

THE POLITICAL STRUGGLES

IN RUSSIA

(1921 - 1929)

from "Le Parti Bolsheviqne", by Pierre Broue
(Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1971)

Translated by John Archer, 1987

Chapter VII:	The Crisis of 1921, the Beginnings of the NEP and the Rise of the Apparatus	P.	1
Chapter VIII:	The Crisis of 1923: the Debate on the New Course	P.	20
Chapter IX:	The Interregnum: The New Opposition	P.	46
Chapter X:	The Struggle of the Unified Opposition	P.	71
Chapter XI:	The Right Opposition	P.	112

P R I C E:

From: "Le Parti Bolshevique: Histoire du P.C. de l'U.R.S.S.", by Pierre Broue, Editions de Minuit, 1971.

Chapter Seven. The Crisis of 1921: the Beginnings of the N.E.P. and the Rise of the Apparatus

The country which had experienced the first victory of the proletarian revolution and of the construction of the first workers' state seemed, three years later, to be near to decomposition. Entire regions were living in a state of anarchy near to barbarism, under the threat of bands of brigands. The whole economic structure seemed to have collapsed. Industry produced 20% in quantity of its prewar production, and 13% in value. The output of iron represented 1.6% and that of steel 2.4%. The production of oil and of coal, sectors least affected, represented only 41% and 27% of that of pre-war; in other sectors, the percentage varied between zero and 20%. Capital equipment was wearing out: 60% of locomotives were out of action and 63% of the railway tracks could not be used. Agricultural production had fallen in quantity and value alike. The area under cultivation was down by 16%. In the richest regions, the production of specialist crops for the markets or the rearing of cattle had disappeared and given way to poor subsistence cultivation. Trade between towns and the country had fallen to the minimum, to the level of requisitions or of barter between individuals.

At the same time, there was a black market, in which the prices were forty to fifty times higher than the legal prices. The standard of living of the population of the cities was well below what is strictly necessary to maintain life. In 1920 the trade unions estimated that the absolutely necessary expenditure represented amounts of money two and a half or three times higher than wages. The most privileged workers received between 1,200 and 1,900 calories; instead of the 3,000 which specialists regarded as necessary. For that reason the cities, starving, were emptied. In autumn 1920 the population of forty provincial capitals had fallen by 33% from the 1917 level, from 6,400,000 to 4,300,000. In three years Petrograd lost 57.5% and Moscow lost 44.5% of their population. By comparison with prewar, one lost half and the other a third of their inhabitants.

Four years after the revolution, then, Russia presented this paradox, a workers' state, founded in a proletarian revolution, in which, to borrow the expression of Bukharin, a veritable "disintegration of the proletariat" was taking place. In 1919 there had been three million workers in industry; in 1920 there were only 1,500,000 and in 1921 1,125,000. In addition, the majority of them were not really working. "Normal" absenteeism in the factories was 50%. The workers drew wages which were nearly unemployment pay. The trade unions estimated that half of what was manufactured in certain work-places was immediately sold by the people who made it. The same was true, which was more serious, in the case of tools, coal, nails and plant.

The workers had fallen in numbers, but perhaps had changed still more deeply in depth. Its vanguard, the militants of the underground period, the fighters in the revolution, the organisers of the Soviets, the generation of experienced cadres like that of the enthusiast-

ic youth, had left the factories en masse at the beginning of the civil war. The revolutionary workers were at posts of command in the Red Army, in the state apparatus and on every front across the vast country. The most active of those who remained formed the cadres of the trade unions. The most capable sought amid the general poverty that individual solution which would enable them and their families to survive. The workers of the towns went back to the country, with which their links had always remained alive, in hundreds of thousands. No vanguard remained, nor even a proletariat in the Marxist sense of the term, only a mass of declassed workers, a wretched, half-idle sub-proletariat. The regression was so deep and the decline into barbarism so real that the year 1921 was to see the re-appearance of the famine which, according to the official statistics, would affect 36 million peasants. Cases even of cannibalism were recorded.

The crisis of 1921: Cronstadt

The explosion took place at the beginning of 1921. To tell the truth, the crisis had been brewing since the end of the civil war. The peasants had chosen, between the two evils of the White Army and the Red Army, the lesser evil when they supported the second. But the requisitions became all the more intolerable when, after the defeat of the Whites, they no longer had to fear a restoration which would take back the land from them. So the peasant discontent rose without a break from September 1920 onwards. There were uprisings in Siberia during the winter and the food supply of the cities was threatened. It was the support of the peasants to which Makhno owed his ability to hold out with his men under arms. The crisis spread from the country into the cities. For long weeks in Petrograd a workers' wages amounted to half a pound of bread a day. In February strikes and demonstrations multiplied.

This is the agitation which formed the background for the Cronstadt insurrection. The discussion on the trade unions and the campaign by Zinoviev for "workers' democracy" fed fuel to the flames. The Party Committee in Petrograd tried to take advantage of the discontent of the sailors with the centralisation imposed by the political commissars by demanding the political leadership of the fleet. Zinoviev served to protect those who denounced "the dictatorship of the commissars". All these elements of agitation were germinating in a fertile soil at Cronstadt.

In 1917 the naval base had been the fortress of the revolutionary sailors. It was no longer. Here too the vanguard had been drawn off by the new tasks. The leaders of 1917 were no longer there. The Bolshevik, Rochal, had had his throat cut by the Whites in Rumania. The anarchist Iartchuk was in prison. Markin had been killed on the Volga. Raskolnikov, Dingelstedt and Pankratov were dispersed all over the country; they and the people like them were military commissars or chiefs, or commandants of Tchekas. Among the sailors, who were this deprived of their political leadership, there were numerous new recruits. Yet they retained a tradition, a prestige and a strength. No doubt oppositional political currents were at work among them. The influence of the Mensheviks could be

months would be needed to defeat them. Makhno still held out in the Ukraine. All these movements could spread with lightning speed if Cronstadt were to hold out for any length of time. Here and there, as at Saratov, peasants were attacking towns in order to slaughter the Communists there. The Bolsheviks could see White Terror on the horizon and the enemy could take advantage of the popular discontent to get a fresh foothold in Russia. They therefore decided to cut it to the quick.

At the Tenth Congress, Lenin stated: "Here we have a democratic petty bourgeois movement, demanding free trade and protesting against the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the non-party elements are serving as a stepping-stone, a support and a gangway for the White Guards" (8). As Radek writes, it was on "the monarchist counter-revolutionary conspiracy of the artillery commander, Kozlovsky, un-observed by the sailors" that the proclamations of the Bolsheviks laid the emphasis" (9). On March 5, in his capacity as chief of the Red Army, Trotsky summoned the mutineers to surrender unconditionally. They refused. Tukhachevsky prepared to attack with elite troops, consisting of Tchekists and cadet-officers of the Red Army. The operations were carried out quickly, because time was short before the thaw, which would isolate the fortress from the mainland. The fighting was to be costly in human lives. The attackers went into battle under the fire of the guns of Cronstadt. It began on March 7 and was over by the 17th. A certain number of the leaders of the insurrection escaped, including Petrichenko, who was to take refuge abroad, but the repression was severe. Cronstadters were shot in the streets and, according to Serge, others were to be shot in the coming months, hundreds of them, "in small groups" (10).

The insurrection was liquidated. The Thermidor which Lenin feared had taken place, but the Bolsheviks had defeated the Thermidoreans. None the less, very deep traces remained. The programme of the insurgents bore many reminders of the programme of the revolution of 1917, of which Cronstadt had been the spear-head. The demands which accompanied corresponded to the aspirations of many workers and peasants who were tired of sacrifices, weary, tired out and starving. "We have gone too far", Lenin was to say. None the less, the party had supported the leadership; the delegates to the Tenth Congress, including the Workers' Opposition, played their part in the attack and the repression. Lutovinov, Shliapnikov's right-hand man, who was in Berlin, categorically condemned the insurrection and approved the attack by the Red Army. None the less, it is clear that new relations were formed between the party and the working people: "Must we give way to the working people, who are at the end of their physical strength and patience, and are less enlightened than we are about their own general interests?", Radek asked himself some days earlier, in an address to the students of the military academy of the Red Army. He drew the conclusion: "The Party takes the view that it cannot give way, that it must impose its will to conquer on the exhausted working people, who are prepared to give way" (11). For the first time, in the name of its "higher consciousness", the party which until then had known how to convince the working people, had fought arms in hand against those who had expressed themselves in which it regarded as a re-

the moment of danger, he was accused of having threatened the Cronstadt men. The conference decided by acclamation to arrest him and Vassiliev. The rumour spread that the Communists from the party school were marching on the meeting hall. The conference closed in confusion, after having appointed a committee of five, which was soon enlarged by the co-option of ten newcomers and was to become the provisional revolutionary committee, with the sailor Petrichenko as its president. From that moment the revolution began against those whom the Cronstadt men called "the Communist usurpers" and the "commissarocracy". It seems have have drawn in behind it the majority of the Communists in Cronstadt (3).

The situation was extremely serious for the Bolshevik government. None of the leaders seems to have really believed that White Guards had any influence in the beginning of the affair, its propaganda immediately described the movement as having been inspired by White Guard officers and led by one of them, General Kozlovsky. This former officer in the army of the Tsar, who was serving in the Red Army, was head of the artillery in Cronstadt. He was a member of the city's defence committee after March 4, but does not appear to have in any way been an initiator of the movement. None the less, the experience of the civil war showed that spontaneous popular uprisings against the Soviet regime always ended up, despite the democratic character of their initial demands, by falling into the hands of monarchists and reactionaries. On March 3, the Cronstadt delegates tried to get a foothold in Oranienbaum and to win to their cause the 5th air squadron. If they had succeeded, Petrograd would have fallen in a few hours (4). Serge Zorin, the party secretary in Petrograd, revealed the preparations of the commander of a regiment, who was ready to go over to the Cronstadters and who was to declare, before he was shot: "I have been waiting for this moment for years. I hate you all, you assassins of Russia" (5). Despite the calls of the insurgents for a "third revolution", which obviously would bring them into opposition to the supporters of the Constituent Assembly, the White Guard emigres multiplied their advances and offers of help, which moreover were rejected. Petrichenko refused to receive Chernov until the situation was clarified (6). Miliukov, the Cadet leader, writes that the insurgents found the right road to bringing down the regime when - though this is untrue - they issued the slogan "Soviets without Communists".

Lenin stressed: "They do not want the White Guards, but they do not want our regime either" (7). It appears that he particularly feared that the sailors would play the role of a Trojan Horse. Cronstadt is a vital strategic position and it carried important heavy artillery. The island was blocked by ice, but if the insurrection were prolonged until after the thaw, the island could become the bridge-head for a foreign invasion at the gates of Petrograd. The first military initiatives were taken by the insurgents on March 2 and 3. The government seems to have thought at first of negotiating, but made up its mind to use force after several days of propaganda warfare by leaflets and by radio. There was nothing encouraging in the news from the rest of the country. Victor Serge says that over fifty centres of peasant insurrection could be counted. The socialist-revolutionary Antonov had collected a peasant army of 50,000 in the Tambov region, and

felt in the Petrograd factories, but not in the fleet. On the other hand, anarchists and social-revolutionaries without doubt increased their audience, which had never completely disappeared, and which was to reveal itself in the slogans of the insurrection. Yet it is impossible to attribute/^{to}a considered initiative by any particular group the first demonstrations of political opposition by the sailors. These arose directly from the workers' agitation in February.

One after another the Petrograd factories went on strike on February 24, 25 and 26. Meetings of strikers demanded the end of requisitions, the improvement of the food supply and the abolition of the labour armies. The last-named had been one of the slogans of the Mensheviks. Speakers frequently demanded that the powers of the Tcheka. On the 24th, the Soviet set up a defence committee consisting of three members under the leadership of Lashevich. It proclaimed a state of siege and gave full powers in each factory to other committees of three, the troiki, and appealed to officer-cadets for the maintenance of order in the streets. Delegates from the Cronstadt sailors took part in all the meetings in the principal factories and were to give an account of them to their comrades in the citadel. It is probably one such meeting which was held on board the Petropavlovsk, on February 28, in the presence of the commissars of the fleet. It adopted a fifteen-point resolution, calling for the re-election of the Soviets by secret ballot after a free election campaign, for the freedom of the press and of meeting for the anarchists and the Socialist parties and for the workers' and peasants' unions, for a meeting on March 10 at the latest of a non-party conference of the workers, soldiers and sailors of Petrograd, Cronstadt and the region, for the liberation of all the political prisoners of the socialist parties and of persons arrested for having taken part in workers' or peasants' movements, for the election of a commission to review the cases of all the detainees, for the abolition of the political education and agitation sections, for the equalisation of food rations for all workers, for the abolition of the detachments charged with seeking out and requisitioning stocks of grain, as well as of all the Communist units, the right of peasants to dispose of their land and of their animals, and for artisans to be free to produce what they please when they do not employ wage-labour (1). At this date there is nothing to permit this programme to be regarded as that of an insurrection. The Petrograd defence committee, anyway, did not see it in that light. It sent two orators to Cronstadt, the president of the executive, Kalinin, who had already been able to calm several strikes in Petrograd, and Kuzmin, the commissar of the fleet.

On March 1, these two leaders spoke, in the Place de l'Ancre, to some 6,000 sailors, soldiers and peasants. The meeting was held under the presidency of the Communist, Vassiliev, the head of the Cronstadt Soviet. They were frequently interrupted and did not succeed in convincing the assembly. By a very large majority, it adopted the Petropavlovsk resolution, and then unanimously decided to call a conference of delegates to arrange new elections to the Soviet (2).

It was at this conference, the next day, that the first serious incidents broke out. When Kusmin stated that the Communist Party would not let itself be driven out of power a

actionary sense. The lyrical agreement of 1917 belonged to the past.

With the insurrection and the repression at Cronstadt there also ended the dream of Muhsam and others, the unification of revolutionary Marxists with libertarians. After the mediation of the American anarchists, Emma Goldmann and Alexander Berkman failed, Cronstadt was to be the symbol of the henceforth irreconcilable hostility between these two currents in the workers' movement.

The N.E.P.

It was no doubt not by chance that the Cronstadt revolt co-incided with the adoption by the Tenth Congress of the Party of a radical turn in economic policy, known as the New Economic Policy and familiarly called "Nep". Contrary to superficial but frequently repeated statements, it was not Cronstadt which led to the adoption of Nep, but the same difficulties lie at the origin of the troubles and the turn. The roots of the events of March 1921 lie in the consequences both of the civil war and of its end. Moreover, we may believe that the turn to Nep. was taken too late, and that the Cronstadt insurrection was the price for this useless delay: most of the economic demands of the mutineers were included in the draft prepared by the Communist Central Committee during the first months of 1921 as measures inevitable in the new situation.

The Nep. is characterised by the abolition of measures of requisitioning, which are replaced by a progressive tax, by the re-establishment of free trading and the re-appearance of a market, by the return to a monetary economy, toleration of medium and small private industry and an appeal, under State control, for foreign investment. It is an attempt to break out of the vicious circle of war Communism and in a certain sense brings it to an end, because it starts from the necessity to encourage the peasant to supply the products of his labour, in order to open up the policy of industrial productivity necessary to support the market, in place of the necessity to drag out of the country what is needed to feed the towns. Historians have delighted in stressing the two contradictory lines in the explanations given by the leading Communists who presented the Nep. sometimes as a temporary retreat and sometimes as a return to the economic policy which had been sketched out in 1917 and which had undergone a detour imposed by the war. The fact is that it had the double aim of encouraging the peasant masses and of developing, with industry, the economic and social bases of the new regime. It was imposed by the repulse of the European revolution, as Lenin explained at the Tenth Congress: "A socialist revolution, in a country like ours, can finally be victorious, but on two conditions, first, that it be supported at the right moment by a socialist revolution in one or several advanced countries... We have done much to bring this condition about... But we are still far from its realisation. The other... is a compromise between the proletariat which exercises its dictatorship or holds state power in its hands and the majority of the peasant population" (12).

In fact it was the isolation of the Russian Revolution which led the Bolshevik leaders to advance the Nep., not the adoption of the Nep. which diverted them from the aim of the

European Revolution. For March 1921 is not only the month of Cronstadt and the Tenth Congress; it is also the month when the insurrectional strike was repulsed in Germany. This was hastily prepared, badly organised, imposed on the Central Committee of the German party by the Hungarian Bela Kun, the emissary of Zinoviev, utilised perhaps in the hope that a revolutionary success would reduce the necessity for the Nep. turn, but its defeat demonstrated that the tactic of the offensive, of short-term revolutionary perspectives, must be abandoned. Lenin and Trotsky were at first nearly alone, facing a hostile majority, but succeeded finally in convincing the delegates to the Third Congress of the International. Trotsky's speech concluded: "History has given the bourgeoisie a breathing-space... The victory of the proletariat immediately after the war was a historic possibility which has not been realised... We must take advantage of this period of relative stabilisation to extend our influence over the working class and to win its majority before decisive events arise" (13). Before the Communist parties take power, they must "win the masses". This is the task to which the Communist International summons them from 1921 onwards.

The monopoly of the Party

The turn of Nep., liberalisation in the economic sphere, was an important stage on the road of the political monopoly of the Bolshevik Party. The dictatorship had been justified, for better or for worse, by the necessities of the military struggle. Now it maintained and strengthened itself in the name of other dangers. The end of war Communism and the relaxation of constraints in fact restored their strength to social forces which until then had been held in check or even suppressed; the richer peasants, the kulaks, the new bourgeoisie, the nepmen, enriched by the recovery of trade and industry, the bourgeois specialists and technicians employed in industry.

The Bolshevik leaders were haunted by the fear that they would see these forces coalesce against the regime. The party was weary. Zinoviev declared without equivocation: "Many militants are tired to death; we are demanding an extreme moral tension from them; their families are living in painful conditions and the party or chance transfer them here and there. Inevitably a physical deterioration results" (14). The Smolensk archives reveal that at this date 17% of the party were tuberculous (15). Tens of thousands of the best militants were dead. The end of the war encouraged an influx of careerists and place-seekers, all those for whom a party card represented social insurance. In 1917 the strength of the party came from its old guard. In 1921 this old guard was decimated and used up, as were its connections with an ardent, combative, generous and enthusiastic working class. A real revolutionary proletariat no longer existed. The proletarians who remained were turning away from the party and its historic perspectives, to cling to the search for a problematic individual solution. How could the Bolsheviks accept free confrontation of ideas and free competition in the elections to the Soviets, when they knew that nine-tenths of the population were hostile to them, when they believed that their overthrow would lead to bloody chaos, to an even

deeper descent into barbarism and to the return of the reactionary regime of the pogrom-ists?

Never since June 1917 had the Mensheviks had so much influence in the factories and the unions. For the first time they represented a real force among the workers, as well as the anarchists. The promises of legalisation were therefore not kept. In fact the organisations which competed with the Party were prohibited, if not in law. The journal of the Left Social-Revolutionaries disappears in May 1921. Sternberg managed to flee into exile, but Kamkov and Karelin disappeared in the jails, like Spiridonova in October 1920. There were still many anarchists at liberty in February 1921 to attend the funeral of Kropotkin, but after Cronstadt they were arrested en masse. Makhno managed to get away to Rumania and Volin, after a hunger strike, was allowed to go abroad. Despite Kamenev's promises, the aged Aaron Baron remained in prison, while his wife was shot in Odessa. In autumn 1920 Martov received a passport for Germany and was to stay there. Dan was arrested after Cronstadt as was to be allowed to emigrate later. From February 1921 the Menshevik journal Sotsialistichesky Vestnik (Socialist Messenger) appears in Germany, but for several years was to be distributed nearly freely in Russia.

Many of the former opponents of the Bolsheviks turned towards them and sometimes met with a warm reception. Semenov, later known as Blumkin, joined the secret service, where there was a place for this former terrorist. The Mensheviks, such as the old "Economist" Martynov, Maisky, Vyshinsky, Troyanovsky, all came over. The fact that the party had a monopoly of political power meant that it became the sole organism within which divergent class pressures and political disagreements could express themselves.

The Tenth Congress

These new conditions weighed on the party which had to face up to two kinds of contradictory imperatives. On the one hand, it could not admit, without losing its character as a Communist Party, to becoming the closed battle-ground of opposed social forces, as its position as the sole party implied. But, as the Party in power, it could not continue to govern the country without internal democracy, like a military unit, without turning its back on its own aims. It felt obliged to filter new recruitments carefully, but at the same time it had to take care not to isolate itself or to fall back into a kind of free-masonry of old comrades, cut off from the new generations which for some years had been growing up under the new regime. It was because the party found itself grappling with these contradictory necessities that it adopted solutions which only later were to reveal themselves as contradictory and even mutually exclusive, while nearly all the leaders and the militants regarded them as complementary. This explains that the Tenth Congress, which its contemporaries regarded above all as the Congress of workers' democracy recovered, became in the years that followed the Congress which declared and prepared for monolithism by prohibiting fractions.

It is improbable that the influence of Zinoviev at the Tenth Congress was due to the efforts he had made previously in his campaign for the restoration of workers' democracy.

On the contrary, he generally enjoyed the solid reputation of being hard-fisted, never embarrassed, precisely, by democratic scruples. Several authors tell that one of the ways to raise a laugh in a working-class audience at the time was to read out a choice of good quotations about democracy from Zinoviev. But it is significant that such a man should choose this war-horse. The incidents concerning Tsektran, the development of the trade union discussion, had amply demonstrated that there were numerous militants and party leaders who believed, with Preobrazhensky, that "the extension of the possibilities of criticism is precisely one of the conquests of the revolution" (16). This was the perspective within which Trotsky likewise had demanded that a "free debate" be opened within the party on the trade union question.

The Tenth Congress opened on March 8. The guns at Cronstadt were roaring. More than two hundred of the delegates were to leave the hall, to go to take part in the assault. It was in no way surprising that, in these conditions, the second day was marked by a very serious warning from Lenin. Speaking of the Workers' Opposition", he said: "A slightly syndicalist or semi-anarchist deviation would not have been very serious, because the party would have recognised it in time and would have set about dealing with it. But when this deviation takes place within the framework of a crushing preponderance of the peasantry in the country, when the discontent of the peasantry against the proletarian dictatorship is growing, when the crisis of peasant agriculture is nearing its limit, when the demobilisation of the peasant army is throwing out hundreds and thousands of broken men, who cannot find work, who know no other trade but war and are recruits for banditry, we no longer have the time for discussion on theoretical deviations. We must say frankly to the Congress: we will permit no more discussions on deviations: they must be stopped... The atmosphere of controversy is becoming a real danger to the dictatorship of the proletariat" (17). Lenin more than anyone else seems to have understood the perilous character of the situation. As he sought to justify the condemnation of the Workers' Opposition, he used arguments which reveal an extremely pessimistic appreciation: "If we perish, it is of the greatest importance to preserve our ideological line and to give a lesson to our successors. We must never forget this, even in desperate circumstances" (18).

However, the danger also comes, beyond all question, from the military regime in the party. Bukharin presents the report on workers' democracy, on behalf of the Central Committee (19). He began by recalling that one of the contradictions of war Communism, thanks to the introduction into organisation of "militarisation" and "extreme centralism", which were absolutely necessary, had been to end up by "creating a highly centralised apparatus on the basis of an extremely backward cultural level of the masses". Such a regime was no longer desirable or practicable. He declared, "We must devote our energies in the direction of workers' democracy and achieving it with the same force as we used in the previous period to militarise the party. By workers' democracy within the party, we must understand a form of organisation which ensures to every member

an active participation in the life of the party and in the discussion of all the questions which are posed there and of their solution, as well as active participation in building the party". On the thorny question of nominations, he stated categorically: "Workers' democracy excludes the system of nominations, and is characterised by the eligibility of every organism from top to bottom, by their responsibility and the control which is imposed upon them". The methods of work in workers' democracy must consist of "wide discussions on all the important questions, absolute freedom of criticism within the party and the collective elaboration of the decisions of the party."

The solution which Bukharin proposed recalls the definition of democratic centralism in the constitution of 1919: "The decisions of the leading organisms must be applied quickly and exactly. At the same time, discussion in the party of all the debated questions in the life of the party is completely free until a decision has been reached". His solution explains the spirit of democratic centralism, within the framework of workers' democracy as the search for "a constant watch by the public opinion of the party on the work of its leading organisms, and a constant interaction between these and the party as a whole in practice, at the same time as deepening the strict responsibility of the appropriate committees of the party with respect, not only to higher organisms, but also to lower organisms". The document which Bukharin presented in this way won the unanimous support of the delegates to the Congress, because it was in fundamental harmony with a general aspiration, which was expressed as well by Bukharin and his friends as by Zinoviev and his supporters and by Shliapnikov and the other oppositionists.

It was the principal resolution, and it bore the mark of its relevance to the immediate circumstances. It was in the name of workers' democracy that access to the party had to be denied to careerists, intriguers and class enemies: one year's probationary membership, without the right to vote, was henceforth imposed on candidates not of working-class origin. The document took up again something which the Eighth Congress had hoped: it proposed that a decision be systematically enforced so that "workers who have been engaged for a long period in the service of the Soviets or of the party must be employed in industry or in agriculture, in the same conditions of life as other workers". This showed that the Bolshevik leaders were aware of the danger of degeneration implied by keeping people permanently in administrative jobs and by the differentiation of functions between workers and those who govern over workers (20). In this way the party was showing its determination to remain a workers' party, leading party as it might be.

None the less, it was important, in the eyes of the leading Bolsheviks, to set the bounds of this democracy which they were unanimous in demanding, in view of the pressing dangers. On March 11 Bukharin announced his intention of moving a resolution on "party unity"; this was clearly directed against the supporters of the Workers' Opposition. In the end, Lenin undertook the introduction of two motions on the last day of the Congress, March 16; one condemned the programme of the Workers' Opposition as an anarcho-syndicalist deviation, stating that its views on the role of the trade unions in the management of industry

were "incompatible with membership of the party". The other drew attention to what it called "signs of factionism" and "the appearance of groups with their own programme and a tendency to turn in upon themselves to a certain extent and to create their own group discipline". Such a situation weakened the party and encouraged its enemies: the motion reminded that militants that "anyone who expresses a criticism" should "take into account of how they do so and of the situation of the party surrounded with enemies" (21). There too the group of Shliapnikov and Kollontai was all the more clearly the target, in that the resolution laid down, under pain of exclusion, that groups formed around specific platforms must be dissolved immediately. Article 4 laid down that all the discussions on the policy of the party, discussions which it was forbidden to carry on in "factions", had their place, in return, in the meetings of the regular organisms of the party. It laid down: "For this purpose, the Congress decides to publish a periodic discussion bulletin and special periodicals". Article 7 foresaw that, for the application of this resolution, the Central Committee was to receive the power to exclude people from the party, including its own members, provided that the decision was taken by a two-thirds majority: it was not to be published.

This resolution was to be the keystone of the subsequent transformation of the party and of the disappearance of the workers' democracy, to which it proposed only to determine a framework. Only twenty-five delegates voted against it. Some expressed their reservations, including Radek in particular, who was uneasy about giving the power to the Central Committee to expel, though he voted for it none the less, in view of the threats to the regime: "In voting for this resolution, I believe that it can well be used against us, yet I support it... At the moment of danger, let the Central Committee take the most severe measures against the best comrades. Even if it is mistaken! This is less dangerous than the wavering which we can observe today" (22). Moreover Lenin's attitude seemed re-assuring. It was known that he was proposing an emergency measure, justified by the gravity of the situation. It was known that he thought "that the most vigorous fractional activity is justified... if the disagreements are really deep and if the correction of the false policy of the party or of the working class cannot be obtained any other way" (23). When Riazanov proposed the adoption of an amendment which would prohibit in the future the election of the Central Committee on the basis of lists of candidates supporting different platforms, Lenin vigorously opposed him: "We cannot deprive the party and the members of the Central Committee of the right to turn towards the party if an essential question raises disagreements... We do not have the power to suppress that" (24).

The Congress had already appointed the Central Committee before it voted on these two resolutions, precisely on the basis of the platforms which had been submitted to the vote of the delegates at the time of the debate on the trade union question. The initiative for this procedure had come from Petrograd on January 3, evidently inspired by Zinoviev, who had seen in it a convenient way of eliminating certain of his opponents and, in particular, the three secretaries who had voted for the Trotsky-Bukharin plat-

form. Trotsky had protested against what he regarded as an infraction of the "free discussion" which had been opened and obliged all the candidates and participants to identify themselves with and actually form groups on a particular point. But at the Central Committee of January 12, he was defeated by 8 votes against 7. For this reason the composition of the Central Committee reflected important changes. It included only four supporters of the theses of Trotsky and Bukharin; Krestinsky, Preobrazhensky and Serebriakov, the three secretaries, were not re-elected. In that way, it seems, they paid for the liberalism which they had showed towards the Workers' Opposition which now stood condemned, and for their firmness in the face of the demagogic attacks of Zinoviev. Andreyev and Ivan N. Smirnov, who had signed the Trotsky-Bukharin platform, also disappeared. All were old militants, pillars of the Central Committee during the Civil War, and well known for their independence of mind. Those who replaced them were also Old Bolsheviks; the fact that nearly all of them had come into conflict with Trotsky in the past and that they were linked with Stalin had hardly any significance at this period: Molotov, Yaroslavsky, Ordzhonikidze, Frunze, Voroshilov became full members, and Kirov and Kuibyshev became candidate members. Zinoviev replaced Bukharin in the Politburo. Bukharin became the third candidate member. Molotov was elected "chief secretary" to the Central Committee, and was to be assisted in his new-task by Yaroslavsky and Mikhailov. Despite their protests and at the insistence of Lenin, Shlyapnikov and Kutuzov, supporters of the Workers' Opposition, were elected.

The Rise of the Apparatus after the Tenth Congress

The days which immediately followed the Tenth Congress, in the period of crisis marked by the laborious beginnings of the NEP, did not see the resolution on workers' democracy expressed in deeds. The new secretariat had a firmer fist than the former one. The Tsektran - what a paradox - was re-established with its privileges. The secretariat created a special section for "the direction and control of transport". A conference of the party fraction in the congress of the trade unions voted, on May 17, for a resolution which laid down that the party "must make a special effort to apply the normal methods of proletarian democracy, especially in the trade unions, where the choice of leaders must be left to the masses of trade unionists themselves" (25). Riazanov was responsible for this proposal and found himself excluded from every trade union position. Tomsky, who had not opposed the proposal, was relieved of his functions on the central committee of the trade unions, at the recommendation of a special commission headed by Stalin. The majority of the study circles which were founded in the course of the year were wound up nearly at once on various pretexts. There were strong reactions, even in the leading bodies of the party. In "Pravda" Sosnovsky vigorously criticised the way in which the apparatus was doing its best to suppress differences: "When the best elements in an organisation find that racketeers are not disturbed, while those who have fought them get transferred from Vologda to Kersch or vice versa, that is when, among the best comrades, these feelings of despair and apathy, or of anger, begin to spread, which are the material basis for all the possible "ideological" opposition

groupings... At the centre they begin to be interested in the question only when a grouping appears". He declared that the Communist militant is one who brings to his task "creative fertility of mind" and "who knows, by his example, to set the masses afire". He served that today this kind of militant is not well regarded by the party cadres, because "he is insufficiently respectful of bureaucratic paper-work". He voiced accusation that "in mechanically and superficially undertaking to "liquidate intrigues", we have stifled the true Communist spirit and have educated only the "party card holders" (26).

The reaction of this Old Bolshevik, in the central organ of the party, shows how vigorously the democratic tradition remained. The worker, Miasnikov, a Bolshevik since 1906, publicly demanded the freedom of the press for all, including monarchists. Lenin tried to convince him in private correspondence. Miasnikov was excluded only after repeated acts of indiscipline, and even then on the promise that he would be taken back at the end of a year if he observed party discipline. In August Shliapnikov had criticised a decree of the presidium of national economy, in inadmissible terms in a cell meeting, but the Central Committee refused to give Lenin the two-thirds majority of the votes necessary to the exclusion which he demanded, on the basis of article 7.

The Workers' Opposition had appealed from the decisions of the party to the International in a letter known as "the declaration of the 22", and were charged with grave indiscipline. A commission made up of Dzerzhinsky, Stalin and Zinoviev was to demand at the Eleventh Congress the exclusion of Shliapnikov, Medvediev and Kollontai, but the Congress refused.

None the less, these resistances themselves indicate the growing pressure on the militants, a growing centralisation in the party, the apparatus of which was establishing itself and growing, despite the resolutions of the Tenth Congress, in weight and authority. If the Central Committee refused to use the tremendous privilege which enabled it to get rid of a minority in its ranks, that perhaps, among other reasons, is because its members felt that little by little the exclusive authority which they ought to enjoy in principle was gradually diminishing. The Central Committee met no more frequently than every two months. Its powers were being more and more taken over from it by the Politburo, which was increased to seven in 1921.

The influence of those who controlled the party apparatus was growing within this body. The party apparatus continued to increase numerically and the multiplication of full-timers was justified by the need to mobilise the members, to control the organisations and to stimulate agitation and propaganda. In the month of August 1922, there was a count of 15,325 full-time officials of the party, 5,000 of whom were employed at the level of districts or factories. The secretariat of the Central Committee that year completed the index of the members which thenceforth it controlled and mobilised. Under the supervision of the Central Committee secretariat there function^{ed} a bureau for appointments, entitled Utchaspred, which had been set up in 1920 to ensure during

the civil war the transfers of Communists in sensitive sectors and their mobilisation. The necessities of rapid action led it very quickly, as we have seen, to intervene in the nominations of party officials, and to replace an official which it had decided to transfer. The intervention of the Organisation Bureau might be necessary for the highest posts, but Utchraspred made the nominations to lower-rank posts under the influence of "recommendations" by the secretariat of the Central Committee, the authority of which extended through the whole country: in 1922 - 1923 it was to effect more than ten thousand nominations and transfers of this kind. These included forty-two posts of secretaries of provincial committees as well as appointments to important posts in the administrative or economic administration, over the heads of the electors or of the heads of the commissariats concerned. When Krestinsky and Preobrazhensky were the secretaries, regional bureaux of the party were created, which acted as links between the party secretariat and the local organisations, and their authority constantly grew.

In 1922 there was set up the section of organisation and instruction, which was attached to the secretariat. This was to become one of its most effective instruments. It had a corps of "leading instructors", who acted as real inspectors-general, visited local organisations, made reports, controlled the general activity and selected cadres. The section could equally delegate important powers to officials who were known as the "plenipotentiaries of the Central Committee", and who, in its name, exercised a right to veto any decision by a party body: this was obviously an effective way to bring to heel an excessively stubborn provincial or local committee.

To be sure, successive oppositions had demanded the formation of control commissions, precisely in order to fight against the abuse of authority by the heads of the apparatus. The Workers' Opposition saw in them a guarantee against the bureaucracy. A complicated system provided for the election of the provincial committees by the local organisations and for the elections to the Central Control Commission by the provincial congresses. But in reality the elected members lacked authority in relation to the representative of the permanent apparatus. The task of purging evidently enforced on them a close collaboration with the staff of the secretariat which centralised information, and finally the Central Control Commission subordinated the others to itself.

Immediately after the Tenth Congress the "purge" was particularly severe: 156,836 members were excluded from the party, 11% for "indiscipline", 34% for "inactivity", 25% for "minor crimes", such as drunkenness or careerism, and 9% for serious faults such as swindling, corruption or lying. Many dubious elements were eliminated in this way, but it is likely, as Shliapnikov and his friends were to claim, that the oppositionists also were hit or threatened, by an interpretation of the resolution condemning the Workers' Opposition which was often too broad. In the course of 1922, it is clear that the party apparatus was moving towards high-handed treatment of the organisation as a whole and, through it, over the life of the entire country, and was substituting itself, in brief, for the party, in the same way as the party had substituted itself for the Soviets. That is clear from the development of the Control Commissions

which became an appendage of the bureaucracy which it was their task to combat. This is even more true in the case of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (Rabkrin), of which Lenin seemed to have had great hopes. These commissions of inspections were originally intended to ensure workers' control over the functioning of the State apparatus. Under the authority of the commissar for the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, Stalin, they became annexes of the Control Commission, which itself was in close contact, not only with the secretariat, but with the former Tcheka, re-baptised the G.P.U.

In this way there took place a real transfer of authority in the party at all levels, from the Congresses or Conferences to the committees, whether elected or not, and from the committees to their full-time secretaries. The persistence and the spread of the practice of nominations, contrary to the resolutions of the Tenth Congress, made the secretaries responsible, not to the party base, but to the apparatus and the secretariat. A real hierarchy of secretaries came into existence; it was independent and it showed a very well-developed mutual solidarity. Sosnovski describes in the following way those who were beginning to be called the apparatchiki, the people of the apparatus: "They are neither hot nor cold. They take note of every committee circular... they make all their arithmetical calculations to meet the activity that has been called for, they tailor the whole activity of the party to fit the mathematical framework of their carefully drafted reports; they are satisfied when every point has been covered and when they can satisfy the centre that its instructions have been scrupulously fulfilled. Around party workers of this type, there falls a rain of every kind of plan, programme, instructions, theses, enquiries and reports. They are happy when calm reigns in their organisations, when there are no 'intrigues', when no one fights them" (27). Above the ordinary party members, simple working people, there were already in the party the functionaries of the Soviets, the army and the trade unions. Now there was a higher layer, because the apparatchiki are those who have access to all the responsible posts, those in the offices and in the pyramid of the secretaries.

However, at the Eleventh Congress, at which Lenin was not present, except at the opening debate, the party resisted. Zinoviev's speech was full of prudent allusions to "cliques" and to "groups", which revealed a very wide-spread oppositional state of mind. A proposal to do away with the local Control Commissions was loudly applauded and obtained 89 votes against 223. A resolution, which was to be carried, placed its finger on the root of the trouble by declaring: "The party organisations are beginning to be systematically buried under an enormous apparatus... which, developing gradually, has begun to make bureaucratic incursions and to absorb an excessive part of the resources of the party" (28). But this enormous apparatus seemed still to be anonymous. It had no recognisable face. The same Congress approved the statement by the chairman of the Congress: "Now we need discipline more than ever; it is necessary because the enemy is not as visible as before. Now there is a respite, there appears among us the wish to be freed from the yoke of the party. We are beginning to think that such a moment has arrived, but it has not arrived" (29).

For that orator, that moment never was to arrive. In fact he was part of a group of apparatchiki whose influence did not cease to grow and nearly all of whom occupied decisive posts already in 1922. Their names were still little known. There was the constellation of secretaries of the Regional bureaux, Yaroslavsky, regional secretary in Siberia in 1921, party secretary in 1922, who went on to the Central Control Commission. There was Lazare Kaganovich, secretary in Turkestan, who in 1922 became responsible for the organisation and education section of the secretariat. There was Sergei Kirov, who had been secretary in Azerbaidjan and became a candidate member of the Central Committee in 1922. There was Stanislas Kossior, who followed Yaroslavsky in Siberia, Mikoyan, secretary in the North Caucasus, who joined the Central Committee in 1922, Ordjonikidze, secretary in Transcaucasia who had been on the Central Committee since 1921, Kuibyshev, secretary in Turkestan, party secretary in 1922 and president of the Central Control Commission in 1923. Their chiefs were Molotov, chief secretary of the party since 1921, Soltz, president in the same year of the Central Control Commission and, above all, Stalin, member of the Politburo, head of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and an influential member of the Organisation Bureau.

All the high officials were Old Bolsheviks, but they formed a characteristic group. Numerous personal links united them. Kaganovich, Molotov and Mikoyan had all had important jobs in Nijni-Novgorod at the same time, where a young apparatchik, Zhdanov, was to follow them. Ordjonikidze and Stalin, both Georgians, had been linked in the underground. Kuibyshev attached himself to Stalin during the Civil War. Stalin, Molotov and Stolz were together in the editorial committee of Pravda before the war. Moreover, they all had a common outlook, a conception of existence and activity which distinguished them from the other Bolsheviks: among them there was neither a theoretician, nor an orator, nor even a mass leader, but capable, efficient, patient men, discrete organisers, men of offices and the apparatus, prudent, routinists, workers, obstinate, aware of their importance, definitively men of order. It was Stalin who united them and brought them together. It was around him that they formed a fraction, which did not speak its name, but which acted and extended its network.

Everything was ready in 1922 for the "rule of the bureaux". Nothing was lacking but "the right man in the right place". This was Stalin at the post of General Secretary, where he could gather into his hand the threads woven in preceding years. He was the incarnation of the new power of the apparatus. This would be an accomplished fact after the Eleventh Congress. Can we believe the delegate who recorded in his memoirs that the candidature of Ivan Smirnov had been unanimously supported, but that Lenin objected to his being appointed, on the ground that he was indispensable in Siberia? Can we also believe that Lenin took twenty-four hours to reflect before he proposed Stalin (30)? Can we imagine an intervention by Zinoviev, whom a personal hostility to Trotsky brought closer to the Georgian and who regarded Smirnov as a personal friend of Trotsky? These are pure conjectures. But the fact remains: the small paragraph

in Pravda on April 4, 1922, announced the nomination of Stalin as General Secretary and opened a new period in the history of the Bolsheviks and that of the peoples of Russia. The event passed almost un-noticed. Preobrazhensky, alone at the Eleventh Congress how one man could accumulate within his grasp functions and powers of this magnitude, in a Soviet regime and a workers' party.

With NEP a new era had opened for the Russian Revolution. It renounced, never to come back to it, the heroic enthusiasm of the apocalyptic years. During the slow economic recovery, the patient reconstruction which the turn of 1921 made possible, there sounded the words of Lenin, which had really closed a chapter: "Carried away by the wave of enthusiasm, we counted, we who had aroused popular enthusiasm, at first political and then military, we counted on being able to carry out directly, thanks to this enthusiasm, the economic tasks which were as great as the general political tasks, as the military tasks. We counted - or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, we thought, without sufficient calculation - that we would be able to organize the production and distribution of products by the state, by the express orders of the proletarian state, in the Communist manner. Life has demonstrated our mistake... It is not by relying directly on enthusiasm, but by means of the enthusiasm engendered by our great revolution, giving free play to personal interest, personal advantage, applying the principle of commercial profitability, that to begin with in the land of small peasants we must construct solid bridges to socialism, passing by way of "state capitalism" (31).

Some years later, Bukharin the tender, the ardent, had in his turn to declare the new feelings which the turn had produced in him: "In the fire of self-criticism, the illusions of the period of childhood are destroyed and vanish without trace, the real relations emerge in their sober nudity and the proletarian policy assumes the character - sometimes less emotional but also more assured - of a policy which is very close to reality and, also, modifies reality. From this point of view, the passage to NEP represents the collapse of our illusions" (32).

These are the totally different conditions in which the new period opened: there is more grey and more routine, less heroism and less lyricism. The apparatchiks appeared right on cue. Yet nobody among those who saw them growing and who ran up against them believed their victory to be possible. How could the office-people take away from Lenin the leadership of his party?

FOOTNOTES

- (1) The full text, pp. 22 - 23 of the study "The Kronstadt Rising", by George Katkov, which appeared in No. 6 of the St. Anthony's Papers, Soviet Affairs, by far the most complete and at the same time the most recent. In French, in addition to the book by Voline, see "La commune de Kronstadt", by Ida METT (Spartakus), which

advances the same viewpoint, and the dossier published in 1959 in "Arguments" No. 14.

- (2) Katkov, op. cit., p. 28
- (3) Ibidem, pp. 29 - 32
- (4) Ibidem, p. 32
- (5) Serge, "Memoirs d'un Revolutionnaire", p. 129
- (6) Katkov, op. cit., p. 42
- (7) Quoted by Schapiro, "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union", p. 205
- (8) Speech at the Tenth Congress, in "Bulletin Communiste", No. 15, April 14, 1921, p. 243
- (9) Radek, "Cronstadt", "Bulletin Communiste" No. 19, May 12, 1921, p. 322.
- (10) Serge, op. cit., p. 130
- (11) Quoted by Barmin, "Vingt Annees au service de l'URSS", Paris, Albin Michel, 1939, pp. 143 - 144
- (12) Quoted by E. H. Carr, "The Bolshevik Revolution", Vol. 2, p. 277
- (13) Trotsky, "The First Five Years of the Communist International", pp. 219 - 226
- (14) Quoted by Suvarin in "Stalin", p. 298
- (15) Fainsod, "Smolensk under Soviet Rule", p. 45
- (16) Quoted in Schapiro, "The Bolsheviks and the Opposition", p. 222
- (17) Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 32, p. 178
- (18) R. V. Daniels, "The Conscience of the Revolution", p. 147
- (19) Report and Resolution, in "Bulletin Communiste", No. 24, July 9, 1921, pp. 401 - 405
- (20) Ibidem, p. 403
- (21) Quoted in Schapiro, "The Bolsheviks and the Opposition", pp. 262 - 263
- (22) Ibidem, p. 264
- (23) Quoted by John Daniels in "Labour Review", No. 2, 1957, p. 47
- (24) Quoted by R. V. Daniels, "Conscience...", p. 150
- (25) Quoted by Schapiro, "The Bolsheviks and the Opposition", p. 268
- (26) Sosnovski, "Taten und Menschen", p. 153
- (27) Ibidem, p. 152
- (28) Quoted in R. V. Daniels, "Conscience...", p. 166
- (29) Ibidem, p. 165

(30) Ibidem, p. 170

(31)

(32) Bukharin, in "Bolshevik", No. 2, April 1924, p.1

Chapter Eight. The Crisis of 1923: the Debate on the New Course

On May 26, 1922, Lenin was struck down by illness. He convalesced during the summer, but was able to resume normal activity only in October. It is therefore difficult to ascertain what he accepted and covered during his period of semi-retirement. However, the entire final period of his political life, at the end of 1922 and during the two first months of 1923, was marked by his personal break with Stalin and the opening of the struggle against the apparatus which his final collapse was to interrupt. For a long time, the only elements of information which a historian could use were those contributed by Trotsky, confirmed as to this or that point of detail by an allusion in a Congress or a statement. Stalinist historiography ferociously denied, of course, this version which the "revelations" contained in the Khrushchev speech have definitely validated, at least in its main lines.

Lenin and the Bureaucracy

It would have been surprising if a man of Lenin's intellectual powers had not been able to grasp the risks of degeneration which the victory of the revolution and its isolation in a backward country implied for the Soviet regime and the party. He had written in March-April 1918: "The element of petty-bourgeois disorganisation (which reveals itself more or less in every proletarian revolution, and which, in our own revolution, will manifest itself with extreme vigour because of the petty bourgeois character of the country, its backward state and the consequences of the reactionary war) must inevitably imprint its mark on the Soviets also... There exists a tendency to transform the members of the Soviets into "Parliamentarians", or, on the other hand, into bureaucrats. This tendency must be fought by making every member of the Soviets participate in the management of affairs" (1). It was because he was conscious that the principal obstacle to the application of this remedy lay in the lack of culture of the masses that on the very morrow of the seizure of power, he had drafted the decree re-organising the public libraries, providing for books to be exchanged, for their circulation to be free, for reading rooms to be open every day, including Sundays and holidays, up until 11 o'clock in the evening. But the effects of such measures could not be immediate. In 1919, at the Eighth Party Congress, he declared: "We know perfectly well what this low level of culture in Russia means, what it makes of the Soviet power, which has created in principle a proletarian democracy infinitely superior to the democracies known hitherto... we know that this low level of culture degrades the power of the Soviets and revives bureaucracy. In words, the Soviet state is at the disposal of all the working people; in reality, as none of us fails to know, it is not within the grasp of all of them, far from it" (2).

His speeches in 1920, 1921 and 1922 are full of references to the bureaucracy of the state apparatus, to the heritage of Tsarism. But the reflux of the masses, the fading out or the stifling of the Soviets do not permit the remedies which were at first en-

visaged to be applied. Lenin seems to have thought more deeply about the problem and to have understood that the source of much of the difficulties was the growing confusion between the state and the party. He declared without equivocation at the Eleventh Congress: "Incorrect relations between the party and the ^{Soviet} administration have been established: We are all agreed about that... Formally it is very difficult to remedy, because a single governmental party leads in our country... I share the blame for this in many respects" (3).

Did he go further in his analysis and envisage the end of the one-party system? This also seems probable. A manuscript note for an article which he drafted at the time of the Congress mentions several times the "legalisation" of the Mensheviks. None the less, he remained convinced of the necessity to act with prudence, in order not to compromise the still fragile gains and conscious as he was of the immensity of the difficulties. In a speech to the Central Committee, he stressed the bad quality of the state apparatus, he went on: "The first steam engine did not work. What does it matter? We now have the locomotive. Our State apparatus is frankly bad. What does it matter? It has been created, it is an immense historic invention, a State of proletarian type has been created". His conclusion reflects the awareness which he had of the limits of what could be done to improve the situation. "The whole kernel of the question consists of separating firmly, sharply and sanely what is a world-historic merit of the Russian Revolution with what we are accomplished as badly as possible, what has not yet been created and what needs to be done again, many times" (4). The pragmatic character of his thought on these fundamental problems appears perhaps still more clearly in these lines about the strikes at the beginning of 1922: "In a proletarian state of a transitional type such as our own, the final aim of all action of the working class must be only to strengthen the proletarian state which is operated by the proletarian class, by means of the struggle against the bureaucratic deformations of this state". Party, Soviets and trade unions must not, therefore, conceal the fact that "recourse to the strike weapon, in a state where political power belongs to the proletariat, can be explained and justified solely by bureaucratic deformations of the proletarian state and by all kinds of survivals of the capitalist past in its institutions, on the one hand, as well as by the lack of political development of the working masses, on the other" (5). In fact, before any other measure, it is to the preservation and improvement of what in his eyes is the essential tool, the party, that Lenin intended to devote his efforts. Even a historian as hostile to Lenin as Schapiro admits that "it seems that Lenin retained his belief that it was possible to raise the level of his members, apply a brake to the expansion of careerism and bureaucracy and to develop the aptitudes of the proletariat and its confidence in itself" (6).

In this connection, the measures of 1922, fixing the probationary period for admission to the party to six months for workers and for soldiers in the Red Army of worker or peasant

origin, twelve months for peasants and two years for the other social categories seem to have been inadequate in Lenin's opinion. He proposed six months only for workers who have worked for at least ten months in heavy industry, eighteen months for other workers, two years for former soldiers and three years for all the other social categories. His great concern to preserve the capital of the Bolshevik Old Guard permit the supposition that the probationary conditions attached to party posts - one year for the secretary of a cell, three years for a district secretary and membership of the party before October for a regional secretary - must have had his full, entire approval. His last writings show, in any case, that he remained faithful in 1923 to the principles on which he had built the party through the development of workers' consciousness: he advised that "workers who have already been employed for a long time in posts in the Soviets" should be removed from leadership tasks, because "they have a certain tradition and a certain outlook against which it is a good thing to fight". He recommended that reliance be placed on "the best elements of our social regime, namely the advanced workers first, and in the second place on really educated people, who, it can be guaranteed, will not accept anything on anyone's say-so and will not say a word against their conscience" (7).

These speeches and articles, devoted to the theme of the bureaucracy and the apparatus, were approved by everyone, including the bureaucrats. In Pravda for January 3, 1923, Sosnovski nevertheless described how the latter, even those who applauded, did not change their practice, for all that: "Lenin has often stressed that the apparatus of functionaries in the offices often becomes ^{the} master over us, when we ought to be the master over it. And they all applaud Lenin, the commissars, the chiefs and the high officials... They applaud sincerely, because they all agree with Lenin. But if you button-hole one of them and ask him whether, in his own office, the apparatus has made itself master of its chief, he puts on an offended look and replies that it is not the same at all; what Lenin says is perfectly right, but only for others, for my neighbour; 'I have got my apparatus well in hand'".

Lenin and the Rise of the Apparatus

When Lenin returned to political activity, after his first attack, he concentrated his attention on the problem of the rising bureaucracy, which had struck him while he was resuming contact. He complained about "lies and Communist boasting", which "caused him heart-felt distress". He sought among his comrades-in-arms the ally and confidant whom he needed before undertaking any offensive. According to Trotsky, it was to him the Lenin proposed, in November 1922, "a bloc against bureaucracy in general and against the Organisation Bureau in particular" (8). On December 14, he suffered a second attack, which left him partially paralysed. On December 15 he dictated the note which was to become known as his "testament". The text was published in 1925 thanks to the efforts of Max Eastman. The Russian leaders denounced it for many years as a forgery, until it was confirmed in 1956 by Krushchev, with the repercussions which are well

known. In it he commented on the qualities and weaknesses of the principal Bolshevik leaders, foresaw the possibility of a clash between Stalin and Trotsky and advised that it be avoided, though he did not suggest a solution.

In the following days he was to undergo a serious shock; this was the revelation what had been going on in Georgia. In 1921 the Red Army went into Georgia to support a Bolshevik "insurrection" there. There was lively resistance to Russian domination, expressed in a strong national sentiment among the Georgian Communists. In Summer 1922 they openly opposed the proposal of the Commissar for Nationalities, Stalin, for the formation of a federated republic to include Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaidjan and to join the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics on the same basis as the R.S.F.S.R., White Russia and the Ukraine. On September 15 the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party decided to oppose the proposal, which was supported by Ordjonikidze, the secretary of the regional bureau. A protest from Budu Mdivani, the leader of the Georgian Communist Party, to Lenin led to a first conflict between Stalin and Lenin, who accused Stalin of showing himself "in too much of a hurry".

But in mid-October the Russian Communist Party approved Stalin's plan. The Georgian Communists, despite a plea from Lenin to observe discipline, refused to submit. Ordjonikidze was installed at Tiflis and then undertook to break their resistance by apparatus methods, obliging the Georgian Central Committee to resign. The operation was probably inspired by Stalin, and Ordjonikidze was only its executant, but it was carried through firmly, with recourse to police repression and violence. The appeals of the Georgian Communists led to a Commission of Enquiry being set up, under the presidency of Dzerjinski. This white-washed the activities of Orjonikidze. Though the Georgian leaders were driven out by the Organisation Bureau and cut off from their organisation, they none the less managed to get to Lenin, to whom they presented a devastating file about the activities which Stalin and Ordjonikidze had mounted against them in Georgia.

Lenin then discovered in an unpleasant way how extensive the damage was, and he reproached himself for it, in unaccustomed language for him: "I believe that I am terribly to blame, before the working people of Russia, for not having intervened vigorously or radically enough in the business". The "powerful forces which are diverting the Soviet state from its course must be specified: they emanate from an apparatus which is fundamentally alien to us and represents a hotch-potch of bourgeois and Tsarist survivals", "only covered up with Soviet varnish", which force the country anew into "a morass of oppression". He had very hard words for Stalin, whom he transparently identified as responsible for the Georgian affair: "The Georgian who despises this side of the affair, who contemptuously throws out accusations of 'social-nationalism' (when it is he himself who is not only a real, authentic 'social-national', but a brutal, Great Russian, prison warder), this Georgian in reality is undermining proletarian class solidarity" (9).

Lenin dictated these lines on December 30, 1922. On January 4, 1923, he added to his testament the post-script about Stalin, whose brutality he denounced and who, he recom-

mended, should be removed from the secretariat. He then opened the attack in public, in an article in Pravda on January 23 about "the inadequacies of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection", Stalin's department. He referred to a letter which he had written earlier, in September 1921, reproaching him for trying to "catch people out" or to "un-mask" people, rather than to "improve" them. On February 6 a new article was to appear on the question; this was Lenin's last article. It was entitled "Better Less, but Better". Without mentioning Stalin's name, he overwhelmed him: "The state of affairs with the State administration is repulsive", "there is no worse institution than the Inspection". It was necessary to destroy "bureaucracy, not only in the Soviet institutions, but in the party institutions". This was a bomb-shell for all informed readers of Pravda: Lenin denouncing Stalin. Trotsky alone has given an account of the hesitations, which seem likely to have happened, of the Politburo to publish this article. Kuibyshev even proposed to print only one copy of it, in order to deceive the sick man (10). But the complicity of Stalin's entourage was denied and the article was published. Moreover Lenin continued his attacks. The Khrushchev speech confirmed once and for all and told in detail what Kamenev had told Trotsky two years after these events about the incident between Stalin and Krupskaya, which led Lenin, on the night of March 5 and 6, to send a letter to Stalin breaking off personal relations with him. On March 9 he suffered a third attack which finally deprived him of the power of speech. The Bolshevik party was deprived of its leader at the moment when more than ever it needed him: the country was shaken by a grave economic crisis. Germany was on the point of seeing the outbreak of the long-awaited revolution. Lenin was on his death bed.

The Economic Crisis: the Scissors Crisis

The first results of NEP were positive. The economic organism began to work again. Agriculture, freed from the strait-jacket of requisitions, was developing. The poor peasant might live badly, but the kulak had important surpluses and the grain crop for 1922 reached three-quarters of that of pre-war. The cities began to come back to life. The population of Petrograd, which had fallen to 740,000 in 1920, reached 860,000 in 1923 and soon touched the million mark. Industry also recovered; the deserted factories, with their windows broken, came back to life. In 1922 production was still only a quarter of what it had been before the war, but it was up by 46% on the preceding year. This re-birth was a profound encouragement, a proof of the vitality and the dynamism of the regime in the eyes of many Russians. Coming after the black years, it seemed to many to be a precious conquest, the dawn of a new epoch.

None the less there were dark shadows on the picture. The progress of State industry was much less noticeable than that of the small artisans and of private industry. The progress of heavy industry was slow compared with that of light industry. The rise in the prices of the latter seemed to rob the peasant of a large part of his profit. Above all, the growth was to have important social consequences. At the start

the NEP brought in its train a new relative weakening of the industrial proletariat, which had initially benefitted from it as consumers. On the other hand, the cadres of newly re-born industry, the administrators and engineers, recruited from among technicians of bourgeois origin, concerned about the rate of profit and productivity, assumed an importance which caused anxiety to the trade unions. From autumn 1922 onwards the rise in the prices of industrial products led to a rise in unemployment. From 500,000 at that date it rose to 1,250,000 in summer 1923. Economic freedom led to rising differences in earnings, which were higher in the industries producing consumer goods than in heavy industry and higher in private than in state industry. The "Red Industrialists" felt the pressure of the party to reduce their outgoings and raise productivity; the first effects of this were, precisely, to raise unemployment while earnings stagnated.

The crisis continued to get worse in spring and summer 1923. Trotsky presented a diagram to the Twelfth Congress, at which he called it "the scissors crisis". The curves of prices of industrial and of agricultural products had intersected in autumn 1922, but since then had not ceased to diverge. At the end of summer 1923, industrial prices reached 180% to 190% of the pre-war level, while agricultural prices stagnated at about 50%. The increase of productivity, the only means envisaged of bringing down industrial prices, involved concentration of enterprises, and, therefore, unemployment. Within the framework of NEP the long-term interests of the economy inflicted new sufferings on the workers. The problem arose of knowing whether the NEP should be maintained as a whole - which meant deferring until much later the recovery of heavy industry, lowering industrial prices by decree and seeking to conciliate the peasants by developing exports and by tax reliefs - or whether it should be corrected by aid to industry. At the Politburo the majority chose the first solution, the status quo. Trotsky spoke in favour of starting the planning aimed above all at enabling heavy industry to be developed. This disagreement was under the surface at the Twelfth Congress in March 1923, and it was brought out to the public only in autumn 1923.

The Defeat of the Revolution in Germany

Indeed the year 1923 witnessed the appearance in Germany of a revolutionary situation without precedent in an advanced country. The crisis of the "reparations" which Germany owed to the Allies, the occupation of the Ruhr by French troops, the policies of the leading circles of German capitalism, resulted in a catastrophic inflation. The mark collapsed. The pound sterling was quoted at 50,000 marks in January, and 1,500,000 marks in July and at 5,000,000 in August. The entire social structure was disrupted to its foundations. The owners of fixed incomes were hopelessly ruined. The small bourgeoisie were driven down into poverty, while the workers, who, none the less, could defend themselves better, saw their standard of living plummet.

This economic catastrophe brought in its train a political upheaval. The financial strength of the social-democratic party and of the trade unions was wiped out by the

inflation. Their influence, based on the "aristocracy of labour", the better-paid workers, disappeared into thin air. The State collapsed: it no longer had the funds to pay the civil servants, even the forces of repression. During this time, the owners of capital invested in plant or in foreign stocks made fabulous profits. The peasants held back their stocks from the market: the cities were starving. Outbreaks, fights and street demonstrations multiplied, expressing the double hatred of the foreign imperialists and of the capitalists who were making money out of the crisis. High finance and the army financed groups of the extreme right. anti-capitalist in ideology and programme, like the Nazi party of Adolf Hitler. The revolution threatened, more serious still than in 1918 - 19.

The situation was very different. The small oppositional groups of 1918 - 19, divided and scattered, had given place to a powerful Communist party. It had over 200,000 members in the workers' fortresses in the beginning of 1923. Its influence was expressed in a vote twenty times higher than its membership. It had a solid apparatus and enjoyed the financial and technical support of the International. Since the crisis of 1921, it had been re-oriented towards "the conquest of the masses". When the crisis opened, the progress of the Communist Party was amazing: in the engineering union in Berlin the Communist candidates won twice as many votes as those for the social-democratic candidates: the preceding year, they had won one-tenth. But none the less the leadership was deeply divided, and it hesitated.

In spring 1923 the majority of the party was turning towards a prudent line, the originator of which was Radek, who was concerned above all to break the diplomatic isolation of the U.S.S.R. and did not have a great deal of confidence in the victory of a revolution. The Communists extended their hands to the Nazis for an anti-imperialist united front. The Left of the Communist Party, which was powerful in the Ruhr, pushed for revolutionary action, but the leadership temporised.

The strike of the printers in the National Bank, on July 10, 1923, provoked a spontaneous General Strike. This swept the Cuno Government out of office. The German bourgeoisie sought help from the Allies. The Communist International and the Bolshevik leaders began to interest themselves in what was going on in Germany. The leadership of the German Communist Party was summoned to Moscow. The whole summer passed in feverish preparations "for the seizure of power", the perspective of which the secretary of the German Communist Party, Brandler, finally accepted. The Germans demanded that Trotsky be sent to lead the insurrection. Zinoviev opposed, and Piatakov and Radek went, with a large entourage of technicians. Red Guards, "proletarian hundreds" were organised. Stocks of arms were gathered. The leaders counted on the factory committees and the action committees of the unemployed workers and of women to play the role of Soviets. In Saxony and Thuringia, the Communists entered governments led by the social-democrats of the left, in order to transform these regional governments into bastions of the revolution. Brandler became a minister in the government of Dr. Zeigner. While

they were waiting, and in fear of premature risings, the militants held back the impatient masses in Germany and suspended every activity but conspiracy. This detailed plan failed: the leadership failed to convince the conference of factory committees at Chemnitz and it called off the insurrection. The favourable moment passed. As Trotsky wrote: "The hopes of the masses changed into disillusion thanks to the passivity of the party, while the enemy recovered from his panic and took advantage of this disillusion" (11).

The Reichswehr re-established order in Saxony and crushed the Hamburg rising. With American aid, capitalist Germany was to recover. Every chance of an early success of the revolution disappeared. The Russian leadership, and especially Zinoviev, bore a crushing burden of responsibility for this defeat, because Brandler had done nothing without consulting it. In fact, the Russian leadership made him carry the weight of responsibility, because it supported his removal from the leadership of the German Communist Party and denounced him. Stalin, who had counselled "applying a brake to the Germans" rather than "pushing them forward" (12), and Zinoviev, the President of the International, did not wish to accept the responsibility for their mistakes.

The consequences were no less dramatic for political development in Russia. During the summer of 1923 an internationalist, revolutionary fervour shook the party. Meetings, banners, advertisements and articles celebrated the approach of the victory of the German October. The young generation tasted the revolutionary enthusiasm and was passionate for it. Under the stimulus of the forces of the youth which thus were mobilised, the party seemed to revive. The shock which it experienced expressed itself in the discussions of that winter (13). But the defeat of the German Communists without a struggle, accordingly, this time for a long time, condemned the Russian revolution to a ghetto. The disillusion which it provoked, when the Russian leaders had presented the victory of the revolution as assured and near at hand, was to weigh heavy on the morale, the confidence and the activity of the militants. It was to be a determining factor in the open explosion of the conflict, which had been delayed by anxious waiting on the events

The maturation of the crisis

Lenin was out of action. This postponed a struggle which, in April 1923, had seemed to be inevitable, between him and Stalin, the incarnation of the apparatus. Trotsky, to whom Potieva, Lenin's secretary, passed on March 6 the letter of Lenin on the national question, which he had dictated on 30 and 31 December 1922, did not wage the struggle which he had planned with Lenin to undertake. He told Kamenev in March that he was opposed to any struggle at the Congress to change organisational arrangements. He was for maintain^{ing} the status quo, against replacing Stalin, against the exclusion of Ordjonikidze and against punishments in general. He awaited excuses, a change of attitudes, a demonstration of good will, the abandonment of his intrigues and "honest co-operation" from Stalin (14).

We could speculate endlessly about this surprising attitude, this abandonment of the bloc with Lenin. Was Trotsky afraid of posing openly his claim to be Lenin's successor? Did he want to keep all the possibilities on his side, in case Lenin soon recovered? Did he want to avoid embittering personal relations which were already far from cordial, for a long time, with certain Old Bolsheviks, who regarded him as an intruder, as having joined them at the eleventh hour, who were jealous of his popularity and prestige and who feared his authority as chief of the Red Army as much as they feared the sarcasm of his mordant wit? Was it an inferiority complex or was hesitation ^{ic of the man?} characteristic? No doubt the answer will never be known. The explanations in his autobiography are unconvincing. One thing is certain: the retreat did him no good; he seems to have under-estimated his adversary.

Stalin got out of a difficult situation when Trotsky abstained on the Georgian question at the 12th Congress. In the following months he was to re-establish his compromised position, and to tighten again on the party that grip which probably only Trotsky could have relaxed in Spring 1923. In fact Bukharin seems to have been seriously concerned about the risks of internal degeneration of the victorious revolution at that time. In a speech entitled, "Proletarian Revolution and Culture", which he delivered in Petrograd, he emphasised that the low culture of the proletariat, (considerably lower than that of the bourgeoisie, whereas the bourgeoisie, in the course of its revolution, had been culturally far above the feudal classes which it overthrew,) meant that the "overhead costs" which were inevitable in the proletarian revolution greater than those of the bourgeois revolution of the past. There he believed that degeneration was a real danger. It could come, in the first place, from employing, as was inevitable, elements who were politically hostile but were technically capable in positions of responsibility. There was the risk that they would "little by little fill the Soviet forms with a bourgeois content, which would liquidate the revolution". The proletarian content of the apparatus, further, did not seem to Bukharin to be a sufficient guarantee against this evolution: "Even a proletarian origin, the most horny hands and other equally remarkable qualities are not a sufficient guarantee against the transformation of privileged proletarian elements into a new class" (15). None the less, it was not an alliance of Trotsky and Bukharin which was to emerge from the parallel reflections of the two leaders.

The oppositions crystallised in the Politburo on the question of immediate economic policy, in the discussion on the scissors crisis. Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev were for the status quo. They opposed the proposals for planning and industrialisation which Trotsky advanced. Their alliance was soon to be known as the "troika": it was to be sealed in their defence of the apparatus, which was vigorously attacked at the Congress by several delegates, as well as in the hostility to Trotsky, which they shared, and which he did not disarm by his refusal to call in question a situation which many of his friends regarded as intolerable.

Preobrazhensky denounced the failure to apply the principal decisions of the Tenth Congress, including that about internal democracy. He denounced the growth of the authoritarian regime, the substitution, at every level, of the system of appointment for that of election. Vladimir Kossior attacked the "clique" of the General Secretary, the systematic persecution of militants by giving unpleasant posts to militants who dared to voice criticisms and systematic preference for docility over abilities as criteria in the choice of functionaries. Lutovinov spoke ironically of the papal infallibility on which the leadership prided itself with its "claims to save the party without the members". Budu Mdivani and Makharadze, who had been crushed at the Georgian Congress in March, denounced the Great-Russian chauvinism of the apparatus which Stalin and Ordjonikidze manipulated. Bukharin called the policy a Stalin in relation to subject nationalities a "chauvinist" one. He stressed the bias which the majority of the delegates expressed, on the basis of information derived only from the apparatus, towards the Georgians charged with deviationism. In the name of the Ukrainian delegation, Rakovsky spoke about a policy of "Russification" of the minorities and said that Stalin was returning to the policy of Tsarism in this matter. It was Rakovsky who appealed to the authority of Lenin and to that of his letter, which still remained un-published, on the national question, in order to condemn the centralising conception which Stalin had succeeded in establishing in the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

Trotsky, for his part, left the hall during the discussion of the Georgian affair and remained silent during the discussions about the apparatus. He supported the "troika" with a declaration that the solidarity of the Politburo could not be broken as well as that of the Central Committee, and replied indirectly to criticisms with an appeal for discipline and vigilance almost like that made by Zinoviev. A kind of special conception of "ministerial solidarity" in the Politburo led him to assume public responsibility for a policy which he had resisted and to agree to withdraw even from Lenin's positions, because he opposed neither the re-election of Stalin a general secretary nor the election of Kuibyshev to the head of the Control Commission. He gave up his chance to use the weapons which he possessed in the service of a policy which he believed to be correct. Thereby he voluntarily disarmed those who could have supported him and transformed himself into a hostage in the hands of his opponents. Bukharin, who at the Congress had opposed the "troika", was to become one of its most effective supporters in the coming months.

No doubt Trotsky did not have to wait long to understand that his sacrifice had been in vain. Stalin tightened his grip on the apparatus of secretaries, established his authority over the Central Committee, the numbers of which were raised to forty, and the overwhelming majority of whom supported the "troika". He had the Tatar Communist, Sultan-Galiev, arrested on pretext of conspiracy; the latter was guilty of having aimed at a Soviet Federation of the Muslim peoples and was to be charged with "undermining the confidence of the formerly oppressed nationalities in the re-

volutionary proletariat". The economic situation deteriorated during the summer of 1923. Wages were not paid and savage strikes broke out. A small group of oppositionists who called themselves the "Workers' Group" tried to intervene in the movement in order to take the leadership of it, but were immediately suppressed by the G.P.U. Miasnikov was arrested in June, Kuznétzov and twenty-eight other Communists in September, charged with organising a street demonstration. The G.P.U. struck in the same way at the "Workers' Truth" group of the old man Bogdanov. All these militants were excluded from the party. The situation was so serious that Dzerjinsky declared to a subcommittee of the Central Committee in September: "The decay of our party, the extinction of our internal life, the substitution of appointment for election are becoming a political danger" (16).

Yet it was the same man, who was responsible for repression of the workers' opposition groups, who was to provoke the open break and Trotsky's entry into the struggle, when he demanded at the Politburo that every party member must undertake to denounce to the G.P.U. any oppositional activity. This initiative seems to have convinced Trotsky of the gravity of the situation. At the same moment he succeeded in preventing Stalin from joining the military revolutionary committee, by threatening to resign himself, but he had to accept the exclusion of his faithful assistant in the Civil War, Skliansky, "the Carnot of the Russian Revolution", and his replacement by two supporters of the troika, Voroshilov and Lashevitch. This is how, having become the target of attacks by the troika, he decided to carry on the struggle which hitherto he had conducted only ^{un}unwillingly behind the scenes.

The Struggle in the Central Committee

On October 8, 1923, Trotsky addressed to the Central Committee a letter which was to place him at the head of the Opposition. It analysed the proposal of Djerjinsky and pointed out that it revealed "an extraordinary deterioration of the situation in the interior of the party since the Twelfth Congress". He admitted that the arguments in favour of workers' democracy developed at that time seemed to him to be a little touched with exaggeration and even demagogy "because of the fact that total workers' democracy is not compatible with the regime of the dictatorship". He declared that, since the Congress, "the bureaucratisation of the Party apparatus has developed to an un-heard-of degree, because the secretariat uses the method of appointment. A broad layer of militants has come into existence which has entered the governmental apparatus of the party, and which is completely giving up their own opinions as party members, or, at any rate, an open expression of them, as if the bureaucratic apparatus were the hierarchy which creates the opinion of the party and its decisions". One of the characteristics of this authoritarianism, "ten times greater than that in the darkest days of the civil war", is the role which is played in the party by "the secretary psychology", the main feature of which is that the secretary is capable of deciding everything". The discontent of militants who are deprived of their rights leads to the danger of producing "a crisis of extraordinary severity, to the extent that they identify perhaps the "Old

Bolsheviks" with "the secretariat". Trotsky ended by threatening to appeal from the Central Committee to the whole party, if the latter refused to redress the situation (17).

On October 15, 1923, 46 militants - some of whom at least were informed of Trotsky's initiative, though we cannot attribute theirs to him - addressed a declaration to the Central Committee. Among them were to be found some of the most eminent Bolsheviks the glories of the Civil War: Preobrazhensky, Alski, Serebriakov, Antonov-Ovseenko, Ivan N. Smirnov, Vladimir Smirnov, Piatakov, Muralov, Sapronov, Ossinski, Sosnovsky and Vladimir Kossior. Though the document was secret, its text reveals the depth of the internal crisis which led to such a broad grouping of responsible militants on a platform of struggle for internal democracy. The economic difficulties were traced to the empiricism of the leadership of the Central Committee. Successes had been won "in the absence of all leadership". But there was danger of a severe economic crisis, in the absence of appropriate measures and particularly of an active policy of planning. The bankruptcy of the leadership expressed itself in the condition of the party, subject to a regime of dictatorship, no longer a living organism or acting by itself. "We are more and more witnessing an ever-growing division between the hierarchy of the secretariat and "the quiet people", and this is now hardly concealed in the party, between the professional functionaries of the party, appointed and selected from above, and the mass of the party, which does not participate in their group life". Congresses and conferences were being more and more transformed into "executive assemblies of the hierarchy". "The regime which has been put into operation in the party is absolutely intolerable: it kills all initiative in the party. The summit has an apparatus of appointed functionaries which undeniably functions in a normal period, but which inevitably misses fire in a period of crisis, and which threatens to end up in total bankruptcy in the face of the serious events which are going to confront us" (18).

The first reply which the Politburo addressed to Trotsky shows that the leadership refused to accept the discussion on the ground on which it was begun. They mentioned that Trotsky had refused to become vice-president of the council, accused him of "wanting all or nothing" and ascribed his opposition to unlimited ambition.

Their second reply was to come at the plenary session of the Central Committee and of the Central Control Commission on October 25 - 27, 1923. Trotsky was struck down by the strange illness which kept him on the fringe of the decisive struggles of this period, was not present. Preobrazhensky proposed immediate measures, on behalf of the Opposition: discussion of the great political questions in every branch, complete freedom of expression within the party, a discussion in the press, a return to the system of electing party officials and the examination of the cases of militants "transferred" because of their opinions and their criticisms. The Central Committee hit back on the level of discipline, with accusations of fractionalism: "The gesture of comrade Trotsky, at a crucial moment in the experience of the party and of the world revolution", was "a grave political error, particularly because comrade Trotsky's attack directed

against the Politburo, has objectively the character of a fractional gesture, which threatens to strike at the unity of the party and to give rise to a crisis within it". It had, further, "served as a signal to a fractional group". The declaration of the 46 was denounced as a divisive act "threatening to place the entire life of the party in the coming months under the sign of an internal struggle and in that way to weaken the party at^a moment which is crucial for the fate of the international revolution" (19). The declaration would, therefore, not be published. The situation none the less appeared to be sufficiently serious for a discussion to be opened in the party and in the columns of its press. Once again, discussion was to serve as a safety-valve.

The Debate

The controversy was to develop between November 1923 and March 1924. Zinoviev opened the debate in "Pravda" on November 7. "The bad thing", he wrote, "is that most essential questions are settled in advance, from above downwards". For this reason, "it is necessary that workers' democracy in the party, about which so much has been said, begin to take on more reality". Of course, centralisation is inevitable, but the widening of discussions is desirable. There was nothing either decisive or aggressive in this good-natured and rather disillusioned way of opening the debate.

The first discussions turned about serious criticisms of the functioning of the apparatus. Bukharin declared: "If we enquire and find out how many times the elections are settled in the party simply by these questions being pronounced from the chair: 'Who is for? Who is against?', we shall soon find that in most cases the elections have become simply formalities. Not only are the votes taken without any previous discussion, but they are taken solely on the question, 'Who is against?'. You get yourself into trouble with the authorities if you vote 'against' them, so it is not hard to forecast the usual result. This is how elections are carried on in all our low-level organisations... It goes without saying that such methods arouse a strong current of discontent. The same thing happens, with very small differences, at every level of the party hierarchy" (20).

Most of the other contributions to the discussion in "Pravda" were less advanced than this, and restricted to criticising this or that aspect or manifestation of a spirit of bureaucracy, without generalisation. But the tone changed with Preobrazhensky on November 28. In fact he opened fire on "comrades, even among the most responsible, who snigger about democracy within the party in the spirit of the Tenth Congress". His view was that "the party, which decided at the Tenth Congress to go over from military to democratic methods, in fact took precisely the opposite course... This was perhaps inevitable in the first period of Nep. Now that the change-over to the policy of Nep has been accomplished... the application of the Tenth Congress resolution is not only possible, but indispensable. We have not gone over to democracy in time. The automatism of routine, acquired once and for all, dominates party life: it has been legitimised". He appealed to memories of the party when Lenin was its leader, and stated: "It is characteristic that, in the period when we had enemy fronts all around us, the

life of the party showed much more vitality and the independence of the organisations was much greater. At the present moment, when not only are the objective conditions present for the re-animation of the internal life of the party and its adaptation to new tasks, but also there exists a real necessity for the party to do so, not only have we not advanced once step beyond the period of War Communism, but, on the contrary, we have intensified bureaucracy and petrification and the number of questions settled from above. We have accentuated the division of the party, which began during the war period, between those who take decisions and carry responsibilities and the masses who carry out the decisions of the party, in the elaboration of which they have no share".

This intervention enabled the limits of the discussion to be drawn. On December 1, Zinoviev referred to the deprivation of the vote for party members of less than two years' standing and declared: "From the standpoint of abstract workers' democracy, this is a parody of democracy. But we thought it necessary from the standpoint of the fundamental interests of the revolution, the good of the revolution, to give the vote only to those who appeared to be the real guardians of the party... The good of the revolution, that is the supreme law. Every revolutionary says: to hell with the 'sacred' principles of 'pure' democracy!". On December 2, Stalin in turn spelt it out: "It is necessary to set bounds to the discussion, to prevent the party, which is a combat unity of the proletariat, from degenerating into a discussion club".

While this discussion was unfolding, the Politburo was trying to find a basis for agreement with Trotsky, so that the leadership could adopt a position unanimously. On December 5 it adopted a resolution, which was the result of discussions in a sub-committee between Stalin, Kamenev and Trotsky, and which seemed to announce a new course. It recognised that the objective contradictions of the epoch of transition expressed themselves ⁱⁿ a certain number of negative tendencies, which it was necessary to combat. Such were "the profound differences between the material situation of members of the party in relation to the differences of their responsibilities and what is called the 'excesses', the growth of relations with bourgeois elements and their ideological influence, the narrowness of the horizon, which must be distinguished from necessary specialisation, and the appearance on this basis of weakening of the links between Communists in different sectors of work; a danger of losing sight of the perspective of socialist construction as a whole and of the world revolution... the bureaucratisation of the apparatuses of the party and the development of the danger of a divorce between the party and the masses". "The party", it declared, should proceed to a serious modification of its policy in the sense of a strict and methodical application of workers' democracy", which "implies for all comrades the freedom to examine and discuss openly the principal questions of the party, such as the election of the functionaries and of the colleges from the bottom to the top". As practical measures, it recommended: "the practical application of election of functionaries and especially of secretaries of

cells of the party", the decision "to submit, except in exceptional circumstances, all essential questions of party policy to the examination of the cells", an effort to educate cadres, the obligation on all organisms to account for their work and "a recruitment of new industrial workers" (21).

The principles repeat, perhaps with less precision, those expounded in the resolution of the Tenth Congress, but the proposed measures were accompanied with numerous restrictions: it is clear that this resolution was a concession to discontent which was only too evident. The prohibition of fractions was repeated, and, coming after the rejection by the Central Committee of Preobrazhensky's proposals and the condemnation of the declaration of the 46 as fractional, clearly shows what its authors really meant.

However, Trotsky voted for this ambiguous resolution, which did no more than protect the leadership. He was to justify his vote by saying that, in his opinion, the text "shifted the centre of gravity in the direction of the activity, the critical independence and the self-administration of the party" (22). In fact, he knew perfectly well that his interpretation and the way in which he wanted to apply the resolution differed profoundly from the conception which the troika had of it: on December 2, speaking to the Communists of Krassnaia Pressnia, Stalin had just recognised a sickness, the origin of which he thought to trace in "survivals of war communism", in the form of "militarisation in the heads of the working people" (23).

Trotsky gave his own interpretation of the resolution of December 5 in a letter to the party organisation of Krassnaia Pressnia. He reminded that the danger of bureaucratism flowed from the apparatus "which is inevitably formed by the most experienced and meritorious comrades", and explained his fear that "the Old Guard" could become fixed and gradually become the most complete expression of bureaucratism". He reminded of the precedent of the degeneration of the leaders of the Second International, though "direct disciples of Marx and Engels", and declared that such a danger existed for the old generation of the Russian Bolsheviks. "It is youth that reacts the most vigorously against bureaucratism": he demanded greater confidence in the youth and a change of methods. "Our youth must not confine itself to repeating our formulae. It must master them, form its own opinions and its own characteristics and be capable of fighting for its views, with the courage that comes of profound conviction and complete independence of character. Out of the party with passive obedience, which makes people limp mechanically behind the chiefs! Out of the party with impersonality, servility and careerism! The Bolshevik is not only a disciplined man, but a man who forms a firm opinion in each case and on each question, and defends it courageously, not only against his enemies, but within his own party".

Trotsky's letter contained an un-disguised call to battle: "Before the publication of the decision of the Central Committee on the 'new course', the simple fact of saying that a change in the internal regime of the party was necessary was taken^{as} a heresy by the functionaries at the head of the apparatus, as a display of a disruptive spirit

and as an attack on discipline. And now, the bureaucrats are formally ready to 'act upon' the 'new course', that is, to bury it in practice... Above all, it is necessary to remove from leading positions those who, at the first word of protest or objection, brandish the thunderbolts of punishment before their critics. The first result of the 'new course' must be to make everyone feel that no one from now on will terrorise the party" (24).

This time the struggle opened between the apparatus on one side and Trotsky and the 46 on the other. However, the situation was complicated, because the opposition based itself against the apparatus on Trotsky's arguments and resisted the resolution of October 5, for which he had voted, as a diversive manoeuvre. Preobrazhensky and his comrades worked out a resolution in which they proposed the election of party officials at all levels, a new formulation of the prohibition of fractions permitting real internal democracy and the re-introduction of the old rule that in matters involving disciplinary punishments the party cell must make the first decisions.

There was a general meeting of Moscow party members on December 11. Kamenev showed little spirit of fight there. He stressed the necessity for workers' democracy, within which the election of officials alone guarantees freedom of discussion. He admitted that un-limited workers' democracy includes "the right to form groups", and justified the opposition of the Central Committee to this right on the ground that the party was in power. Groups exist on foreign Communist parties, because "they have not succeeded in eliminating certain social-democratic survivals in their struggle against the government". He did not quote Trotsky, but attacked Preobrazhensky, who denounced the troika and challenged it to produce a single document of its own. He ended by calling on members to "vote confidence in the Central Committee" (25).

More interesting were the interventions which followed. Krylenko analysed the notion of a fraction, which was nothing other than "a distinct group bound by a special discipline". In his view, the conception which Kamenev defended was a confusion of "fraction" with "group", "reducing all the democracy in the party to the individual right of comrades to intervene in isolation", which led to "suppressing workers' democracy in the party". He declared: "The right to unite on determined platforms is an absolute right without which internal party democracy is no more than an empty phrase" (26). The President of the Executive, Kalinin, admitted squarely that the apparatus did not want democracy: "In the situation today, no Communist can admit complete democracy... Who suffers from the absence of democracy? It is not the working class, but the party itself. But within the party there are very few people who are not connected in some way with the apparatus, who play no part in its complicated work... Who will profit most from our democracy? In my opinion, it will be those who are not overloaded with work. Those who are free will be able to benefit wholly from democracy, while those who are burdened down with work will not be able to do so" (27). Of the other speakers listed, Yaroslavsky alone delivered a sharp attack on Trotsky. Sapronov and Preo-

brazhensky supported the opinions of the Opposition, explicitly demanding freedom for groups, and Radek appealed to the authority of Lenin in their support.

Preobrazhensky's resolution had a small majority against it, but the feeling of the meeting seemed to show that the Opposition had the wind in its sails. On December 15 Stalin was to launch in Pravda the first personal attack: that Trotsky's memory is short when he includes himself among the Old Bolsheviks; that the degeneration risks coming, not from the Old Guard, but from "Mensheviks who have entered our party and who have not been able to rid themselves of their opportunist habits". He accused Trotsky of "duplicity", on the ground that his letter of December 10 supported the opposition of the 46 to the Central Committee for whose resolution he had, nevertheless, voted. He wrote that, in relation to the youth, Trotsky was practising "base demagoguery".

The tone of the polemic rose another step at the meeting of Petrograd militants on December 15. Zinoviev mentioned the revelation which Bukharin had just made in a meeting in Moscow, about the contacts which the Left Communists and the Left Social-Revolutionaries had had in 1918, about the possibility that the majority would be overthrown and that a Piatakov government would be formed. He had two objects: first, he wanted to show that "the struggle of two fractions in a party which has power contains the germ of two governments", and, secondly, to stress that in 1918 a number of the 46 had been "Left Communists" and opponents of Lenin. Trying to get to the heart of the problem, he declared: "Bureaucratism must be cleared away, but those who want to reduce the party apparatus in general must be reminded of their Communist duties, because our apparatus is the right arm of the party". On the question of Trotsky's attitude, he launched the thought: "Trotskyism is a well-defined tendency in the workers' movement", but stressed: "whatever our divergences on these questions today, Trotsky is Trotsky and remains one of our most authoritative leaders. Come what may, his collaboration in the Politburo of the Central Committee and in the other organs is indispensable" (28).

During this time, the discussion continued in the columns of Pravda, and the tone became sharper. Its editor, Konstantinov, lost his job for having protested, on December 16 and written that "slander and accusations without foundation are becoming the weapons in discussion of many comrades: this must cease". His successor was no more adaptable to the directives from the Central Committee, and he too was dismissed in his turn. On December 21, Zinoviev attacked a document by Trotsky entitled "The New Course, which was circulating in the party: in his opinion, Trotsky was supporting the Central Committee "like the rope supports the hanging man" and his support really expressed "a resistance to the line"... "The essential error of comrade Trotsky lies in that he is displaying a certain re-appearance of old ideas favouring the legitimacy of divergent currents". He ended a long description of "Trotskyism" by declaring: "The whole Central Committee, united as well, perhaps even better, than in the time of Vladimir Illitch, considers that comrade Trotsky is now committing a radical political

mistake.

The New Course

The document which provoked Zinoviev's attack appeared finally in Pravda on December 28 and 29, 1923. It was not very polemical, despite some ferocious sallies, and contains a minute and very subtle analysis of the political situation, in the state apparatus and in the party, a study of the origins of bureaucratism and an outline of the "new course" which the party should take. In fact Trotsky regarded the discussion which was unfolding as marking a stage in the development of the party, its passage to "a higher historical stage". As he saw it, the "mass of Communists" were more or less saying to their leaders: "You comrades have the experience going back to before October 1917 which most of us lack, but since October under your leadership we have acquired an experience which daily grows greater. We want, not only to be led by you, but to participate with you in leading the proletariat. We want this, not only because it is our right, as members of the party, but also because it is absolutely necessary for the progress of the proletariat" (29). The explosion of discontent which was shaking the party resulted from a long preceding evolution, accelerated by the economic crisis and the long wait for the German revolution, which had led the fact to appear "with particular sharpness that the party lives in a certain sense on two levels: the higher level where people reach decisions and the lower level where people merely become aware of the decisions" (30). The "bureaucratism" which the resolution of the Central Committee had just recognised was not "some chance feature" but "a general phenomenon", much deeper than a mere hang-over from the past: "The bureaucratism of the war period was nothing compared to the bureaucratism which has developed in time of peace, when the apparatus... obstinately continues to think and to decide for the party" (31). It was from this state of things that a double danger of degeneration flowed: that among the youth, excluded from participating in the general activity, and in the Old Guard. "To see an "outrage" or an "attack" in this warning, which is based on objective Marxist foresight, one must really have the gloomy susceptibility and the arrogance of bureaucrats" (32).

Trotsky then analysed the social composition of the party, of which less than a sixth of the members were factory workers, the majority being employed in the different apparatuses of leadership.. The "presidents of regional committees or divisional commissars, whatever their origin might be, represent a determinate social type" (33). In other words, "the source of bureaucratism lies in the growing concentration of the attention and the forces of the party on the governmental institutions and apparatuses and in the slowness of industrial development" (34) which does not enable a change to be made in the social composition of the party within a short time. Bureaucratism, therefore, is "an essentially new phenomenon, flowing from the new tasks, the new functions and the new problems of the party" (35). "Apparatus methods" prevail, leadership replaces administration and "assumes a character of pure organisation, denegerating frequently into commands". The "secretary" sees the day-to-day concerns of the state

apparatus, "loses sight of the broad outlines", and, "believing that he is moving others, is himself moved by his own apparatus" (36).

Of course, it is desirable, in the Russian Soviet state, in which "the Communist Party is obliged to monopolise the leadership of political life", to avoid in the party "stable groupings... which can take the form of organised fractions", but it is impossible, at the same time, to avoid "differences of opinion in a party of half a million members" (37). Experience shows that "it is quite insufficient to declare that groups and fractions are a bad thing in order to prevent them from appearing" (38). The oppositions of 1917, which had been resolved by the taking of power, those of 1918 by the signing of the peace, those of 1921 by the turn to the Nep, showed that fractions are overcome by correct policy: the resolution of the Tenth Congress which prohibited them could possess only "an auxiliary character", from this standpoint, within the framework of real workers' democracy. Effectively fractions did exist in the party. The most dangerous of them, which nourished the others, was the "bureaucratic, conservative fraction", out of which "provocative voices" were raised, and where "people dug around in the past" seeking there "everything that can embitter the discussion" (39), and where people in this way endanger the unity of the party when they claim to counter-pose it to the need for democracy.

In his reply to Zinoviev, Trotsky declared that "it would be monstrous to believe that the party will break its apparatus or will permit anyone else to do so". But "it wishes to renew its apparatus, and it reminds the apparatus that it belongs to the party which elects it and that the apparatus must not detach itself from the party" (40). As Lenin had already seen, bureaucratism is a social phenomenon which has profound causes in Russia, in "the necessity to create and to support a state apparatus which allies the interests of the proletariat and of the peasantry in perfect economic harmony", from which they were still far away. The phenomenon was complicated by the low level of culture of the broad masses. "Obviously, the party cannot tear itself away from social and cultural conditions", as they exist, but, as "a voluntary organisation", it can preserve itself all the better if it recognises the danger. Appeals to tradition from the conservative fraction serve only to disarm the party: "The more the party apparatus is closed in on itself, the more it is impregnated with a feeling of its own intrinsic importance, the more slowly does it react to the needs which arise from below, the more it inclines to counter-posing formal tradition to new needs and new tasks. And, if anything can strike a mortal blow at the spiritual life of the party and the doctrinal education of the youth, it is indeed the transformation of Leninism, a method which for its application demands initiative, critical thought and courage in the field of ideas, into a dogma, which requires nothing but interpreters appointed once and for all" (41).

The Battle for the Thirteenth Conference

The publication of "The New Course" marks the high point of the controversy, but also the end of the free debate. Thereafter the General Secretary kept a tight control of Pravda, where Bukharin immediately answered Trotsky, repeating the accusations of "deviat-

ion" and of "opposition to Leninism". The oppositionists expressed themselves only infrequently, with their articles surrounded by articles by supporters of the Central Committee. There was to be no reply to "The New Course" but on the level of courtroom argument. In fact, the theses of Trotsky and of the 46 seemed to be so successful in Moscow that Trotsky could write, on December 10, that the capital had "taken the initiative in the revision of the orientation of the party". The apparatus understood the danger, and it was to ensure its success in the discussion by its own methods, using the powers which it possessed and which, precisely, the opposition wished to take away from it.

The right to nominate enabled it to isolate Trotsky and to behead the Opposition. The nomination of his friends to high diplomatic posts was not the result of chance. No suspicion was raised when Joffe was sent to China and then Krestinski to Germany. But when Christian Rakovski was appointed ambassador to Paris in summer 1923, it was clear that the apparatus was getting rid in this way of one of the spokesmen for the nationalities at the Twelfth Congress, of a close friend of Trotsky, of an opponent of Stalin and of one of the most able leaders of the Opposition which was coming into existence. Rakovski had not signed the declaration of the 46 because he had been out of Russia, but the Ukrainian party was influenced by his friends and by the end of the year became a stronghold of the Opposition. Chubar, who succeeded Rakovski as the president of the Council of Peoples' Commissars in the Ukraine, and Kaganovich, who was in charge of the secretariat, "re-organised" the Ukrainian party. Kotziubinski, an underground fighter in 1918 and a spokesman for the Opposition, was sent to Vienna. The cells in the Red Army voted by a majority in favour of the theses of the Opposition. Antonov-Ovseenko, who was responsible for the Communist Party's work in the army, was removed from his post for having sent round a circular about workers' democracy, in conformity with the decisions of the Congress, without having first referred to the Central Committee. Bubnov, who replaced him, had also signed the declaration of the 46, but he now repudiated it: in this way Stalin killed two birds with one stone.

The Communist Youth did not take part in the discussion, but the majority of their militants who belonged to the party supported the Opposition. Fifteen elected members of their Central Committee were not merely relieved of their functions in the organisation by the party secretariat (in breach of the constitution) but also were sent off "on assignment" to distant localities. This gave the majority in the leadership to the supporters of the troika. None the less, Trotsky was to publish, as an appendix to "The New Course" a letter from youth leaders, all sympathisers of the Opposition: these were Federov and Dalin, members of the Central Committee, Andre Chokin, Alexander Bezymenski and Dugatchev three of the six members of the first youth presidium in 1918 and two former Moscow secretaries, all of whom maintained their positions.

These were exceptions. In Moscow and Petrograd, responsible officials and members were "displaced by being sent to work hundreds or thousands of kilometers away. The very threat made more than one Oppositionist weaken and helped more than one vacillator to

make up his mind. The Opposition did not organise itself as a fraction - indeed, Trotsky was not formally a member of it - in order to avoid being accused of indiscipline. Consequently the apparatus had no difficulty in isolating the delegates who supported the Opposition and eliminating them through the system of election at several stages. In Moscow, for example, the supporters of the Opposition were in a majority in the party cells, but were not more than 36% in the district conferences and 18% in the provincial conference, where Preobrazhenski won 61 votes against 325 to Kamenev. Even though the Opposition had the majority - thanks perhaps to the "displacement" of its leaders - in centres such as Ryazan-Penza, Kaluge, Irbirsk and Cheliabinsk, even though it was in a majority in at least one-third of the cells in the Red Army and in nearly all the students' cells, it finally had no more than three delegates at the national conference.

Nothing but apparatus manipulation could have so reduced the representation of the Opposition. None the less the battle was a grave set-back for it and disappointment of its initial hopes. To be sure, it had triumphed among the youth and especially among the students - who represented at this date an intellectual and active elite of recent working-class origins - and in this confirmed the forecast of Trotsky. But the Opposition had failed in its principal effort to influence the workers in the party. In Moscow, where it had most votes, it won a majority in only 67 out of 346 factory cells. Several explanations for this set-back have been suggested, for example, the absence in the platform of the 46 of any appeal to the immediate interests of the workers. Others have stressed that Trotsky was perhaps unpopular in certain sectors of the working-class since the trade union discussion. None of these elements can be ignored - Stalin knew what he was doing when he treated Trotsky as "the patriarch of the bureaucrats" - but none of them by itself is more satisfactory than those over-simplified explanations which talk about Stalin's skill in manoeuvre or Zinoviev's demagogic methods. Perhaps E. H. Carr is nearer to the truth when he writes: "The failure of the Opposition to base itself on the proletariat was a symptom of the weakness, not merely of the Opposition, but of the proletariat itself" (42).

Probably it is this feeling that in the short run defeat was inevitable which explains the abstention of Trotsky in the final phase of the battle. He was struck down by this mysterious illness, which never ceased to weigh him down during these years. He took no part in any of the party meetings outside the Politburo, and left to Preobrazhenski, Piatkov and others, capable and brilliant people but far from possessing Trotsky's stature, the task of defending the theses which were his and those of the 46. On December 21 he accepted the verdict of the Kremlin doctors, who prescribed that he should leave Moscow and take a cure for two months by the Black Sea. No doubt this contributed to weakening the Opposition. But at any rate the explanation of it is difficult, and the hypotheses which are proposed hardly conform to Trotsky's combative temperament, when they suggest that he was hesitant in the face of a struggle over principles or shrank back from its consequences. It seems more likely that the key to his attitude is to be sought in his discouragement at the developments in politics which he had not foreseen, in a feeling

of being helpless against an apparatus the ambitions and effectiveness of which he had certainly not suspected, and in the need for time and an interval in which to re-examine things.

The Thirteenth Conference

It cannot be said that an intervention by Trotsky at the top of his form could have influenced the course of things during the several weeks of intense discussion starting in mid-December. His political semi-paralysis was fundamentally the logical result of his refusal to fight during Lenin's illness, of his almost reluctant intervention in October and of his tactic of compromise in the Politburo at the time of the vote on the resolution of December 5. Several weeks before the conference, at any rate, the stakes were down. The press published no more articles by the Opposition, but the leaders appeared one after another in its columns, declaring their determination to ensure that the party took "a new course", despite the manoeuvres of the "deviationists", the "anti-Leninists", the "Mensheviks" and the "petty-bourgeois", disguised under the banner of "Trotskyism". The pamphlet, "The New Course", in which Trotsky's principal speeches were collected, was not to be published until too late to be of use in the discussion and was to serve less as a weapon in the hands of the Opposition than as a demonstration of Trotsky's ideological solidarity with it. It was the leaders of the 46 who were to wage in the party by themselves a struggle which they had begun at the same time but never waged in common.

The debates at the Conference developed in a normal way. Preobrazhenski intervened in the discussion on economic problems to stress the alarming growth of private commercial and industrial capital. Piatakov with great brilliance expounded the theses which were common ground between Trotsky and the 46: the development of industry posed problems which it was absurd to reduce to a discussion on how quickly it could be achieved, whereas the problem was one of leadership. The instrument existed in the form of the State plan (Gosplan), which should enable improvisation in economic affairs to be given up, and economic development to be based on a general conception, on precisely specified objectives consistent with the conditions and the resources available. It is a mistake to suppose that state industry has to adapt itself spontaneously to the market, on the ground that the latter develops spontaneously. Planning alone will permit industry to be adapted and enabled to dominate the market: without it, nationalisation would become an obstacle to economic development. Molotov, Kamenev and Mikoyan replied in an ironic tone. They criticised as utopian these proposals for planning industry through a period of several years. They accused the Opposition of wanting their centralising, bureaucratic conceptions to prevail in economic matters and - the eternal accusation against Trotsky and his friends - wanting to sacrifice the peasantry to the development of industry. There was no doubt which way the vote would go.

The discussion on the problems of the party was opened by Stalin. He admitted that a certain bureaucratism existed, and accounted for it as the result of the pressure which the State bureaucracy exerted on the party, increased by the low cultural level of the

country and the psychological hang-overs from War Communism. He mentioned the discussions in the sub-committee about the resolution on workers' democracy, and declared: "I remember how we clashed, with Trotsky, on the question of groups and fractions. Trotsky did not oppose the prohibition of fractions, but he resolutely defended the idea of admitting groupings in the party. That is the position of the Opposition. These people do not seem to understand that when you admit freedom to form groupings, you open the door to people like Miasnikov and permit them to mislead the party by presenting a fraction as a grouping. For, what is the difference between a grouping and a fraction? Nothing but a difference in appearance... If we admitted groupings, we would ruin the party. We would transform it from a monolithic organisation, a compact one, into an alliance of groupings and fractions, which would negotiate between each other and would conclude alliances and temporary agreements. That would not be a party. It would be the end of the party" (43). In Stalin's opinion, the real tendency to bureaucracy had provided Trotsky with the pretext for intervening in violation of discipline, with his "anarcho-Menshevik" point of view, and trying to set the party against its apparatus, the youth against their elders and the students against the workers. The unity of the party had to be strengthened. It had to be forewarned against every danger. In order to demonstrate the determination of the Bolsheviks, it should include in the final resolution point 7 of the resolution of the Tenth Congress prohibiting fractions, the point which gave to the Central Committee the powers to exclude which we know.

Preobrazhenski intervened on behalf of the Opposition. He took up again all the arguments which had already been advanced, recalling the intense life of the party in the time of workers' democracy and protesting against the systematic exhumation of old quarrels and against the identification of the cause of the bureaucrats with "Leninism".

Stalin's reply was sharper than his opening. The prohibition of fractions had been voted at the Tenth Congress, at the time when Lenin led the party. The minimum period of party membership for party officials, which in fact prevented them from being elected, was decided at the Eleventh Congress: Lenin was the leader of the party. What Preobrazhenski and his friends were demanding was "a modification of the line of party behaviour which was closely attached to Leninism". In his reply to Preobrazhenski he explained clearly what he really thought on a precise point: the fact is unusual enough at this time to deserve notice. "In fact", he declared, "what does Preobrazhenski's line of argument lead to? He wants nothing more nor less than to restore to the life of the party the character which it had in 1917 and 1918. At that time the party was divided into groups and fractions. It was prey to internal struggles, at a dangerous point in its history, placed before a question of life or death... Preobrazhenski presents the life of the party in 1917 and 1918 to us in ideal colours. But we know only too well this period in the life of the party, the difficulties in which went as far as provoking grave crises. Is Preobrazhenski thinking of restoring this state of affairs, this "ideal state"

of our party?" (44). In reality, Stalin argued, the threat to the party came from a heterogeneous coalition, ranging from Trotsky, "the patriarch of the bureaucrats", to "perpetual anti-Leninists" such as people like Preobrazhenski and Saprnov.

The final resolution laid down that the party had been subjected to attack by a re-groupment of small circles of former oppositionists who were gathered round the "fractionist" activity of Trotsky. The Opposition "has issued as its slogan the destruction of the party apparatus in its effort to shift the centre of gravity of the struggle against the bureaucracy of the State into the party". Its positions were condemned as "an abandonment of Leninism", "reflecting objectively the pressure exerted by the petty bourgeoisie". The resolution laid down as the remedy for the bureaucratisation, the existence of which it recognised, the rapid recruitment of a hundred thousand factory workers, the reduction of the number of students in the party, improvement in the education of party members by systematic teaching of "Leninism", tightening discipline and greater severity in the repression of "fractional activities" (45).

The troika, then, finally won a complete political victory. Moreover, the apparatus vigorously resisted the first serious attack. What were the party militants thinking? For many of them, no doubt, there existed no problem: the party continued, having overcome a momentary crisis. Some were troubled by the attacks of the Old Bolsheviks on Trotsky, who since 1917 had, with Lenin, incarnated the party. The most cynical and demoralised counted the hits in the struggle for power which unfolded before their eyes. Many apparatchiks, like Kalinin, had clear consciences: they had the impression that Trotsky had stabbed the party in the back and that the party had effectively defended itself.

A wave of discouragement spread through the supporters of the Opposition. Some militants committed suicide: these included Lutovinov, the Old Bolshevik, leader of the Workers' Opposition, Eugenia Bosch, a party militant before the war, who organised the underground party in the Ukraine during the Civil War, Glatzmann, one of Trotsky's secretaries and a number of other less-known militants. Others paid in their material situation for taking up a position which was punished by being transferred. Some made up their minds to be more prudent in future. For the nucleus of those who remained convinced that they had been correct as against the party, there could be no question of resisting after the vote of the conference: these were disciplined militants. None the less, the political battle which had just unfolded had cast a lurid light on the advance and the depth of the degeneration, the symptoms of which they had emphasised. For the first time in the history of the party, there had been a struggle, not so much about principles, ideas or problems of tactics as about personal questions. In addition, also, the apparatus openly intervened, imposing its discipline in the vote by intimidation and even violence. Yet, for all of them, one hope remained: the recovery of Lenin, whose personality and authority could reverse a situation in the party which

was still a dangerous one, with the party still trembling from the blows which the protagonists in the conflict over the "new course" had dealt each other.

F O O T N O T E S

- (1) Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 27, pp. 272 - 3.
- (2) Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 29, pp. 183 - 4.
- (3) Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 306
- (4) Ibid. pp. 301 - 2
- (5) Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 187.
- (6) Schapiro, "The Bolsheviks and the Opposition", p. 278.
- (7)
- (8) Trotsky, My Life, p. 499.
- (9) The existence of these notes was revealed by Trotsky, but they were not published until after the 20th Congress. See Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 36, p. 608.
- (10) L. Trotsky, "Stalin School of Falsification", New Park, 1974, pp. 57 - 8.
- (11) L. Trotsky, "Lessons of October".
- (12) The full text is in L. Trotsky, "Stalin", p. 368.
- (13) Ruth Fischer, "Stalin and German Communism", p. 312.
- (14) L. Trotsky, "My Life", p. 505ff.
- (15) L. Revo, "La Révolution et la Culture", "Bulletin Communiste" No. 2, 1924.
- (16) Quoted in Pravda, December 13, 1923, by Kamenev.
- (17) The full text of Trotsky's letter is unknown and is not found in the Harvard Archives. There are large extracts from it in Max Eastman, "Since Lenin Died", Appendix IV.
- (18) The full text, translated from Russian into English, is quoted in E. H. Carr, "The Interregnum", pp. 367 - 373.
- (19) R. V. Daniels, "The Conscience of the Revolution: Communist Opposition in Soviet Russia", Harvard University Press, 1960, p. 219 - 220.
- (20) Stenographic report of the Thirteenth Congress, p. 154, quoted by Eastman, op. cit. pp. 51 - 2.
- (21) International Correspondence No. 5, January 24, 1924, pp. 42 - 45.
- (22) L. Trotsky, "The New Course", New Park 1956, p. 76.
- (23) Bulletin Communiste No. 5, 1924, pp. 135 - 138.
- (24) Trotsky, *ibid.*, pp. 79 - 80.

- (25) Bulletin Communiste No. 5, 1924, pp. 135 - 138.
- (26) Bulletin Communiste No. 1, 1924, p. 7.
- (27) Ibid. p. 6.
- (28) Bulletin Communiste, No. 8, 1924, p- 222 - 228.
- (29) Trotsky, ibid., p. 14.
- (30) Ibid., p. 15.
- (31) Ibid., p. 16.
- (32) Ibid., p. 19.
- (33) Ibid., p. 21.
- (34) Ibid., p. 22.
- (35) Ibid., p. 23.
- (36) Ibid., pp. 24 - 5
- (37) Ibid., p. 27.
- (38) Ibid., P. 28.
- (39) Ibid., p. 33.
- (40) Ibid., p. 34.
- (41) Ibid., p. 42 and p. 49.
- (42) E. H. Carr, "The Interregnum", p. 328.
- (43) Stenographic report, quoted in Leites and Bernaut, "Ritual of Liquidation: Bolsh evism on Trial", Glencoe, Illinois Free Press, 1954.
- (44) International Correspondence No. 8, 1924, p. 70.
- (45) Resolution of the Thirteenth Conference, Bulletin Communiste No. 9, 1924, p. 238.