

Chapter Nine. The Interregnum and the New Opposition

On January 21, 1924, Lenin died. The problem of his formal succession had already been settled. The colourless Rykov became President of the Council of People's Commissars. Trotsky, who was still away from Moscow, was warned too late to return in time. It was the members of the troika who presided at the funerary ceremonies, delivered the speeches and celebrated the memory of the deceased. Stalin, the last orator, recited the "commandments" of the dead man in the style of a litany. This almost mystical exaltation, reminiscent of the bible and nearer to the tradition of the priests of the Orthodox Church than to the teachings of Marx, sounded strangely in the great hall of the Congress of Soviets: a page had been turned.

The transformation of the Party

The campaign to recruit industrial workers, decided by the Thirteenth Conference, was placed under the patronage of the dead leader. The so-called "Lenin Appeal" was to bring in more than two hundred thousand new members in a few months, and ended by raising the party membership by 50% in a year. Despite its label, the campaign sanctioned a profound break from the methods employed during Lenin's lifetime. On the one hand, it was no longer a question of the enthusiastic, convinced joining by workers who had been won by other party members, nor even of that of ambitious people obliged by the force of things to give the proofs of themselves and to show capacity and devotion. It was now an almost official recruitment, carried out within the framework of the factories, under the pressure of secretaries who were the official authorities and who did not lack means of pressure with which to make workers, concerned above all with their day to day problems and the necessity to keep their jobs, join the one and only party. The newcomers, moreover, were for the most part completely or largely lacking education. They formed the majority of the 57% illiterates who, according to Stalin, were in the party in May 1924. Consequently they were a long way away from the problems of politics, inexperienced and malleable.

In the hands of the apparatus they formed a docile army, always falling in behind the leadership, very distant in every way from the revolutionary spirit of the Bolshevik workers, who were to be swamped under the numbers of mulish members. In their favour the restrictions imposed by the earlier congresses were waived: the newcomers were to use their membership rights to the full, were to vote, to fill responsible posts, were to be able to be delegates at conferences, without any account being taken of how long they had spent in the probationary stages which had earlier been demanded. We can imagine more easily what a trump card this flood of new members could be for manipulating cells and responsible party organisms at the hands of the apparatus and of the General Secretary, when we remember that the recruitment based on the "Lenin Appeal" was carried out in parallel with a purge that, this time, was aimed at the supporters of the Opposition of the 46. We can understand how Molotov could declare, in these conditions: "The development of the party in the future will, without any doubt, be based on the Lenin Appeal" (1).

The Cult of Lenin Begins: the Suppression of the Testament

The funeral speeches and articles set the tone for a new period. The Congress of Soviets, which was in session at the time of Lenin's death, changed the name of Petrograd, which became Leningrad. It made January 21 an annual day of mourning. It decided to erect monuments to his memory in every city, to embalm his body and place it in a mausoleum under the Kremlin walls, so that pilgrimages could be made to the mummy. The voice of Krupskaya alone was raised against these decision, the semi-religious inspiration of which was surprising in revolutionaries:

"Do not permit your mourning for Ilyich to take on forms of external reverence for his person. Do not erect monuments. Do not give his name to palaces. Do not organise ceremonies to his memory. He attached so little importance to all that. All that so annoyed him. Remember the poverty... that still exists in the country. If you want to honour the memory of Vladimir Ilyich, build creches, kindergartens, houses, schools, libraries, medical centres, hospitals, homes for invalids, and, especially, put his principles into practice".(2)

Zinoviev was promoted to the rank of High Priest and declared: "Lenin is dead, Leninism lives".(3). The Central Committee resolved to start a new journal, "The Bolshevik", intended to summarise "Leninism" systematically in simple proposition which all could understand. None the less, the problem of Lenin's testament still had to be settled, with Krupskaya believing that it should be brought to the notice of the party in respect for the dead man's wishes. The document was read on May 22 to a session of the Central Committee enlarged by the attendance of the oldest party members; it there produced the effect of a bomb. Zinoviev at ^{once} flew to the help of Stalin, whom the document, in the atmosphere of adoration of the deceased, seemed to condemn beyond forgiveness: he declared:

"Ilyich's last word is the highest law for us... but on one point at least the fears of Lenin have shown themselves to be unfounded. I wish to speak of that concerning our General Secretary. You have all witnessed our common work during these last years and, like myself, have been happy to confirm that the fears of Ilyich have not been realised."(4)

With the support of Kamenev he proposed that Stalin be retained in the position from which Lenin wished to remove him. No opposition was openly raised. The natural consequence followed. Despite Krupskaya, who wanted the testament read to the party congress, the Central Committee decided by some 30 votes to 10 to keep it secret and to communicate it only to the leaders of the delegations to the congress. Trotsky remained silent from the beginning of the meeting to the end: for years, his silence was to make him the accomplice of the falsifiers. For the second time his abstention rescued Stalin and those who, in deifying Lenin and concealing his last wishes, showed that maintaining themselves in power dominated their other pre-occupations. In any

case it sheds light on his subsequent abstention: for Trotsky, the party remained the party and those who led it had to be treated with respect, in the interests of the party itself, whatever might be their vagaries.

The Thirteenth Congress

With the danger of the testament out of the way, the Thirteenth Congress, opening on May 23, was to be for those who had won the day a repetition on a larger scale of the Thirteenth Conference, and with greater lustre. First Zinoviev touched on the question of the struggle about the new course in a long opening speech, which levelled a new charge against the Opposition, in a self-glorification of the leaders who had surmounted the crisis and defeated the manoeuvre aimed at weakening the party through the Central Committee. No doubt drawing encouragement from Trotsky's silence over the business of the testament, he declared that the controversy had shown that it was "now a thousand times more necessary than ever that the party be monolithic". He returned to the indictment of Trotsky and went so far as to demand from the Opposition a public retraction and recognition of its errors: "The most sensitive course, that most worthy of a Bolshevik, which the Opposition could take would be to come to the platform of the Congress and say, 'I have made a mistake and the party was right'"(5).

This pretention was without precedent in Bolshevik history and roused some feeling among the delegates. Krupskaya, whose moral authority as the widow and collaborator of Lenin was high, was to take the floor to say that it was "psychologically unacceptable". She was to give Trotsky the opportunity for a simple, dignified reply, which has often been mis-interpreted by historians in an opposite direction in their desire to find in it something more than a declaration by a disciplined party member:

"Nothing could be easier than to state in front of the party: 'All my criticisms, and all my declarations, all my warnings, all my protests, all that was nothing but a mistake from beginning to end'. But, comrades, I do not think so... The English have a saying: 'My Country, right or wrong!'. We can say, with much greater justification: whether it be right or wrong, on certain questions or at certain moments, it is my party."

He repeated what had already impregnated the pages of "The New Course":

"In the last resort, the party is always right, because it is the unique historical instrument which the working class possesses to resolve its problems... One can be correct only with the party and through it, because history has not yet created any another means by which to be correct" (6).

Defeated, he submitted, but he did not despair of convincing. In fact, he maintained that he was correct, and, when he took up all the arguments which had been developed before the Thirteenth Conference, he none the less was careful to distinguish himself from the 46, by making clear that he was opposed to groups in the party, because it would be difficult not to identify them with fractions. Preobrazhenski also was to speak, in protest against the fact that the purge had especially been aimed at the Opposition, and

to question (as Trotsky had not done) the use by the Central Committee of the success of the "Lenin Appeal": "It reveals an inadmissible optimism to claim that this entry of workers into the party confirms and approves everything that we have done in matters of internal policy, including the bureaucratic perversions" (7).

In a number of resolutions the Congress approved the decisions of the Thirteenth Conference and the line of the Central Committee. It repeated the condemnation of the Opposition, which "The Bolshevik" was to attack again a few days later for "internal semi-Menshevism, a quarter of Menshevism, a thousand times more dangerous than 100% Menshevism, the real Menshevism", at a moment when "100% Bolshevik unity" was necessary (8).

The "Bolshevisation" of the International

According to official history, it was in 1924 that the International was "Bolshevised". Between 1919 and 1921 it had been constructed on the perspective of immediate revolutionary struggles, which could lead in a short time to the seizure of power in several lands. In this way are to be explained the twenty-one conditions imposed on parties for their membership, and the constitution, which envisaged making it a centralised world party, an "international Bolshevik party". Lenin alone was anxious about this Russification: this organisation, artificially imposed on parties which had neither the experience nor the tradition of the Russian revolutionaries, risked retarding their development. The delegates to the Third Congress did not follow him, any more than they followed him at the Second Congress, when he proposed to base the Executive in Berlin, in order to reduce the influence of the Russian leadership, and recalled the excessive influence of the German socialists in the Second International.

In fact, even during his lifetime, the opposite prevailed. The Communist parties, small sects like the British party or large parties of a social-democratic type like the Italian or the French parties, had neither the experience of struggle nor the leaders capable of standing up to the Russian leaders. The German Communist Party after the assassination of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, was divided into several violently opposed tendencies. Its former secretary, Paul Levi, was excluded in 1921, for having publicly condemned the insurrectional action in March. Lenin did his utmost to retain him in the party in order to avoid the split and, after his exclusion, wrote to the German Communists that he had "only lost his head" (9).

But the concern to educate and to effect agreement disappeared with Lenin from the International. Zinoviev was to make the Communist parties servile organisations, entirely dependent on the Executive, on the pretext of "Bolshevising" them. Alfred Rosmer writes as a witness and a participant: "By means of emissaries whom he sent to all the sections, he suppressed all opposition before the Congress. Wherever resistance showed itself, the most varied methods were used to break it down; it was a war of attrition, in which the workers were defeated in advance by the functionaries, who had all the time in the world and imposed ⁱⁿ⁻terminable discussions; for the sake of peace, all who had permitted themselves to criticise and who were worn down by the weight of

the International either provisionally gave way or took themselves away" (10).

After Trotsky was defeated, all those who had defended him were punished. Boris Suvorin, one of the founders of Communism in France, was put out of the leadership and then out of the party, for having translated and published "The New Course". Brandler was held solely responsible for the defeat in Germany and was removed from the leadership of the German Communist Party. The Polish Communists, Warski, Walecki and Wera Kostrzewa were removed for having protested against the attacks on Trotsky. At the Fifth Congress Zinoviev promised to "break their backs". In a reply to Stalin on July 3, 1924, Wera Kostrzewa advanced the charge: "We are against the creation inside the party of an atmosphere of permanent conflict, of tension and of rancour between one and another... I am convinced that with your system you are going to discredit all the party leaders, one after another, and I fear that at the decisive moment the proletariat will no longer have trusted people at its head. The leadership of the revolution could fall into the hands of adventurers, of those who "cook spicy dishes" and of careerists" (11).

But the tone was set at the Fifth Congress by another militant, the young German Ruth Fischer. She was eloquent and enthusiastic, but without any experience of the class-struggle, the companion of Maslov, a German militant of Russian origin, the spokesman of the Left in 1923. Zinoviev imposed her at the head of the German Communist Party, in the place of the Old Guard of the militants of the Spartacus League, who were condemned as "right-wingers". Ruth Fischer was the incarnation of the "Bolshevisation" tendency. She denounced Trotsky, Radek and Brandler as "Menshevik liquidators" and called for the International to be transformed into "a world Bolshevik party", a monolith from which all tendency struggles would be excluded. In fact this programme was already three-quarters realised. The definitive subordination of the Communist parties to Moscow was possible only because this Bolshevik party retained in the eyes of the advanced workers the revolutionary prestige of victory in the October Revolution. Wera Kostrzewa expressed the feeling of many Communists when, at the end of her intervention, she told Zinoviev and Stalin: "You know that we cannot fight against you. If tomorrow you were to call on the Polish workers to choose between us and the Communist International, you know very well that we would be the first to tell them to follow you" (12). The pseudo-Bolshevisation killed off independent Communist critical spirit and thought. It thereby destroyed every chance of making the parties of the International into parties capable of playing the role which the Bolshevik party played in Russia.

The "Lessons of October" and the Second Campaign against Trotsky

Though as a disciplined militant Trotsky accepted that he must submit and be silent, he continued to be a source of anxiety to the troika. "The Bolshevik" of June 5, 1924, did not conceal its irritation at the "elastic speech" he made at the Thirteenth Congress. At the same time, it had no interest in provoking him and, from the moment when he accepted silence on the essential political problems, it sought to avoid doing so.

However, Trotsky was not prepared to let himself be buried under slanders. An opportunity to express himself was offered by the publication, projected long before, of Volume III of his "Writings and Speeches", by the State Publishing House, devoted precisely to the year 1917. These documents were obviously irrefutable in themselves. They gave to Trotsky the place which was his in the course of the revolution, first after Lenin, as he freely admitted, if not first with him. But for the militant and the un-repentant fighter history has no value if it is not understood and analysed, and if it does not serve as an instrument for changing the world. Trotsky was to introduce the third volume of his works with a study as big as a thick pamphlet; in it he deals with the lessons which appeared to him to be essential, in relation to October 1917, and brings together the principal ideas about the role of the party in the course of the revolution which he defended many times and particularly in the course of 1923. He intended to use the solid, irrefutable basis provided by the past, which the documents published by the State Publishing House supplied to him, as a spring-board by means of which the whole party could gain an understanding of the stage which was hardly beginning, for the future.

The closely-written pages of the preface, entitled "The Lessons of October", painted first a general picture of the history of the Bolshevik Party. Trotsky distinguished three periods in it: the preparatory period before 1917, the revolutionary period of 1917, and the post-revolutionary period. Of the three, the second is evidently the epoch which he regards as decisive - and this is not merely because Trotsky was the incarnation of Bolshevism in it, as the then-current description of Bolshevism as "the party of Lenin and Trotsky" establishes. The second period was the test par excellence of the party, its historic justification. And the history as it emerged from the documents, writings and speeches of Trotsky, as from those of anyone else, reveals two crises within the party in the course of 1917: that of April, when the majority of the cadres of Bolshevism, having moved towards conciliation with the Mensheviks and adaptation to a democratic republic, reared up under the blows which Lenin dealt them, as he spelt out the new orientation, with the support of the workers' vanguard - and that of October, when Zinoviev, Kamenev and part of the Bolshevik general staff submitted to Lenin only because he was able to win the assent of the broad masses and to demonstrate to them by action and success that his point of view was correct. The "lesson" is an important one: it is the authority of Lenin and his sense of deep social movements which alone could dispose, at the time of the decisive test, of that Bolshevik Old Guard which in 1923 claimed to be the guardian of the tradition. Trotsky stresses that neither Zinoviev nor Kamenev had the slightest title to claim "Leninism" as theirs, to the extent that, in the course of decisive events, and especially on the eve of the seizure of power, (this was when one sees the revolutionary builder), they took their position against Lenin, whom Trotsky, whose past was not not a Bolshevik one, supported without reservation.

He passed from October 1917 to October 1923, and outlined the situation in Germany in

in the preceding year, and the hesitations of the German Communist Party, which let the favourable moment pass and collapsed without a fight. The German October confirmed negatively what the Russian October had demonstrated positively. It was the same party leaders who had responsibility for the International, of which Zinoviev was the president, and with it for the set-back of the German Revolution. When they should have made a turn and marched boldly to power, they had experienced the same conservative reflex as six years earlier in Russia. The German working class, in a favourable objective situation, had a Communist party, but it did not have, either at the national or the international level, a leadership of the stature of that of Lenin. That was why it was defeated.

The attack was devastating. It was thoroughly buttressed by contemporary history and reality and solid enough to stand up to any test. However, it placed the accent on the role of the leadership, at the highest level, thereby minimising the role of the party itself in the eyes of many militants. In the end, with its replies to the "revelations" of the troika about Trotsky's Menshevik past by what was really a "revelation" of the "conciliatory" past of Zinoviev and Kamenev, it gave the impression of a personal squabble, a display of dirty linen, which in the end would help to discredit all the protagonists thus desperately trying to demolish the others' legends about being iron Bolsheviks and faithful lieutenants of Lenin.

Pravda announced the publication of the book, with its un-published preface, on October 12. Peter and Irene Sorlin have stressed, in their meticulous examination of the press that it was not until November 2 that an article entitled "How not to write the history of October" mentioned again the book which every militant knew. From November 12 onwards the journals were filled with letters and motions of protest from local organisations. One may well believe that they were in response to instructions from the apparatus, which fully explains why there were so many, why they all appeared simultaneously as well as the interval before their appearance, which cannot be explained in any other way.

In any case, the campaign which broke out was to be one of extraordinary violence. We will content ourselves with a list summarising the articles devoted to the preface in these few weeks by the leaders: on November 18, there was "Leninism or Trotskyism", by Kamenev (14); on November 19, there was "Trotskyism or Leninism" by Stalin (15); on November 30, there was "Bolshevism or Trotskyism", by Zinoviev (16). All of these articles charged Trotsky with "revisionism" and "trying to liquidate Leninism". Then came the articles against the "permanent revolution"; Kamenev again on December 10, Bukharin on the 12th, Stalin on the 20th (one of his first incursions into theory), which concluded, in his own peculiar style: "It is not with honeyed speeches and rotten diplomacy that the yawning gulf between the theory of the "permanent revolution" and Leninism can be concealed."

These were the big guns. But Trotsky became a target from all sides, with the sustained

fire made possible by control of the press by the apparatus, the systematic use of all the documents existing in the archives, exhumation from polemics of the past, of which there was no shortage, and exhibition of their most cutting passages without explanation and out of context. The reader of Pravda was to learn that Lenin treated Trotsky as a "pig" at the same moment as Trotsky was confiding his grievances against Lenin to the Menshevik Chkheidze. Well-chosen texts and well-cut-out quotations could give the impression that Trotsky was always an anti-Bolshevik and the irreconcilable adversary of Lenin. Even those who had not forgotten 1917 could yield under the pressure of these lines. It mattered little that Zinoviev and Kamenev had been treated as "yellow" and Stalin as a "prison screw", because the first statement was not repeated and the second was unknown. The ordinary party member, for whom 1917 in the best case was only a glorious legend, admitted, sometimes not without bitterness, the role of the wicked Trotsky, without really believing in the virtues of the worthy Zinoviev. In the troika Stalin was spattered least, because his minor role before and during 1917 enabled him to escape the discredit which was the lot of the former protagonists.

At the end of the civil war, Lenin had definitively rehabilitated Zinoviev and Kamenev - or so he thought - when he wrote in "Communist International": "Immediately before the October Revolution and immediately after it a certain number of excellent Communists in Russia committed a mistake which no one would be willing to mention today. Why? Because, if it is not absolutely necessary, it is a mistake to repeat mistakes which have been completely corrected" (17). One single voice was raised in 1924 to get a hearing for a viewpoint filled with concern to conserve all the precious cadres, which had led Lenin himself both to welcome as his equal this "pig" Trotsky and to retain at his side the "yellow" Zinoviev and Kamenev. Krupskaya said in fact on December 16 that "she does not know whether Trotsky is guilty of all the mortal sins of which he is accused, not without polemical intent"; she reminded of his real role in 1917 and what the party owed him, but ended saying "when a comrade like Trotsky take, perhaps unconsciously, the road of revising Leninism, the party has its word to say" (18). A letter from Trotsky, published in Pravda on December 20, pointed out that his book was simply the development of ideas which had frequently been expressed by him earlier and which had never brought down such attacks upon him (19).

At columns' length the secretariat, through all the committees, schools, instructors and propagandists, fabricated "Trotskyism". All the time Trotsky had under-estimated the role of the party and, since 1903, had defended conceptions which undermined its foundations and made him the "spokesman of petty-bourgeois influences". At the same time, he had always under-estimated the peasantry and defended a policy which risked breaking the alliance between workers and peasants. All his disagreements with Lenin in the past, on the pre-war party, on Brest-Litovsk, on the trade unions, were explained by these vicious beliefs. It was due to these same deviations that he advocated planning, the method of the autocrat, industrialisation to the detriment of the peasants, and that he worked to destroy from within the leadership which had unmasked him. Developed in

this way, "Leninism" became no more than an alibi to justify the current policy, the iron hand in the party and the concessions to the peasants.

The party had to be educated. A resolution of the Central Committee on January 17, 1925 decided to "^{tin}con-^{ue}" the work of un-veiling the anti-Bolshevik character of Trotskyism" and "introducing into the programmes of political education the explanation of its anti-Bolshevik character" (20). The revision of history itself was near. For the present, Trotsky was warned that, having by his attacks given to "anti-Soviet elements, vacillating elements" the "signal for re-groupment against the policy of the party", "if he ^{be-}longed to the Bolshevik Party an effective subordination was required, and not merely a verbal submission to discipline, and a total, un-conditional renunciation of all struggle against Leninism", in other words, all opposition. His place was no longer at the War Commissariat and in the Revolutionary War Committee: at his request, he had been relieved of these functions. Nothing but the opposition of Stalin, who was always circumspect vis-a-vis his allies, prevented Zinoviev and Kamenev from obtaining Trotsky's exclusion from the party. The young Communists of Leningrad were demanding it at the tops of their voices.

The Difficulties of the N.E.P.

The elimination of Trotsky from the government in 1925 was in sum only the final result of the defeat of the Opposition in 1923. But new difficulties were to provoke new conflicts. In 1923 and 1924 the leadership had maintained the New Economic Policy; it was in the development of its consequences that the root of the new oppositions is to be found.

In 1925 Russia had certainly emerged from the period of crisis which had reached its peak in summer 1923. The country was at work, the fields were being cultivated, the factory wheels were turning, the trains were running and trade was busy. None the less, there can be no illusions. Agriculture was still as backward as ever. No heavy industry had really been re-established into work. The prosperity of private trade did not conceal the the low level of life generally to which it contributed, because the 900 million roubles invested in private commerce earned 400 millions annually in interest. The class struggle continued. The peasant, to be sure, and his family, had enough to eat, but they were practically deprived of all industrial products, the prices of which were twice those of pre-war, while peasant production brought in as much as before, but also the worker earned and ate less than before the war.

Social oppositions were drawn in the cities between the recently-enriched trades and nepmen on the one hand, the Red administrators and specialists, and, on the other hand, the workers, but these oppositions were not less in the countryside. Some 3 - 4% of the peasants, the kulaks, the well-situated peasants, were the real beneficiaries of the Nep and the re-appearance of the market. They occupied one-half of the sown land and 60% of the farm machinery. They alone profitted from the sale of the surplus of their crop. 2% of the richest kulaks supplied 60% of the products which reached the market.

The difference was deepening between the kulaks and the small or middle peasants, who depended on them: in fact, it was to the kulaks that 75% of the 7.7 million hectares of land belonged, which were illegally rented by small or middle peasants seeking other resources. It was the kulaks who employed the 3.5 million agricultural wage-earners and the 1,600,000 day labourers, who received pay nearly 40% less than what the great landed proprietors paid before the war (21). The poor peasant was crushed by debt as always. He paid four times as much in interest as in taxes, and depended so entirely on the kulak that the party, for fear of the reactions of the kulaks, obstructed or prohibited the formation of unions of poor peasants which had been one of the central points of the policy of War Communism. The most serious consequence of the rise in the power of the kulaks was that they could now definitely influence the market. They could threaten all economic equilibrium by slowing down or cutting off the delivery of their surplus, as they pleased. The immediate interests of the kulaks, or, if we prefer, their capitalist tendencies, risked at every moment provoking a clash with the regime or, at least, forcing it to retreat. In 1925 the fall in food deliveries provoked a crisis of the food supply. It obliged the government to halt grain exports and to cancel orders for machinery and raw materials intended for industry, for lack of the means to pay for them. In this way the kulak slowed industrialisation down, subordinating it to their own requirements. No one thought of going back to the methods of War Communism. None the less the question was posed: must industrialisation depend exclusively on the satisfaction of the demands of the better-off peasants?

This, among others, was to be the theme of a high-level theoretical debate between two of the most distinguished minds and the most brilliant economists of the party, Bukharin and Preobrazhenski, the former co-authors of the "A.B.C. of Communism", former Left Communists, whose opinions since 1923 were widely divergent.

The Theses of Preobrazhenski

The work of Eugene Preobrazhenski is still practically unknown today. Only the first volume of his great work, "The New Economics", has appeared, and it was never translated from Russian before being pulped. None the less, it represented an initiative of the greatest interest. The analyses and conclusions which it presented provided the bases for any study of the development of an economy of the socialist type in an under-developed country, because the ambition of the researcher and scholar Preobrazhenski led him to try to apply the "categories" of Capital to the Soviet economy.

His analysis started from the situation of Soviet economy, where a workers' state, leading nationalised industry, was striving to develop a modern economy in the framework of a backward country. In general terms, he thought that the victory of the revolution in a backward, isolated country, or even in a group of countries which have not reached their maximum economic development, such as the United States, creates an extremely critical situation, because, after the revolution, the country loses the advantage which the capitalist system offers for its economic development, without having the immediate possibility of taking

advantage of the benefits of the socialist system, because its bases do not yet exist. It is in this way that the middle peasant, and especially the kulak, can take the liberty of cutting down their deliveries and of increasing their loans to small peasants or their personal consumption, to the extent that industry does not offer to them except at prohibitive prices the products which can induce them to sell. This "period of transition" is extremely dangerous, because the country which has made its revolution finds itself in a position of inferiority to "monopoly capitalism". This is how Russia sees its market tied to technologically backward industry, while it sells its agricultural products at the world market price, paying twice for what it saves for purposes of investment. He regarded this period, therefore, as "the most critical period in the development of the socialist State". He declared: "It is a question of life or death for us to get through this period of transition as quickly as possible, in order to reach the point at which the socialist system gives us all its advantages" (22); in the face of the danger of an alliance between the Russian kulak and international capital, he observes that the Russians were constructing socialism "in a lull between two battles".

Therefore the task of the economist was to analyse the laws of economic development in the transition period, laws which are "objective forces" comparable to the economic laws which govern capitalism and which can function independently of the consciousness which men have of them, as the expression of the system. The first law is that, in order to fight against monopoly-capitalism, the socialist system must practice "socialist monopolism", in the form of an extreme concentration of state economic authority over industry and external trade. In Russia, this law is imposed by the absolute necessity to end rural over-population, which in fact makes possible the blackmail which the kulaks are able to exercise on the state by boycotting industry, as well as by the absolute necessity to create, by the equipment of the country, that "new technological base", which alone can make possible a development of the whole economy. It makes necessary "the concentration of all the large-scale industries of the country in the hands of a single trust, i.e. the workers' state" (23), in order to carry on, on the basis of its monopoly, a price-policy which enables it to impose "another form of taxation on private production". This monopolism will inevitably have to be accepted, whatever may be the reservations of the leader about it: "The structure of our nationalised economy today often shows itself to be more progressive than our system of economic leadership" (24). Despite their resistances, the development of the productive forces through the agency of monopolistic state industry was to take place under what Preobrazhenski calls "the law of primitive socialist accumulation": "We live under the iron heel of the law of primitive socialist accumulation" (25). The term had been borrowed by Preobrazhenski from Sapronov and already been used by Trotsky in 1922. In a way it became the keystone of a system of ideas which were attributed to Preobrazhenski and has never been exactly understood. When it is used with reference to the "primitive capitalist accumulation" of which Marx described the workings in the early period of the capitalist system, it means that a backward country cannot industrialise

quickly by means of the resources of state industry alone, but must resort to accumulation obtained at the expense of funds normally devoted to wages and to the profits of the private sector. Consequently "the law of primitive socialist accumulation" obliges the workers' state to "exploit" the peasantry -- in the economic sense of the term -- by paying less than the value of the products, to give priority to heavy industry in the plans and, contrary to what would happen during the socialist period of the future, to manage the economy from the point of view, not of the consumer, but of the producer.

Of course, the functioning of the law in the transition period -- the duration of which Preobrazhenski estimate to be twenty years in the case of the victory of the revolution in Western Europe -- brought with it consequences in contradiction to the general trend of the development. The "exploitation" of the peasantry, showing that the incomes of the peasants inevitably grow more slowly than those of other wage-earners, cannot fail to provoke a political opposition, which must be overcome by the development of co-operative productive units and an attractive tax policy. The centralisation of the economy would result in the creation of an enormous "monopolistic" apparatus, with parasitic tendencies. This in its turn would play the role of a brake on the general development. It would create a layer of privileged people, administrators and technicians raising themselves socially above the working people. In a general way the transition economy generated social inequality, because privileges would definitively disappear only when the productive forces had reached their maximum development and all distinction between manual and intellectual work disappeared. Marxists who were conscious of ^{the} "objective laws" must hasten this development through the political activity of the party, the organisation of the working class. In Preobrazhenski the scholar and the economist gave way to the politician, the militant, the leader of the Opposition, and stressed that the parasitic tendencies of the monopolistic apparatus and the predominance of the viewpoint of the producer, acting with their own weight, must be corrected by the activity of workers operating from the viewpoint of the consumer. Obviously this pre-supposes that "real workers' democracy exists and that means to defend themselves against the state are guaranteed to workers. In a more general way, the general body of the contradictions led Preobrazhenski to conclude: "Our development towards socialism is confronted by the necessity to put an end to our ^{socialist} isolation, for reasons which are not only political but are economic, and to seek in the future a source of support in the material resources of other socialist countries" (26).

The viewpoint of Bukharin

Bukharin was to be the principal adversary of the thesis of Preobrazhenski. He described as generally "monstrous" what was claimed to be the "law of primitive socialist accumulation", which justified the exploitation of the peasants, endangered the alliance of the workers and the peasants and served only, in his opinion, to justify, through the centralisation of the economic apparatus of the state, the appearance, out of the proletariat, of a new class of exploiters. The fact is that the former prophet of the European Revolution had, as he admitted, lost some of his illusions when war communism failed. Deutsche

says that he had a shock when he discovered that "Bolshevism remained alone with the Russian peasantry", and that he turned towards the peasants "with the same fervour, the same hope and the same capacity for idealisation with which hitherto he had regarded the European proletariat" (27). This attractive explanation no doubt describes Bukharin's manner of existence. But his profound motives had their root in an analysis which we can counter-^{nearly}pose point by point to that of Preobrazhenski. The two men did not refrain from doing so.

In Bukharin's eyes, the failure of war communism taught a hard lesson. As Ehrlich says in his summary of Bukharin's thought, it is better "to rear the geese that lay golden eggs rather than kill them"... "The significance of Nep lay in utilising the economic initiative of the peasants, of the petty bourgeoisie and even the bourgeoisie and, consequently, in tolerating private accumulation. By doing so we place them objectively in the service of socialist state industry and of the economy as a whole." (28). The totalitarian conception of planning had been condemned along with war communism. From that time onwards "we occupy the posts of command and hold firmly to the key-positions; then our state economy, by different roads and sometimes even in competition with what remains of private capital, continues to become stronger and gradually absorbs the backward economic units - a process which essentially takes place through the market" (29).

In order to develop industry, it is necessary first of all to bring industrial prices down. This would offer the double advantage of preventing "monopolistic gains" and of obliging the Red industrialists to raise the productivity of their enterprises, while they sample the attractions again of the market. The rising demand from the peasants must be the driving force of this re-animation, but will be possible only if the peasants themselves are able to increase their incomes and to invest, which is prevented by the restrictions imposed on them by the Soviet state: "The wealthier layer of the peasantry and the middle peasants who want to become wealthier today are afraid of accumulating. A situation is created in which a peasant is afraid of covering his dwelling with a metal roof because he is afraid of being labelled as a kulak. If he buys a machine, he arranges to conceal it from the Communists... The better-off peasant is discontented because we do not let him accumulate or to hire wage-labour: on the other hand, the poor peasants who suffer from the rural over-population grumble because they are not allowed to hire themselves out" (30). Bukharin therefore argued that all the restrictions which weighed on the peasants should be lifted, because socialism would convince the peasants only if it had an attraction for them and seemed to them to be economically advantageous. Co-operation would be the bridge towards collective farms and socialism in agriculture, but it should be introduced prudently and at first limited to "the sphere of circulation". The enrichment of the peasant, the condition for the recovery of industry and for economic development, evidently carries with it the risk that there would develop in Russia a social class which would be the last vestige of capitalism. But the workers' state would be able, by means of the levers of command, to harmonise the gradual development

and regulate it by a progressive, direct tax, and especially to integrate the peasants, step by step, up to the kulaks, in the general development, because, said Bukharin: "To the extent that we are in rags, the kulak can defeat us on the economic field. But he will not do so if we let him deposit his savings in our banks. We will help him but he will help us" (31). In a long perspective - Bukharin spoke about the "kulak's grand-child" - the peasant world will level up socially and would pass to collective exploitation and a higher technological level, when the kulak would die out of 'euthanasia', as Ehrlich says.

Bukharin started from premisses totally opposed to those of Preobrazhenski, from the primacy of the problems of consumption and of the market, the reduction in industrial prices. he ended with an equally opposed conclusion, "the construction of socialism on a low technological base": "We must advance by very small, very small steps, dragging our great peasant cart behind us" (32). By a strange irony, this brilliant disciple of Marx re-discovered the tradition of populism through his study of the problems of the period of transition. Turning his back on the illusions of his youth, he replied to Preobrazhenski that the world-wide victory of the revolution would not pose the problem otherwise than in the "Russian" terms on the world scale, and that his more or less lengthy perspective must not influence the determination of the policy of the party. Above all, in the antagonism between cities and the country which was rising again in the spring of 1925 in a sharp form, he presented himself as the defender and, in a certain way, the spokesman of the peasants, fearing that the conditions of social equilibrium necessary in his eyes to economic development could be destroyed.

This came out clearly in the celebrated lecture which he delivered in the Bolshoi theatre in Moscow on April 17, in which, after summarising his favourite arguments about the progress of peasant accumulation, he declared: "To the peasants, to all the peasants, we must say: 'Enrich yourselves; develop your farms; do not fear that constraint will be imposed on you.' Paradoxical as this may seem, we need to develop the better-off peasant in order to help the poor and the middle peasants." (33). These words produced a scandal. He was to withdraw them formally, but that made no difference to the basis of his thought. His pupils, the group of the Institute of Red Professors, Stetski, who had suggested, from the same standpoint, that the monopoly of foreign trade should be abandoned, Boguchevski, who declared that from then on the kulak "is a decrepit social type of which few specimens only survive", Slepkov, who spoke of an enlargement of the Nep into a "Neo-Nep", were warned to be more prudent. But the Fourteenth Conference, while it criticised their excessive formulations, adopted the road which they had outlined, when it authorised the leasing of land and the employment of wage-labour and included in its programme, credits for agricultural machinery, reduction of industrial prices, abolition of controls on the prices of agricultural products and a reduction in the land tax. It seemed that the countryside and the richer peasants had triumphed. The reaction was now to come from a great city - Leningrad.

The Birth of the "New Opposition"

Leningrad - the old Petersburg of the old days - had since the time of the Tsars been the fortress of the modern industrial proletariat. It had provided the majority of the worker-militants who had been the heart of the party in 1917 and then had led the Soviets throughout the country and formed the political framework of the Red Army. Of course, the Leningrad party organisation cannot be compared with that of Petrograd in 1917 - 18, if only because of the role which its members had played, ^{in which} and ^{had} their blood been shed. None the less, the Leningrad party organisation retained original characteristics, which explain its intervention in 1925. At that date, out of 50,000 members and 40,000 candidates for membership in the province, 72% were workers and only 11% were officials. Nowhere else was the proportion of workers in the party so high. Moreover, 36% of them were metal-workers, traditionally the most advanced sector. It is, therefore, not surprising that Bukharin's theories aroused sharp opposition there. The engineering factories and naval shipyards were closed. There were several tens of thousands of unemployed, for whom industrialisation, and rapid industrialisation were a question of life and death, and who were not prepared to accept (according to the excellent summary by Deutscher) the thesis according to which it would be the mujik who determined the speed of industrial reconstruction, which would be "at a tortoise's pace".

Of course, the party was controlled by Zinoviev. His hard fist is well known and in 1923 had been quickly used to crush the opposition. But the "activists" of Leningrad themselves were aware of the discontent of the workers whom they had in their control. They had been exalted in official propaganda; they were proud of being the successors of the spear-head of the Bolshevik Party, of being the vanguard of the Commune of the North and were in the clouds with delight at their victory over the Opposition. They could hardly accept calmly a line which definitively minimised their present and future role and which undermined the very basis of their authority and made them the prisoners of the discontent of those whom they administered. In September the Old Bolshevik Zalutski, secretary of the party committee in the Leningrad province, gave a speech (soon reproduced in a pamphlet) in which he voiced the disappointment of the workers, who were asking whether it really was a proletarian revolution which had triumphed in October. He spoke of Thermidor by analogy with the French Revolution and of "degeneration" coming from ^{within} the very heart of the party's strength. He drew a comparison between Stalin and Bebel, the Pope of German Social-Democracy, the incarnation, like him, of the apparatus and the arbitrator of the conflicts between leftists and revisionists. Against the new right represented by Bukharin and his friends in the Institute of Red Professors, a new left appeared, distinct from the 1923 Opposition, little acquainted with the theoretical positions and scientific studies of Preobrazhenski, but undoubtedly linked to a proletarian layer in the party.

In reality Zalutski counted by himself for nothing. He was Zinoviev's man, and had not acted on his own initiative. He gave way to the pressure at the base of his organisation, to be sure, but with the approval of his "patron". His speech was the first public symptom of the breach which was coming for months between the triumvirs.

At the end of 1924 the General Secretary was already trying to reduce the exclusive hold

which his partners, Zinoviev and Kamenev, exerted over the respective organisations of their fiefs of Leningrad and Moscow. The Moscow secretary, Zelenski, was moved to Central Asia and replaced by Uglanov, who was brought from Nijni Novgorod. Most historians agree in thinking that only Trotsky's attack in "The Lessons of October" kept together the triumvirate when it was on the point of breaking apart and forced Zinoviev and Kamenev to defer until later the counter-offensive against what without doubt was a trespass into their reserved domain. Anyway, without making a lot of noise, Uglanov could take advantage of this enforced respite to "re-organise" the regional apparatus and to place reliable men in various branches: the ill-feeling which was still strong against the bureaucrats who had crushed the Moscow Opposition at the time of the discussion on "The New Course" unquestionably made his task easier. In Moscow the purge of the purgers took place under the eye of jeering former oppositionists, who saw in it a proper turn of things.

The first more serious conflict took place during 1925, when Stalin, supported by the majority, refused the proposal of Zinoviev and Kamenev to exclude Trotsky from the Politburo. Zinoviev went so far as to accuse Stalin of being "half a Trotskyist". The Young Communist organisation in Leningrad started a campaign against both Trotsky and the national leadership, and this ended when the adult in charge of the organisation was removed (Safarov). In the International, which Zinoviev controlled, other conflicts were ripening. In Germany, Stalin was supporting Thaelmann, who wanted a Communist candidate in the presidential elections, at all costs, against Maslov and Fischer, proteges of Zinoviev, who wanted a joint candidature with the Social-Democrats. Maslov and Fischer were beaten and removed from the leadership. Control of the International seemed to be slipping out of Zinoviev's hands.

Occasions for conflict multiplied from Spring 1925 onwards. At the Politburo Zinoviev and Kamenev opposed the suggestion to present at the Fourteenth Conference a resolution, drafted by Stalin, asserting, against Trotsky's "Permanent Revolution", the possibility of "building Socialism in a Single Country". A compromise was reached. But the economic crisis provided new occasions for friction. Zinoviev and Kamenev openly criticised the line which Bukharin defended. It seems likely that the most right-ist formulations were dropped under their pressure.

The debate did not become public and was not officially recognised, but Zinoviev touched upon it in speeches and pamphlets. In September 1925 he published a large collection entitled "Leninism". Some hundreds of pages were devoted to "Trotskyism" and the usual charges, after which he examined the problems which the Nep posed. He was clever enough to begin from a recent book by the White emigre Ustryalov, the book about which Lenin said that it pointed out to the Bolsheviki the dangers which threatened them by telling "its class-truth". The book was entitled "Under the sign of the Revolution" and was published in Manchuria. Ustryalov analysed the situation in Russia "where, among all the people, who are renewed, but are also

wearied by the storm, a wish for peace, for work and for submission has revived". He wrote: "Land-owners, Enrich yourselves! A Slogan of Life, a Slogan of Return to Health!", and concluded: "The slogan of growth and individualism is healthy like the working countryside, it is as inevitable as life and as imperious as history" (34). The words of this clever "class enemy" enabled Zinoviev to state that the main danger could come from "the un-settlement of the dictatorship of the proletariat by the petty bourgeois and anti-proletarian influences which work on the state apparatus, on the economy and even on the party" in a country where the population is predominately petty bourgeois and capitalism is partly re-born, "the petty bourgeois and the new bourgeoisie are bound by a thousand links to the international bourgeoisie" (35), where the State is stringly marked with bureaucratism, where heavy industry has not returned to its 1913 level, and all within the framework of capitalist encirclement.

He then used many quotations from Lenin to analyse the Nep as a strategic retreat in which the march to socialism takes place through the construction of a state capitalism. Zinoviev stressed that "the class struggle continues under the dictatorship and in particular under the Nep", especially in the countryside. There could be no doubt on that point: "The kulaks are the enemies of the soviet power", infinitely more dangerous than the Nepmen, because "3% kulaks in the countryside constitute an enormous force". Here the attack is still more direct on Bukharin and his disciples: "To try now to get people to believe that the kulak does not exist, to throw phrases about, like "The Kulak is not dangerous", is to suggest... that... we no longer consider the kulak to be an enemy... "We must not tolerate a shade of equivocation in this question of the kulak" (36). One chapter consisting entirely of quotations from Lenin finally demonstrates the invincible hostility of the founder of Bolshevism to the idea that socialism can be realised in one country alone: it is necessary to fight against "the bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology related to the epoch of Nep and to the growth in well-being of the country", because it is contrary to the task of the Communists, which is to consolidate the victory in their country and at the same time thus open the road for the workers of other countries. (37)

On September 19 and 20, 1925, he published in Pravda an even sharper article, despite the omissions on which the Politburo insisted, under the same form of a polemic against Ustryalov, and entitled: "The Philosophy of an Epoch". There he asserted: "The development of the Nep, at the same time as the delay in the world revolution, is pregnant with the danger of degeneration, among other dangers". He mentioned the workers' revolutionary struggle: "In the name of what did the working class, and the great masses of the people behind it, rise up in the great days of October? In the name of what did they follow Lenin into the firing line? In the name of what did they follow our banner during the first years? An the name of equality!... Today the mass of the people dream of equality... That is the key to the philosophy of our epoch." Thus, when he declared: "To be the authentic spokesmen of the people, we must place ourselves at the head of its struggle for equality" (38), Zinoviev gave clear notice that he was ready to

to confront, as the spokesman of the workers, Bukharin who had made himself that of the kulaks.

The Battle before the Fourteenth Congress (December 1925)

At first the conflict was confined to groups in the party and concerned with the theoretical position of Zinoviev. However, it quickly spread through the corridors of the apparatus before breaking out into full daylight. After Zalutsky had stated his position, he was relieved of his functions by the secretariat, which surprisingly was supported by the regional committee. Stalin appointed one of his own people in his place, a man called Komarov. The Zinoviev ^{group} was seized by the throat in its own fortress, and reacted: the regional committee rejected the candidate sent from the secretariat, and Komarov himself asked for his appointment to be cancelled, in view of the opposition which his nomination had aroused. In order to avoid being caught by surprise again, Zinoviev undertook a severe purge of the Leningrad apparatus, unhesitatingly eliminating anyone who seemed to have been won over by the secretariat. The leading characters were already confronting each other. When Frunze, the Commissar for War, died, he was at once replaced by Voroshilov, a supporter of Stalin, and Lashevich, a supporter of Zinoviev, was attached to him as assistant. The battle became sharper at the October meeting of the Central Committee. Each side accused the other of trying to violate the decisions of the April Conference. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Sokolnikov and Krupskaya called for a public discussion on the peasant question. The majority refused their request, contrary to the old traditions, but also in conformity with the precedent which they had introduced against Trotsky. The conflict nearly became public, when the Leningrad Pravda made repeated attacks about the peasant question, while the Communist Youth published a "Blue Book" consisting of articles by Bukharin, Stetski, Bogushevsky and others, with comments, illustrating what the Youth regarded as "the kulak deviation".

In fact, the members of the troika were fighting through intermediaries. The press and meetings in Leningrad and Moscow were hurling accusations at each others' heads, and motions of censure. Each regional secretariat was hastening to eliminate from posts of responsibility anyone suspected of being lukewarm about its own theses. Leningrad declared that the party must ensure "the maximum internal democracy". Moscow replied ironically about what Leningrad meant by that. Leningrad replied that Moscow were experts in the matter. Leningrad proposed a massive recruitment of workers, up to the point where they formed 90% of the party. Was this really a serious effort to loosen the grip of the apparatus? Moscow accused Leningrad of deviating from Leninism and wanting to dissolve and weaken the vanguard. The declarations from Leningrad on "the kulak danger" and about state capitalism, borrowed from Zinoviev, were characterised by Moscow as "alienation, separatism, hysterical screaming and lack of intellectual self-confidence". Leningrad replied by referring loudly to its proletarian character. Moscow, in turn, accused Leningrad of attacking the apparatus, and of supporting Trotsky. Trotsky for his part remained silent throughout, privately making fun of the spectacle provided by the two organisations of the same workers' party, which always voted unanim-

ously the resolutions against each other, and could not offer the least opposition, however isolated, in evidence of the democratic character of their discussions. For the victors of yesterday, who now were ready to fight one another, possessed in common the same confidence in effective "organisation" and the same "realism". This is the reason why, furthermore, we may rely on the version of Stalin, according to which he offered a compromise on the eve of the Congress. This would have opened to secretariat and the editorial bureau of Pravda to two Leningraders. But Zinoviev refused: no doubt he thought that he had lost enough at this game since the death of Lenin.

The Fourteenth Congress

Yet this was a strategic mistake, on the territory on which he had been engaged since 1922 and where Stalin was waiting for him. There could be no surprise at the Congress. Apart from the Leningrad delegation, tried and tested by Zinoviev's apparatus, all the others had been chosen, in the same way, from among the faithful backers of the secretariat. The outcome of the game was determined in advance. Yet Stalin did not want a break. For ^{the benefit of} public opinion among the "calm old men", the break-up of unity and the initiative for the attack must come from his opponents. It must be Zinoviev and Kamenev who let fly: then the leadership team would carry on without them, to its great regret. From the beginning, in Stalin's political report, he spoke of the questions in dispute without mentioning names. He expressed the wish that agreement be reached. As he said, in a desire for conciliation he would not even speak about the behaviour of the Leningraders. But perhaps Zinoviev still had some faith in the value of programmes and manifestoes. He was to open the battle in front of the delegates even when no discussion had officially been opened. For this purpose, he asked for, and received from the Congress, permission as a member of the Central Committee and of the Politburo to present a political counter-report. This usage had been frequent in the party in earlier times but had been applied only once since 1918.

Since he was henceforth in a minority, he had to speak about the "workers' democracy" which he was to demand. He denounced the fact that "everything should be chewed over by the Central Committee and fed ready into the party's mouth". He declared that one could not speak of democracy when all comrades did not have the opportunity to speak. But, for him, this was a ground full of snares. When he denounced the "state of semi-siege" in the party, the Congress kicked up a row. Someone shouted: "And what about Trotsky?" He replied that in 1923 the conditions were not ripe: "1926 is not 1921 and not 1923. Today we have different workers, we have greater mass activity and other slogans". This past had to be liquidated: "Without permitting fractions, while we maintain our old positions with respect to fractions, we should mandate the Central Committee to draw into the work of the party all the old groups in the party and to offer to them the possibility of working under the direction of the Central Committee". The Central Committee should be reorganised "from the point of view of a Politburo with full powers and a secretariat of functionaries subordinated to it" (38). Immediately after this, the storm broke.

The discussion at the Fourteenth Congress proves to be very interesting for the understanding of the problems of the party at this date. Nothing new was said about the kulak problem. The Congress re-asserted the "line", even though the rejection of a resolution drafted by Tchanin and Sokolnikov, stressing that the decisive factor in economic development resides in the capacity to develop agriculture and to integrate into the world market, enabled official historians later on to call this "the Congress of Industrialisation". What is important is that some of those who had helped to crush the Opposition posed some of precisely the problems which the Opposition had raised, that the methods employed to crush Trotsky were criticised by those who had initiated them, and, finally, that for the first time the problem of the authority and the role of Stalin came up for discussion.

Zinoviev confirmed that Lenin's Testament existed and described the conditions in which it had been shuffled aside. He recalled the warning against Stalin, in order to point out that, today, the danger was becoming concrete, in the alliance between the kulak, the nepman and the bureaucrat. He confessed that he had taken part, with Stalin, in the "coup d'etat" which, in the Young Communist League, had resulted in the recall and exile of the elected leaders. He told how the members of the Politburo, for years and in his presence, had formed a real fraction, meeting without Trotsky, who was a regularly elected member, in order to apply "group discipline" in normal meetings, which was ground for exclusion in the party.(39) To this Yaroslavsky replied that it was foolish to accuse the majority of forming a fraction, since, from the moment that it is the majority it cannot be a fraction. Other delegates spoke of the conditions which the apparatus imposed on the militants: Avilov-Glebov said that opponents kept silent "for fear of being sent to Murmansk or to Turkestan". Krupskaya declared that these postings created in the party the impossibility of speaking sincerely or openly... "If we draft resolutions on internal democracy, and at the same time create conditions such that a member of the party can be transferred to another post for having expressed his opinion, then all our good intentions about internal democracy remain on paper."

The intervention of Lenin's widow considerably raised the level of the discussion: it was one of the last occasion on which a Bolshevnik Congress was to agree to listen to someone who recalled to it what Lenin's thought really was. She protested strongly against the abuse of appeals to the authority of "Leninism": "I think that it is out of place here to shout that this or that is the true Leninism. I recently re-read the first chapters of 'The State and Revolution'... He wrote: 'There have been cases in history where the teachings of great revolutionaries have been robbed of their essence after their deaths. They have been converted into harmless icons, but those who honoured their name blunted the revolutionary edge of their teaching.' I think that this bitter quotation obliges us not to cover this or that of our conceptions with the label of Leninism, but that we should examine every question in its essence... For us, marxists, truth is what corresponds to reality. Vladimir Ilyitch used to say: 'Marx's teaching is invincible because it is true... The work of our congress must be to seek and to find

the correct line... Bukharin said here, with great emphasis, that what the congress decides will be correct. Every Bolshevnik regards the decisions of the congress as obligatory, but we should not adopt the position of the English jurist who took literally the popular English saying to the effect that Parliament can decide anything and even turn a man into a woman". The Congress was impressed up to that point, but it roared with fury at the crime of high treason against the conception which the speaker held of the history of Bolshevism, when she, who ever since Iskra, had been the working-class centre of the organisation, concluded: "We should not console ourselves with the thought that the majority is always right. In the history of our party, there have been congresses where the majority was wrong. For instance, let us recall the Stockholm Congress" (40). Krupskaya added to the grievances which were piling up against her this major grievance, that she reminded them of the merits of Trotsky, of the friendship which Lenin had for him, and that she denounced the inadmissible methods employed against him. It is significant that part of the discussion, - the most stormy part, - turned around Stalin himself, who was, for the first time, denounced as the presiding genius who had appeared to represent the apparatus, the incarnation of the forces leading to degeneration. Sokolnikov denounced the situation which, independently of Stalin's personality, meant that, from the moment when the same person was a member of the Politburo and head of the secretariat: "political divergences may express themselves, one way or another, in organisational measures". He threw out the warning: "If comrade Stalin wants to deserve the same confidence as we had it Lenin, then let him be worthy of it." (41). ~~Kamenev~~ sharply and courageously, but without emphasis, despite the hurly-burly, declared: "Because I have more than once said this to Stalin personally, because I have said it more than once to the representatives of the party, I repeat to the congress: I have formed the conviction that comrade Stalin cannot fulfill the function of re-unifying the general staff of Bolshevism... We are against the theory of one-man leadership. We are against the creation of a 'chief'!" (42) Bukharin's friend, Tomsky, at once protested that there did not and would not exist a "system with chiefs". Stalin's henchmen rushed to deny it - and this was a new, important factor. Kuibyshev declared: "In the name of the Central Control Commission, I declare that comrade Stalin, as general secretary of our party, is precisely the person who has been capable, with the majority of the Central Committee and its support, of gathering round himself the best forces of the party and putting them to work... On the basis of real experience, or a real knowledge of our leadership, I declare, in the name of the Central Control Commission, that this leadership and this general secretary are what the party need to go from victory to victory" (43).

Stalin and his people indeed intended to win these victories under the banner of socialism in a single country. Zinoviev introduced a compact bundle of quotations from Lenin, a general analysis, which ended: "The final victory of socialism in a single country is impossible... It will be decided on the international level." For Stalin's side, he had only one quotation, and that taken out of context, but he also had an imperturb-

able confidence in generalities and in the influence of scholastic reasoning on meetings of functionaries: "It is impossible to know what we are building. We cannot take one step forward without knowing the direction of the movement... Are we in the process of constructing socialism while we cast doubt on the victory of socialist construction, or are we working at random, blindly, preparing the ground for bourgeois democracy, while we wait for the international socialist revolution?" (44). Meanwhile Bukharin, with greater intellectual finesse, brandished the hated alternative of the permanent revolution, and pressured Zinoviev, who conceded that socialism could be constructed in a single country, but maintained that it could be finally achieved only on the world scale.

The congress closed with the adoption of the positions of Stalin and Molotov by 559 votes to 65. The Central Committee was renewed: four of Zinoviev's supporters, including Zalutsky, were not re-elected and Lashevich became an alternate member, while eleven former alternates disappeared. There were sixteen new full members and twenty-three hitherto unknown apparatchiki among the alternates, some of whom were at the beginning of a brilliant career: Gamarnik, Postyshev, Unschlicht, Lominadze and Andre Zhdanov.

The Leningrad Apparatus is Crushed

The Leningraders remained at the congress with the same forces as they had had at the opening. They were crushed, but they had not yet drunk the cup to its dregs. Stalin referred in his closing speech to their differences with Trotsky, and adopted the role of a champion of unity: "We did not agree with comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev because we knew that the method of amputation meant many risks for the party, that the method of amputation and of blood-letting - because they were calling for blood - is dangerous and contagious. Today you exclude one, tomorrow another and the next day a third. What will be left to us in the party?" He addressed the Leningrad leaders: "You call for the blood of Bukharin? We will not give you his blood. Know that!" (45) But at the same time, he put on in turn a threatening front: "We do not have to be distracted by these discussions. We are a party that governs; do not forget that". This was a language understood by functionaries who had day-to-day difficulties to deal with.

Stalin had spoken of reprisals, and they were not slow to come. Shortly after the congress, a delegation from the secretariat arrived in Leningrad, led by Molotov and including Voroshilov, Kirov, Kalinin, Stetsky and other first-rank leaders. The provincial committee was accused of having falsified the votes by excluding those from the Viborg district, which was hostile to Zinoviev. The delegation was accused of not having respected the decision of the provincial committee on party unity. The troops of the general secretary dismantled in a few days the apparatus which Zinoviev had put together. They held meetings of committees on every level; they paid special attention to the secretaries and altered promises of promotion with threats of being moved to Turkestan; they held the threat of unemployment over the heads of workers. Zinoviev's people were thrown into confusion; he had assured them that the position was impregnable. Soon their principal concern was to save their own skins. Moreover, many of them were

petty tyrants, whose fall or humiliation was seen by workers with a secret satisfaction. Zinoviev's protestations about violations of democracy were received with laughter. Already at the congress Mikoyan had pinned him down: "When Zinoviev had the majority, he favoured iron discipline. But now that he does not have the majority, he is against it". Victor Serge witnessed the unfolding of this operation. It took a fortnight. He has left us a bitter description of what went on, of the arguments of the emissaries, based on violence, on fear and on respect for fetiches: "The very low educational level of part of the audience and their material dependence on the committees ensured success in advance" (46). The Communist Youth held out longer than the local committees; their regional committee was able to reject a resolution approving the decisions of the congress and to issue an appeal for a special congress. It was then wound up by the envoys of the secretariat. At the March congress, six members of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth still defended the views of the Opposition. A Leningrader, Katalynov, denounced the struggle of "Stalinism" against "Leninism" (47). The official historian, Yaroslavsky, himself admitted that the conquest of the factory cells was no less difficult. But it was achieved, all the same, and Molotov could announce to the Central Committee on January 20, 1926, that, of the 72,907 members of the party who had been individually consulted, some 70,389, or 93%, said that they opposed the Opposition, and 2,244, some 3.2% were for. Zinoviev lost even his position as president of the Leningrad Soviet; his reign was ended. Serge Kirov, the apparatchik from Azerbaidjan, took the apparatus of the Northern Commune in hand and was to remain its first secretary until his death.

"Socialism in a Single Country"

Now that Stalin had been victorious, thanks to the apparatus, he could play at being a theoretician. His new book, "Problems of Leninism", repeated the statement that socialism could be constructed in one country alone, defining socialism as "... the possibility of resolving the contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry by the internal forces of our country, the possibility that the proletariat can take the power and can utilise this power to construct a wholly socialist society in our country, with the sympathy and support of the proletariat in the other countries but without the preceding victory of proletarian revolutions in other countries" (48).

He rejected as "anti-Leninist" the statement according to which the backward state of revolutionary Russia could be an insuperable obstacle to the construction of socialism in ^{the} USSR alone. Stalin reduced the obstacle, in the end, to one, the threat which the capitalist world held over her.

This in 1926, there appeared in a theoretical form the justification of what for years was to be Stalinist Russia, on the basis of the isolation of revolutionary Russia, the result of the delay in the world revolution. However, at that date it still remained necessary to convince all the Bolsheviks, those of the right as well as those of the Left, that they had to act as if the actual regime were indeed "socialism" and "the

dictatorship of the proletariat", as they had wished for them, as Lenin had taught them and for which they had made the revolution.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) Quoted in E.H.Carr, "The Interregnum", p. 356.
- (2) Pravda, January 30, 1924
- (3) Ibid.
- (4) Daniels, "The Conscience of the Revolution", Harvard U.P. 1960, p. 239, according to Bajanov.
- (5) Quoted in E. H. Carr, op. cit., p. 362
- (6) Bulletin Communiste, No. 77, 1924, pp. 639 - 642
- (7) Quoted by Daniels, op. cit., p. 238
- (8) "Bolshevik", June 5, 1924, quoted in Sorlin, "Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin", Paris, Colin, 1962
- (9) "Letter to the German Comrades", in "Bulletin Communiste" No. 57, 1921, p. 960
- (10) Rosmer, "Moscou sous Lenin" (Paris, Horay, 1953) pp. 287 - 288. The English-language edition is "Lenin's Moscow", publ. by Pluto Press, 1971, p. 213.
- (11) Quoted in K. S. Karol, "Visa pour la Pologne", pp. 45 - 46
- (12) Ibidem, p. 46
- (13) "Cahiers du Bolchevisme", No. 1, 1924, pp. 12 - 13
- (14) Ibid. No. 5, pp. 296 - 312 and No. 6, pp. 375 - 395
- (15) Ibid. No. 7, pp. 450 - 463
- (16) Ibid. No. 7, pp. 464 - 471 and No. 8, pp. 529 - 543
- (17) Internationale Communiste, December 20, 1921
- (18) Letter of Krupskaya, in "Correspondance Internationale", No. 1, January 7, 1925, pp. 4 - 5
- (19) "Cahiers du Bolchevisme", No. 12, pp. 751 - 753
- (20) Ibid. No. 12, pp. 753 - 759
- (21) Victor Serge, "Vers l'Industrialisation", pp. 486 - 487
- (22) Quoted in Deutscher, "The Prophet Unarmed", p. 235
- (23) Quoted by Ehrlich, "The Soviet Industrialisation Debate", Harvard U.P. 1960, p. 49
- (24) Ibid. p. 59.
- (25) Deutscher, op. cit., p. 235
- (26) Ehrlich, op. cit., p. 59

- (27) Deutscher, op. cit., pp. 231 - 232
- (28) Erlich, op. cit., p. 10
- (29) Ibid.
- (30) Ibid.
- (31) Deutscher, op. cit., p. 243
- (32) Ibid. 240
- (33) Quoted in Carr, "Socialism in One Country", Vol. 1, p. 258
- (34) Quoted in Zinoviev, "Le Leninisme", p. 186
- (35) Ibid. p. 189
- (36) Ibid. p. 233
- (37) Ibid. p. 290
- (38) Quoted in Carr, p. cit., p. 301
- (39) "Bulletin Communiste", No. 12, 1926, pp. 178 - 180
- (40) Ibid. pp. 181 - 183
- (41) Quoted in Daniels, op. cit., p. 268
- (42) Quoted in Carr, op. cit., p. 138
- (43) Ibid. p. 146
- (44) Quoted in Yaroslavsky, "Histoire du Parti Communiste de l'URSS", Paris, 1931, p. 425
- (45) Quoted by Sorlin, pp. 203 - 204
- (46) V. Serge, "Memoires d'un Revolutionnaire", Seuil, Paris, 1961, p. 209
- (47) R. T. Fisher, "Pattern of Soviet Youth: a Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol", Columbia U.P., 1961, p. 120
- (48) Stalin, "Problems of Leninism", International Publishers, New York, 1934, p. 65