution" states that in 1905 it was not Rosa Luxemburg, but Parvus and Trotsky who advanced the theory of "permanent" revolution against Lenin. This fully corresponds to historical fact. It was Parvus who in 1905 came to Russia and edited a special newspaper in which he actively came out in favour of "permanent" revolution against Lenin's "conception," it was Parvus and then, after and together with him, Trotsky - it was this pair that at the time bombarded Lenin's plan of revolution, counterposing to it the theory of "permanent" revolution. As for Rosa Luxemburg, she kept behind the scenes in those days, abstained from active struggle against Lenin in this matter, evidently preferring not to become involved as yet in the struggle.

In the polemic against Radek contained in the article "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists," I focussed attention on Parvus because when Radek spoke about the year 1905 and "permanent" revolution, he purposely kept silent about Parvus. He kept silent about Parvus because after 1905 Parvus had become an odious figure. He became a millionaire and turned into a direct agent of the German imperialists. Radek was averse to having the theory of "permanent" revolution linked up with the obnoxious name of Parvus; he wanted to dodge the facts of history. But I stepped in and frustrated Radek's manoeuvre by establishing the historical truth and giving Parvus his due.

That is how the matter stands with regard to the article "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists."

As for the "Letter to the Editorial Board of Proletarkaya Revolutsia," that treats of another aspect of the question, namely, the fact that the theory of "permanent" revolution was invented by Rosa Luxemburg and Parvus. This, too, corresponds to historical fact. It was not Trotsky but Rosa Luxemburg and Parvus who invented the theory of "permanent" revolution. It was not Rosa Luxemburg but Parvus and Trotsky who in 1905 advanced the theory of "permanent" revolution and actively fought for it against Lenin.

Subsequently Rosa Luxemburg, too, began to fight actively against the Leninist plan of revolution. But that was after 1905.

January 25, 1932

J. Stalin

Bolshevik, No 26
August 30, 1932

TROTSKYISM OR LENINISM?

(When Trotsky returned to Russia in the early summer of 1917 he got together his old grouping of intellectuals and tried to negotiate with the Bolsheviks as an independent political force. But the Bolsheviks maintained their usual intransigent attitude towards trotskyism. This firm attitude of the Bolsheviks prevented the trotskyist group from gaining influence. They were then faced with the prospect of complete political isolation in the midst of a powerful revolution, or of abandoning their political line and joining the Bolsheviks. They chose the latter, and while the revolutionary movement was on the upsurge they were useful members of the Party. Trotsky, because of his effectiveness as an orator and his administrative ability (and not, of course, because of his independent contribution to political thought) was given a leading position in the Party.

But when serious difficulties were encountered in 1918 and in 1920-21 Trotsky tended to trotskyism. In his dispute with Trotsky over the trade union question in 1921 (Trotsky wanted to 'militarise' the trade unions and drill the working class into communism like a sergeant major) Lenin began to use the word 'trotskyism' for the first time since Trotsky's entry into the Party.

After Lenin became paralysed early in 1923 (which was also the time at which the isolation of the revolution in Russia had to be faced up to) Trotsky began a thorough reversion to trotskyism and began a campaign to impose trotskyism on the Bolshevik Party. He began this campaign with an attempt to re-write the history of 1917 (in "The Lessons of October"). The picture painted here was of a Bolshevik Party riddled with internal contradiction, of Lenin abandoning the 'counter-revolutionary' political line which Trotsky had been attacking since 1903, of a great resistance within the Party to Lenin's new revolutionary line, of a merging of the 'new' Leninism with trotskyism, and of Trotsky making the revolution.

This nonsense was exposed by Stalin in a number of exceptional articles on the political history of the revolution (e.g. "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists"). We give below a few extracts from Stalin's speech "Trotskyism or Leninism?" (November 19th 1924) dealing with Trotsky's role in 1917. In this speech Stalin rejects the proposal that repressive measures be used against Trotsky, and recommends an extensive ideological struggle against 'renascent Trotskyism' in order 'to bury Trotsky-

ism as an ideological trend'. This ideological struggle was waged for four years, and the emptiness of Trotsky's attitudinising and phrasemongering was made clear to the working class. Unable to maintain a coherent political position before the working class, Trotsky resorted to underground manoeuvres. Repressive measures were taken against him only then. In 1928 he was expelled from the Communist movement. A few months later he began his journalistic career with the Daily Express and other imperialist newspapers.)

* * *

TROTSKYISM OR LENINISM?

Let us now pass to the legend about Trotsky's special role in the October uprising. The Trotskyites are vigorously spreading rumours that Trotsky inspired and was the sole leader of the October uprising. These rumours are being spread with exceptional zeal by the so-called editor of Trotsky's works, Lentsner. Trotsky himself, by consistently avoiding mention of the Party, the Central Committee and the Petrograd Committee of the Party, by saying nothing about the leading role of these organisations in the uprising and vigorously pushing himself forward as the central figure in the October uprising, voluntarily or involuntarily helps to spread the rumours about the special role he is supposed to have played in the uprising. I am far from denying Trotsky's undoubtedly important role in the uprising. I must say, however, that Trotsky did not play any special role in the October uprising, nor could he do so; being chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, he merely carried out the will of the appropriate Party bodies, which directed every step that Trotsky took. To philistines like Sukhanov, all this may seem strange, but the facts, like true facts, wholly and fully confirm what I say.

.....

Granted, we are told, but it cannot be denied that Trotsky fought well in the period of October. Yes, that is true, Trotsky did, indeed, fight well in October; but Trotsky was not the only one who fought well in the period of October. Even people like the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who then stood side by side with the Bolshheviks, also fought well. In general, I must say that in the period of a victorious uprising, when the enemy is isolated and the uprising is growing, it is not difficult to fight well. At such moments even backward people become heroes.

The proletarian struggle is not, however, an uninterrupted advance, an unbroken chain of victories. The proletarian struggle also has its trials, its defeats. The genuine revolutionary is not one who displays courage in the period of a victorious uprising, but one who, while fighting well during the victorious advance of the revolution, also displays courage when the revolution is in retreat, when the proletariat suffers defeat; who does not lose his head and does not funk when the revolution suffers reverses, when the enemy achieves success; who does not become panic-stricken or give way to despair when the revolution is in a period of

of retreat. The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries did not fight badly in the period of October, and they supported the Bolsheviks. But who does not know that these 'brave' fighters became panic-stricken in the period of Brest, when the advance of German imperialism drove them to despair and hysteria. It is a very sad but indubitable fact that Trotsky, who fought well in the period of October, did not, in the period of Brest, in the period when the revolution suffered temporary reverses, possess the courage to display sufficient staunchness at that difficult moment and to refrain from following in the footsteps of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. Beyond question, that moment was a difficult one; one had to display exceptional courage and imperturbable coolness not to be dismayed, to retreat in good time, to accept peace in good time, to withdraw the proletarian army out of range of the blows of German imperialism, to preserve the peasant reserves and, after obtaining a respite in this way, to strike at the enemy with renewed force. Unfortunately, Trotsky was found to lack this courage and revolutionary staunchness at that difficult moment.

In Trotsky's opinion, the principle lesson of the proletarian revolution is "not to funk" during October. That is wrong, for Trotsky's assertion contains only a particle of the truth about the lessons of the revolution. The whole truth about the lessons of the proletarian revolution is "not to funk" not only when the revolution is advancing, but also when it is in retreat, when the enemy is gaining the upper hand and the revolution is suffering reverses. The revolution did not end with October. October was only the beginning of the proletarian revolution. It is bad to funk when the tide of insurrection is rising; but it is worse to funk when the revolution is passing through severe trials after power has been captured. To retain power on the morrow of the revolution is no less important than to capture power. If Trotsky funk during the period of Brest, when our revolution was passing through severe trials, when it was almost a matter of "surrendering" power, he ought to know that the mistakes committed by Kamenev and Zinoviev in October are quite irrelevant here.

That is how matters stand with the legends about the October uprising.

II

THE PARTY AND THE PREPARATION FOR OCTOBER

Let us now pass to the question of the preparation for October.

Listening to Trotsky, one might think that during the whole of the period of preparation, from March to October, the Bolshevik Party did nothing but mark time; that it was being corroded by internal contradictions and hindered Lenin in every way; that had it not been for Trotsky, nobody knows how the October Revolution would have ended. It is rather amusing to hear this strange talk about the Party from Trotsky, who declares in this same 'preface' to Vol-

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ume III that "the chief instrument of the proletarian revolution is the Party," that "without the Party, apart from the Party, by-passing the Party, with a substitute for the Party, the proletarian revolution cannot be victorious." Allah himself would not understand how our revolution could have succeeded if "its chief instrument" proved to be useless, while success was impossible, as it appears, "by-passing the Party." But this is not the first time that Trotsky treats us to oddities. It must be supposed that this amusing talk about our Party is one of Trotsky's usual oddities.

Let us briefly review the history of the preparation for October according to periods.

- 1) The period of the Party's new orientation (March-April).
The major facts of this period:
- a) the overthrow of tsarism;
 - b) the formation of the Provisional Government (dictatorship of the bourgeoisie);
 - c) the appearance of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry);
 - d) dual power;
 - e) the April demonstration;
 - f) the first crisis of power.

The characteristic feature of this period is the fact that there existed together, side by side and simultaneously, both the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry; the latter trusts the former, believes that it is striving for peace, voluntarily surrenders power to the bourgeoisie and thereby becomes an appendage of the bourgeoisie. There are as yet no serious conflicts between the two dictatorships. On the other hand, there is the 'Contact Committee'.

This was the greatest turning point in the history of Russia and an unprecedented turning point in the history of our Party. The old, pre-revolutionary platform of direct overthrow of the government was clear and definite, but it was no longer suitable for the new conditions of the struggle. It was now no longer possible to go straight out for the overthrow of the government, for the latter was connected with the Soviets, then under the influence of the defencists, and the Party would have had to wage war against both the government and the Soviets, a war that would have been beyond its strength. Nor was it possible to pursue a policy of supporting the Provisional Government, for it was the government of imperialism. Under the new conditions of the struggle the Party had to adopt a new orientation. The Party (its majority) groped its way towards this new orientation. It adopted the policy of pressure on the Provisional Government through the Soviets on the question of peace and did not venture to step forward at once from the old slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry to the new slogan of power to the Soviets. The aim of this halfway policy was to enable the Soviets to discern the actual imperialist nature of the Provisional Government on the basis of the concrete questions

of peace, and in this way to wrest the Soviets from the Provisional Government. But this was a profoundly mistaken position, for it gave rise to pacifist illusions, brought grist to the mill of defencism and hindered the revolutionary education of the masses. At that time I shared this mistaken position with other Party comrades and fully abandoned it only in the middle of April, when I associated myself with Lenin's theses. A new orientation was needed. This new orientation was given to the Party by Lenin, in his celebrated April Theses. I shall not deal with these theses, for they are known to everybody. Were there any disagreements between the Party and Lenin at that time? Yes, there were. How long did these disagreements last? Not more than two weeks. The City Conference of the Petrograd organisation (in the latter half of April), which adopted Lenin's theses, marked a turning point in our Party's development. The All-Russian April Conference (at the end of April) merely completed on an all-Russian scale the work of the Petrograd Conference, rallying nine-tenths of the Party around this united Party position.

Now, seven years later, Trotsky gloats maliciously over the past disagreements among the Bolsheviks and depicts them as a struggle waged as if there were almost two parties within Bolshevism. But, firstly, Trotsky disgracefully exaggerates and inflates the matter, for the Bolshevik Party lived through these disagreements without the slightest shock. Secondly, our Party would be a caste and not a revolutionary party if it did not permit different shades of opinion in its ranks. Moreover, it is well known that there were disagreements among us even before that, for example, in the period of the Third Duma, but they did not shake the unity of our Party. Thirdly, it will not be out of place to ask what was then the position of Trotsky himself, who is now gloating so eagerly over the past disagreements among the Bolsheviks. Lentsner, the so-called editor of Trotsky's works, assures us that Trotsky's letters from America (March), 'wholly anticipated' Lenin's Letters From Afar (March), which served as the basis of Lenin's April Theses. That is what he says: 'wholly anticipated'. Trotsky does not object to this analogy; apparently, he accepts it with thanks. But, firstly, Trotsky's letters "do not in the least resemble" Lenin's letters either in spirit or in conclusions, for they wholly and entirely reflect Trotsky's anti-Bolshevik slogan of "no tsar, but a workers' government," a slogan which implies a revolution without the peasantry. It is enough to glance through these two series of letters to be convinced of this. Secondly, if what Lentsner says is true, how are we to explain the fact that Lenin on the very next day after his arrival from abroad considered it necessary to dissociate himself from Trotsky? Who does not know of Lenin's repeated statements that Trotsky's slogan: "no tsar, but a workers' government" was an attempt "to skip the still unexhausted peasant movement," that this slogan meant "playing at the seizure of power by a workers' government"?

What can there be in common between Lenin's Bolshevik theses

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and Trotsky's anti-Bolshevik scheme with its 'playing at the seizure of power'? And what prompts this passion that some people display for comparing a wretched hovel with Mont Blanc? For what purpose did Lentsner find it necessary to make this risky addition to the heap of old legends about our revolution of still another legend, about Trotsky's letters from America 'anticipating' Lenin's well-known Letters From Afar*?

No wonder it is said that an obliging fool is more dangerous than an enemy.

...
*Among these legends must be included also the very widespread story that Trotsky was the 'sole' or 'chief organiser' of the victories on the fronts of the civil war. I must declare, comrades, in the interest of truth, that this version is quite out of accord with the facts. I am far from denying that Trotsky played an important role in the civil war. But I must emphatically declare that the high honour of being the organiser of our victories belongs not to individuals, but to the great collective body of advanced workers in our country, the Russian Communist Party. Perhaps it will not be out of place to quote a few examples. You know that Kolchak and Denikin were regarded as the principal enemies of the Soviet Republic. You know that our country breathed freely only after those enemies were defeated. Well, history shows that both those enemies, i.e., Kolchak and Denikin, were routed by our troops in spite of Trotsky's plans.

Judge for yourselves.

1) Kolchak. This is in the summer of 1919. Our troops are advancing against Kolchak and are operating near Ufa. A meeting of the Central Committee is held. Trotsky proposes that the advance be halted along the line of the River Belaya (near Ufa), leaving the Urals in the hands of Kolchak, and that part of the troops be withdrawn from the Eastern Front and transferred to the Southern Front. A heated debate takes place. The Central Committee disagrees with Trotsky, being of the opinion that the Urals, with its factories and railway network, must not be left in the hands of Kolchak, for the latter could easily recuperate there, organise a strong force and reach the Volga again; Kolchak must first be driven beyond the Ural range into the Siberian steppes, and only after that has been done should forces be transferred to the South. The Central Committee rejects Trotsky's plan. Trotsky hands in his resignation. The Central Committee refuses to accept it. Commander-in-Chief Vatsetis, who supported Trotsky's plan, resigns. His place is taken by a new Commander-in-Chief, Kamenev. From that moment Trotsky ceases to take a direct part in the affairs of the Eastern Front.

2) Denikin. This is in the autumn of 1919. The offensive against Denikin is not proceeding successfully. The 'steel ring' around Mamontov (Mamontov's raid) is obviously collapsing. Denikin captures Kursk. Denikin is approaching Orel. Trotsky is summoned from the Southern Front to attend a meeting of the Cen-

tral Committee. The Central Committee regards the situation as alarming and decides to send new military leaders to the Southern Front and to withdraw Trotsky. The new military leaders demand 'no intervention' by Trotsky in the affairs of the Southern Front. Trotsky ceases to take a direct part in the affairs of the Southern Front. Operations on the Southern Front, right up to the capture of Rostov-on-Don and Odessa by our troops, proceed without Trotsky.

Let anybody try to refute these facts.

. . . .

Trotskyism is distrust of the Bolshevik Party principle, of the monolithic character of the Party, of its hostility towards opportunist elements. In the sphere of organisation, Trotskyism is the theory that revolutionaries and opportunists can co-exist and form groups and coteries within a single party. You are, no doubt, familiar with the history of Trotsky's August bloc, in which the Matovites and Otzovists, the Liquidators and Trotskyites, happily co-operated, pretending that they were a 'real' party. It is well known that this patchwork 'party' pursued the aim of destroying the Bolshevik Party. What was the nature of 'our disagreements' at that time? It was that Leninism regarded the destruction of the August bloc as a guarantee of the development of the proletarian party, whereas Trotskyism regarded that bloc as the basis for the building a 'real' party.

Again, as you see, we have two opposite lines.

Thirdly. Trotskyism is distrust of the leaders of Bolshevism, an attempt to discredit, to defame them. I do not know of a single trend in the Party that could compare with Trotskyism in the matter of discrediting the leaders of Leninism or the central institutions of the Party. For example, what should be said of Trotsky's 'polite' opinion of Lenin, whom he described as "a professional exploiter of every kind of backwardness in the Russian working-class movement" (Letter to Chkeidze. 1913)? And this is far from being the most 'polite' of the 'polite' opinions Trotsky has expressed.

How could it happen that Trotsky, who carried such a nasty stock-in-trade on his back, found himself, after all, in the ranks of the Bolsheviks during the October movement? It happened because at that time Trotsky abandoned (actually did abandon) that stock-in-trade; he hid it in the cupboard. Had he not performed that 'operation', real co-operation with him would have been impossible. The theory of the August bloc, ie, the theory of unity with the Mensheviks, had already been shattered and thrown overboard by the revolution, for how could there be any talk about unity when an armed struggle was raging between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks? Trotsky had no alternative but to admit this theory was useless.

The same misadventure 'happened' to the theory of permanent revolution, for not a single Bolshevik contemplated the immediate seizure of power on the morrow of the February Revolution, and Trotsky could not help knowing that the Bolsheviks would not allow him, in the words of Lenin, 'to play at the seizure of power.' Trotsky had no alternative but recognise the Bolsheviks' policy of fighting for influence in the Soviets, of fighting to win over the peasantry. As regards the third specific feature of Trotskyism (distrust of the Bolshevik leaders), it naturally had to retire into the background owing to the obvious failure of the first two features.

Under those circumstances, could Trotsky do anything else but hide his stock-in-trade in the cupboard and follow the Bolsheviks, considering that he had no group of his own of any significance, and that he came to the Bolsheviks as a political individual, without an army? Of course, he could not!

What is the lesson to be learnt from this? Only one: that prolonged collaboration between the Leninists and Trotsky is possible only if the latter completely abandons his old stock-in-trade, only if he completely accepts Leninism. Trotsky writes about the lessons of October, but he forgets that, in addition to all the other lessons, there is one more lesson of October, the one I have just mentioned, which is of prime importance for Trotskyism. Trotskyism ought to learn that lesson of October too.

It is evident, however, that Trotskyism has not learnt that lesson. The fact of the matter is that the old stock-in-trade of Trotskyism that was hidden in the cupboard in the period of the October movement is now being dragged into the light again in the hope that a market will be found for it, seeing that the market in our country is expanding. Undoubtedly, Trotsky's new literary pronouncements are an attempt to revert to Trotskyism, to 'overcome' Leninism, to drag in, implant, all the specific features of Trotskyism. The new Trotskyism is not mere a repetition of the old Trotskyism; its feathers have been plucked and it is rather bedraggled; it is incomparably milder in spirit and more moderate in form than the old Trotskyism; but, in essence, it undoubtedly retains all the specific features of the old Trotskyism.

The new Trotskyism does not dare to come out as a militant force against Leninism; it prefers to operate under the common flag of Leninism, under the slogan of interpreting, improving Leninism. That is because it is weak. It cannot be regarded as an accident that the appearance of the new Trotskyism coincided with Lenin's departure. In Lenin's lifetime it would not have dared to take this risky step.

. . .

2) On the question of the Party principle. The old Trotskyism tried to undermine the Bolshevik Party principle by means of the theory (and practice) of unity with the Mensheviks. But that theory has suffered such disgrace that nobody now even wants to

mention it. To undermine the Party principle, present-day Trotskyism has invented the new, less odious and almost 'democratic' theory of contrasting the old cadres to the younger Party element. According to Trotskyism, our Party has not a single and integral history. Trotskyism divides the history of our Party into two parts of unequal importance: pre-October and post-October. The pre-October part of the history of our Party is, properly speaking, not history, but 'pre-history', the unimportant or, at all events, not very important preparatory period of our Party. The post-October part of the history of our Party, however, is real, genuine history. In the former, there are the 'old,' 'pre-historic,' unimportant cadres of our Party. In the latter there is the new, real, 'historic' Party. It scarcely needs proof that his singular scheme of the history of the Party is a scheme to disrupt the unity between the old and the new cadres of our Party, a scheme to destroy the Bolshevik Party principle.

Needless to say, the Party cannot reconcile itself to this grotesque scheme.

3) On the question of the leaders of Bolshevism. The old Trotskyism tried to discredit Lenin more or less openly, without fearing the consequences. The new Trotskyism is more cautious. It tries to achieve the purpose of the old Trotskyism by pretending to praise, to exalt Lenin. I think it is worth while quoting a few examples.

The Party knows that Lenin was a relentless revolutionary; but it knows also that he was cautious, that he disliked reckless people and often, with a firm hand, retrained those who were infatuated with terrorism, including Trotsky himself. Trotsky touches on this subject in his book On Lenin, but from his portrayal of Lenin one might think that all Lenin did was 'at every opportunity to din into people's minds the idea that terrorism was inevitable.' The impression is created that Lenin was the most bloodthirsty of all the bloodthirsty Bolsheviks.

For what purpose did Trotsky need this uncalled-for and totally unjustified exaggeration.

The Party knows that Lenin was an exemplary Party man, who did not like to settle questions alone, without the leading collective body, on the spur of the moment, without careful investigation and verification. Trotsky touches upon this aspect, too, in his book. But the portrait he paints is not that of Lenin, but of a sort of Chinese mandarin, who settles important questions in the quiet of his study, by intuition.

Do you want to know how our Party settled the question of dispersing the Constituent Assembly? Listen to Trotsky:

"Of course, the Constituent Assembly will have to be dispersed," said Lenin, "but what about the Left Socialist-

Revolutionaries?'

29.

"But our apprehensions were greatly allayed by old Natanson. He came in to 'take counsel' with us, and after the first few words he said:

"We shall probably have to disperse the Constituent Assembly by force."

"'Bravo!' exclaimed Lenin. 'What is true is true! But will your people agree to it?'

'Some of our people are wavering, but I think that in the end they will agree,' answered Natanson."

That is how history is written.

Do you want to know how the Party settled the question about the Supreme Military Council? Listen to Trotsky:

"'Unless we have serious and experienced military experts we shall never extricate ourselves from this chaos,' I said to Vladimir Ilyich after every visit to the Staff.

"'That is evidently true, but they might betray us...

"'Let us attach a commissar to each of them.'

"'Two would be better,' exclaimed Lenin, 'and strong-handed ones. There surely must be strong-handed Communists in our ranks.'

"That is how the structure of the Supreme Military Council arose."

That is how Trotsky writes history.

Why did Trotsky need these 'Arabian Nights' stories derogatory to Lenin? Was it to exalt V.I. Lenin, the leader of the Party? It doesn't look like it.

The Party knows that Lenin was the greatest Marxist of our times, a profound theoretician and a most experienced revolutionary, to whom any trace of Blanquism was alien. Trotsky touches upon this aspect, too, in his book. But the portrait he paints is not that of the giant Lenin, but of a dwarf-like Blanquist who, in the October days, advises the Party 'to take power by its own hand, independently of and behind the back of the Soviet.' I have already said, however, that there is not a scrap of truth in this description.

Why did Trotsky need this flagrant...inaccuracy? Is this not an attempt to discredit Lenin 'just a little'?

Such are the characteristic features of the new Trotskyism.

What is the danger of this new Trotskyism? It is that Trotskyism, owing to its entire inner content, stands every chance of

30.

becoming the centre and rallying point of the non-proletarian elements who are striving to weaken, to disintegrate the proletarian dictatorship.

You will ask: what is to be done now? What are the Party's immediate tasks in connection with Trotsky's new literary pronouncements?

Trotskyism is taking action now in order to discredit Bolshevism and to undermine its foundations. It is the duty of the Party to bury Trotskyism as an ideological trend.

There is talk about repressive measures against the opposition and about the possibility of a split. That is nonsense, comrades. Our Party is strong and mighty. It will not allow any splits. As regards repressive measures, I am emphatically opposed to them. What we need now is not repressive measures, but an extensive ideological struggle against renascent Trotskyism.

We did not want and did not strive for this literary discussion. Trotskyism is forcing it upon us by its anti-Leninist pronouncements. Well, we are ready, comrades.

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