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*No 5, May 1990*

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[Translation of the Russian-language theoretical and political journal of the CPSU Central Committee published in Moscow 18 times per year.]

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**KOMMUNIST**

No 5, March 1990

[Translation of the Russian-language theoretical and political journal of the CPSU Central Committee published in Moscow 18 times per year.]

**Lenin's Legacy and Perestroika**

905B0020A Moscow *KOMMUNIST* in Russian No 5, Mar 90 (signed to press 16 Mar 90) pp 3-4

[Text] In times of acute and major social changes criticism of the past becomes all-embracing and merciless. At that point it appears as though nothing of the past is of any value. In our days a certain portion of such criticism and efforts to find those "responsible" for the socialist choice made in 1917 and its consequences reaches back all the way to Marx and Engels but is particularly partial when it comes to Lenin. As a rule, the extent of its fairness and substantiveness is more loud and nihilistic than provable. It is a fact of reality which must be taken into consideration. Nor could we consider amazing and absolutely unexpected the fact that, sooner or later, this was bound to happen. What is amazing is something else: the length and indiscriminate nature of the transformation of the Leninist political and theoretical legacy into a holy writ, into a dogma, into a repository of quotations for the latest "loyal students," i.e., the impoverishment and distortion of the Leninist words, thoughts and logic, depriving them of life, truth and historical concreteness, and hiding behind and justifying oneself with them! Having worn out and made senseless the poetic formula which states that "today as well Lenin is more alive than all the living," another one was forgotten: "Had he been royalty or divinity my rage would have been boundless. I would halt processions and pilgrimages and would stand in the way of the crowds."

The 120th anniversary of Vladimir Ilich Lenin's birth may be perhaps the liveliest of the anniversaries over the past more than 60 years in terms of the revolutionary, the purging spirit and thought and closeness to the subjects which occupied his mind and conscience at the very end of his life.

Lenin is not to be blamed for what was done with him, with his name and writings after his death. He did not bequeath to us to remember, love and study ourselves in the Stalinist model. He did not turn his life into the life of a saint. He did not order that the world be filled with his images. He did not bequeath to us to stop the development of the social sciences for decades and to impose upon culture the burden of the gloomy industriousness of a jailer. Our country cannot blame him for the unceremonious treatment of human life and the destinies of nations and peoples by the postrevolutionary state.

Today Vladimir Ilich Lenin must be defended. He has long needed such defense, virtually from the very first days of his immortality. The defense was late, to the

country's misfortune. This makes it even more timely today. This must be a defense from slander and lies and wrongful accusations. It must be a defense against the continuation of official and false honors and simplistic interpretation of the revolution and the reasons for revolutionary activities. It must be a defense against the Pharisees who proclaim themselves supreme judges.

However, the following could be said as well: Lenin does not need anyone's defense. His life, his work and his thoughts can stand by themselves. This is actually the best defense, the most natural of all defenses. However we, the people of today, who endlessly repeat his names and his words in the course of our lives, as outsiders, does it not depend upon us to release from the verbal dumps, created through zealous dogmatism, the reality and trueness of the Leninist work and Lenin's historical role?

In that case, however, we should not think that the dynamics of live Marxist thinking was entirely blocked in our country. No one has been able as yet to obstruct thoughts and to block sources.

The way we see it, this Leninist issue of *KOMMUNIST*, saturated with discussion materials, is precisely a defense of Lenin. Lenin's handwriting on the cover of this issue restores to the hardened word "communist" its human, its live dimensions. Discussion is a feature of the agile, the restless mind which strives toward the truth, but only if we assume that this aspiration is serious, if it is based on knowledge and not conjectures. We hope that our discussion materials, however arguable, are precisely this kind of desired feature.

Our authors free and thus defend Lenin in his true historical significance and real dimensions, without over- and underestimation. In front of us stands not a man-god who always understood everything and who was always right, but a live, struggling and suffering man, totally captivated by the idea of a great just revolution and the future socialist restructuring of his homeland. In A. Potresov's and N. Valentinov's memoirs, published for the first time in our country, Lenin does not appear the way we had become accustomed to reading about him in the monochromatic-rose-tinted memoirs. This time he does not trigger in the writers either tenderness or infinite agreement. This, however, makes all the more interesting their testimony of Lenin's political talent, the importance and charm of his personality and his profound moral and spiritual affiliation with Russian revolutionary-democratic and liberation traditions. They remind us that he was the son of his time and in him, as a Russian person, Western revolutionary thinking encountered Russian thought....

The inner freedom with which M. Gefter thinks and makes assumptions, alongside Lenin, in trying to understand the tightening of the knots of national conflicts and the very style which was required for submitting such an assumption also are a defense of Lenin. It is a defense

against the respect of officialdom, a hierarchic mental distance and corrosive servility....

Our authors—historians, philosophers and economists—agree on the main thing: the more accurately we define Lenin's true historical significance and the significance of his actions and thoughts, the more unquestionable and loftier will be his spiritual and moral authority. Anything that is unnecessary, fabricated, subsequently added, intentional, unctuous and distorting the true scale of Lenin's personality must be rejected. Life proves that the defense of Lenin against Stalin and his theoretical exercises and ostentatious following remains relevant. Neither Lenin nor Marx can be held responsible for Stalinist "Marxism-Leninism."

It is equally unquestionable that glorification was used in an effort to conceal the most important thing: the incompatibility between his thoughts, personality and ideals and that which was subsequently proclaimed as being his "true path," his way and his course.

We hope that the reader will enjoy the live waters of the bold debatable thinking. One can easily note that this debatability is not self-seeking and it is not a due paid to fashion. Even if it were, it would be a due of respect paid to a person who meant such a great deal to the destinies of the country and the world.

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#### Rereading....

905B0020B Moscow KOMMUNIST in Russian No 5, Mar 90 (signed to press 16 Mar 90) pp 5-7

[Article by S. Shcheblygin, senior instructor, Moscow Higher Party School]

[Text] "...We are forced to acknowledge the radical change of our entire viewpoint on socialism." V.I. Lenin

*"Current publications extensively promote the idea of the changed concept of socialism in Lenin during the final years of his life. Correspondingly, with reference to Lenin's previously 'unrequited' ideas, those of a 'new model' of socialism are being developed. In an effort to understand this ideological innovation, which I find difficult, I reread Lenin's works quoted by the authors in substantiation of their views.... The more thoroughly I compare their assessments and conclusions with their references to Lenin's legacy, the more convinced I become of the clear disparity between these references and the true nature of the works...." A. Lugovskaya, Moscow.*

**This excerpt from a letter to the editors is a confirmation of the dramatic clashes in social awareness, related to the reinterpretation of Lenin's theoretical legacy and the molding of its contemporary evaluations. What is happening here? Following are the thoughts on this topic of S. Shcheblygin, senior instructor, Moscow Higher Party School.**

In my view, the "mental confusion" in the area of the traditional perception of Lenin's ideological-theoretical legacy can be traced back to a misinterpretation of a number of most important Leninist works in their initial "preinterpretation" variant. Yes, on our shelves there always stood all (or almost all) of Lenin's works. However, the circumstance-governed, "official," Leninism has greatly strayed from the real Lenin, and the most difficult thing today is to realize that the obstacle separating us from Lenin's primordial thoughts exists within ourselves.

Even before Copernicus the sky was not hidden from astronomers. However, their computations became increasingly confused with each new dimension, leading them to a dead end. Copernicus was able to make the theoretical breakthrough only by realizing that the problem was within us: it was necessary to change our very view on the universe.

Such is the case today. For many long years a one-dimensional, a linear vision of Leninism existed and was protected. In exploiting our own sincere belief in Ilich's brilliance, we assumed that he was a simple man, like the truth, and zealously turned each one of his written lines into the truth. It was somehow stupid even to question the fact that Lenin was aware of the truth both in 1903 and in 1923 as was, obviously, stupid to doubt, before Copernicus, to believe that the earth was stationary if we could see every day merely the movement of the sun in the sky. Such is the key to the Stalinist mystification of Leninism and its durability: Lenin was refused the right of dialectical contradictoriness, while Leninism was refused the right to dialectical development.

Instead of following the logic of the negation of negation, Lenin was forced to march from one great truth to another. Such "integrity" of Leninism became cast in reinforced concrete to the point that the very question of the contradictions within socialism was considered as virtually undermining the Soviet system. Today we must restore our understanding of the dialectical nature of Leninist thinking.

The linear perception of Lenin's ideas is no longer acceptable. The attempt to lay the "Leninism of the age of perestroika" on the old foundations will not lead us to a theoretical breakthrough either. The linear approach, even more so if understood as a means of implementing the latest social instruction, as a substantiation of the changes in our entire viewpoint on socialism, will be the same type of extracting quotations although different ones....

We must not mystify processes. Lenin's ideological legacy is precisely a **process** of the establishment of the idea of socialism, at a point when theoretical systems are tested and concretized by the practice of the revolution.

The range of socioeconomic alternatives on the eve of the revolution did not include a model of a non-market and non-commodity society. At that time the Bolshevik Party did not have in the least as its objective the

immediate "introduction" of socialism in a country of small peasants. Lenin directly wrote about this in his work "The Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution." The question is, why did Lenin find it necessary, soon after that, to convince himself and the party of the possibility of choosing a different way, and why was this error prove to be amazingly constructive on the political level. The answer, we believe, is quite simple.

Let us recall that long before February 1917 Lenin "classified" the future Russian revolution as a phenomenon equal in scale to the French Revolution. This thought may be traced not in isolated quotations but in his entire political and philosophical studies of that time. On the basis of this classification, the bolsheviks were assigned the role of the Jacobins. The new Jacobins, however, were armed with an ideology—Marxist socialism. When, armed with this ideology, the Bolshevik Party began the real process of the Russian revolution, it was as though the two principles—the Jacobin and the Marxist—opened within the movement a complex dialogue, supplementing and refuting each other.

In my view, it is the viewpoint of this concept of the truly new reinterpretation of Lenin's works, that makes looking at the clarified contradictions of Lenin's mind as a reflection of the contradictions within the real revolutionary process possible. It is from such positions that the amazing coincidence of the appearance of a bourgeois revolution and the acceptance of a socialist idea by the masses becomes understandable.

Naturally, the bourgeois-democratic revolution did not end in February and, from the "Jacobin" viewpoint, the next stage lay ahead: the stage of its dictatorship. To the socialists it was nothing other than the dictatorship of the proletariat. The war and the revolution broke down the market which, from the standpoint of the socialist idea, could be simply explained as follows: capitalism is being defeated, surrendering to nonmarket relations.

In the autumn of 1917 Lenin wrote two different works almost on a parallel basis: "The State and Revolution" and "The Threatening Catastrophe and How to Struggle Against It." The first asserted the antibureaucratic nature of both the future revolution and the future revolutionary state. The second noted that the only item on the agenda could be that of a humane and democratic state capitalism which essentially will in fact be socialism, i.e., a rejection of the need for a market. The result was an amazingly conflicting picture of the future society with banks as the centers of public production but without money and without bureaucracy. For the six subsequent years this idea was to determine policy to the benefit of pragmatism, giving priority alternately to the first or the second side.

A great deal is being said today about Lenin's "antimarket utopia." Are there reasons for such talk? As we can see, there are. However, no more than Stalin's idea of emphasizing the thesis of the "Leninist plan" for the

building of kolkhozes. Lenin's antimarket views dialectically coexisted with different approaches. This was particularly clearly manifested at the Eighth Party Congress, at which he called for retaining in its program the features of a commodity production as an area of activities of the middle peasantry.

By November 1920 bolshevik Jacobinism had already exhausted its possibilities in terms of the bourgeois revolution. It was no longer needed by the multi-million strong peasant army. However, it was on the basis of its ideas that the party intended to continue to build the new social life in the spirit of the socialist ideal of the Marxist classics. The result was not late in coming: an extremely grave sociopolitical crisis afflicting the Soviet system. It became clear that interrupting all market relations of the petty-commodity peasant production system meant dooming the country to catastrophe. It was at this point that Marxism appeared, no longer as a dogma but as a theory capable of self-development. The firm rejection of the tax-in-kind and state monopoly on grain trade inaugurated a new stage in bolshevik ideology, when the socialist idea had to be adapted to real processes and not vice versa.

Having proclaimed that the party is beginning to build the state capitalism of the Soviet system, Lenin quite quickly put the country on the track of a market economy. In the social consciousness, however, illusory-socialist guidelines continued to prevail: the NEP was a temporary retreat, a peasant's Brest, a breathing spell on the way to the socialist model developed in Marx's "*Critique of the Gotha Program*"...

The party did not understand Bukharin when he tried to provide more sober assessments, involving the combination of socialism with the market and developing the idea of a socialist people's capitalism. At that time, Lenin feared that ideological disputes would once again drown economic work. Meanwhile, ideological contradictions increased with every passing day. The moment of truth came only in January 1923. In his work "On the Cooperative," Lenin made a theoretical leap and agreed with Bukharin: a socialist market was possible.

As Bukharin accurately pointed out in analyzing this Leninist work, "obviously, dialectics made a full circle and that which Vladimir Ilich categorically rejected under certain circumstances and certain conditions is now becoming reality under the entirely different conditions in which we live."

It is this and not the linear interpretation of Lenin that enables us, in my view, with a clear conscience, legitimately to consider his legacy as the origin of the ideology of the renovation of Soviet society in the age of perestroika.

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**'The Path Will Not Be Straight'; Notes on V.I. Lenin's Economic Views**

905B0020C Moscow KOMMUNIST in Russian No 5, Mar 90 (signed to press 16 Mar 90) pp 8-17

[Article by O. Latsis, doctor of economic sciences]

[Text] It is not without some apprehension that I undertake to write an article on Lenin's economic views, for quotations will be necessary. One cannot make a convincing study without referring to the original texts. However, quoting Lenin is an occupation which was compromised by generations of dogmatists, speculators or simply falsifiers. To this day unconscientious quoting has not abated. Conversely, it is experiencing a kind of boom. The only difference is that in the past the vulgarizers sifted, tendentiously choosing quotations based on apologetic considerations (at least on the surface), whereas now authors are appearing, who engage in this process for the sake of refuting Lenin.

A clear example of this is V. Soloukhin's article, accompanied by an extensive critical commentary, published in the journal RODINA. However, Soloukhin's "interpretation" of Lenin is hardly worse than, shall we say, the claims instilled over many decades, according to which to the very end of his days Lenin held on to the concept of socialist production as being a "single factory" or state monopoly. One fraud is no better than another. How will the readers react? The only advice one could give them is the following: do not hasten also to trust those who are now drastically turning "everything upside-down." Read the original sources yourselves.

The purpose of this article is not to "hit with quotations" those whose views differ from the author's. Instead of arguments about things which conscientious researchers have long made clear, such as whether Lenin was "for" or "against" commodity-monetary relations, and when precisely was he "for" or "against" them and to what extent, instead of all this, let us try to determine how he viewed some fundamental economic concepts, such as "socialization," "concentration," "market" and "planning." It would be useful to remember yet another undeservedly forgotten debate: Did Lenin have a "second NEP plan?"

**'Rally Mankind Again'**

Stalinist-type quotation mongers tried not only to ignore Lenin's statements of the NEP period but also quite selectively used works written prior to the period of "war communism," particularly in the course of the polemics with the "left" in the spring of 1918. This is no accident: it is precisely in these works that one finds Lenin's understanding of the process of socialization, radically different from the Stalinist one. Whereas to Stalin statification was the peak of "socialization," Lenin repeatedly emphasized that nationalizing, confiscating and legally turning something into the property of the state did not in itself mean actual socialization (see "*Poln. Sobr. Soch.*" [Complete Collected Works], vol 36, pp

171, 278, 293 and 294, as well as "*Leninskiy Sbornik*" [Leninist Collection], XL, pp 390, 393, 398, 407 and 410).

There is also nothing amazing in the fact that these works proved to be "inconvenient" even to authors who, today as well, are trying to identify Lenin's views with those of Stalin, for the opposite purpose: not to praise but to reject these views. Particular efforts are being made to present Lenin as the predecessor of Stalinist terrorism. Serious historians have already written a great deal about the true role of terror and violence on the part of the proletarian state, forced to defend itself from the terrorism and violence of its opponents in the Civil War (see, for example, KOMMUNIST No 14, 1989, pp 74-87).

A complete study of all of Lenin's views on the role of coercion would exceed the limitations of a journal article. Furthermore, the question of the significance of violence under the conditions of a civil war and defense against intervention is relatively simple. Therefore, in this article we shall merely mention Lenin's views on the role of violence in the building of socialism, taking one of his works as illustration: his remarks on the subject of Bukharin's book "*The Economics of the Transitional Period.*" Why precisely this one? To begin with, it is not particularly well known, for this article is not mentioned in any one of Lenin's collected works. Second, the use of this work relieves us from any accusation of partiality: it was written almost 1 year before the start of the NEP and, therefore, it fully reflected the "war-communism" enthusiasms to which Lenin himself was subjected, although to a lesser extent than his fellow workers. Finally, these lines were addressed, obviously, only to Bukharin. They were not for publication and were made public years after Lenin's death and, therefore, could not be suspected of being mandatory or having a propaganda purpose. They were the complete expression of their author's thoughts.

Bukharin writes that the revival of industry requires state-proletarian coercion. "Such state coercion (confiscation of grain surpluses, tax-in-kind or any other method) is economically substantiated: to begin with, directly, for the peasantry itself is interested in the development of industry; ...second, indirectly, for the ruling power of the proletariat is the best way of blocking the restoration of the economic pressure exerted by the big landowners, usurers, bankers, the capitalist state, etc." ("*Leninskiy Sbornik.*" XL, p 401). Lenin did not object to such an interpretation of coercion. He merely emphasized the word "substantiated" and wrote on the margin: "necessary."

Bukharin argued further: "Consequently, in this case, state coercion is not 'pure coercion' of the Duhring type, for which reason it is a factor which follows the main line of socioeconomic development." Lenin: "Very good." Bukharin: "Since the industrial proletariat relied on the official socialization (statified by the proletariat) of the large-scale economy, it directly organizes the production

process." Lenin emphasized the word "official" and noted: "not only official." Finally, Bukharin claims: "To the main mass of **petty producers**, involving them in the organized apparatus is possible essentially through the **turnover sphere**, and, consequently, formally in the same way as under a system of state capitalism." Again Lenin specifies: "Not only formally."

Therefore, state coercion—the confiscation of grain surpluses (requisitioning) or tax-in-kind—was a form of taxation not rejected in principle even during the period of "war communism." Furthermore, state coercion is not "pure violence." The link between the state and the mass of petty producers is achieved via turnover or, in other words, the market.

Nonetheless, at that time the idea of the market was liked neither by the author of the book nor the author of the remarks. Why? Bukharin writes: "However, to the extent to which there still is a 'free market' there is speculation and so on; there is a speculative profit, the laws of the dynamics of which are defined differently from those of the normal capitalist system. In this case we have the monopoly status of the seller who suctions off products from other areas" ("*Leninskiy Sbornik*" XL, p 418). Lenin emphasized the words "existence of speculative profits" and "monopoly." In the margin, he wrote: "True!" Therefore, what was not liked was the monopoly of suppliers and, on this basis, speculation. Well, we dislike them just as much today as well, although we accept market relations. How to deal with them? The next chapter in the book is entitled "Noneconomic Coercion During the Transitional Period."

Bukharin's next study is that of the political power which develops capitalist production relations and which gradually introduces "**nonproletarian** human production elements within the system of the new sociopolitical connection." In this case Lenin noted: "Very good!" Bukharin further notes that this "concentrated coercion" partially turns **within itself**, becoming a factor of **self-organization and coercive self-discipline by the working people**... "Lenin: "True!!" (ibid., p 419).

This "true!" is steadily found in Bukharin's subsequent considerations of the future of coercion in the economic area. The author anticipates the breakdown of the old mentality "in the economically useful and nonparasitical groups within the hostile camp." These elements must be taken into consideration, rallied and "encompassed within new labor boundaries." Under the influence of the vestiges of the old mentality, "they consider the plan of social expediency as the grossest possible violation of the rights of the 'free individual'." Therefore, coercion is necessary. In the course of development, however, with constant re-education (Lenin indicated particular approval of that last word) the coercion elements become increasingly fewer. On the other hand, during the transitional period coercion (in other aspects) is shifted to the ruling class itself.

"This is a superlative chapter!" Lenin noted at the end of the 10th chapter. The final sentence he noted in this chapter reads as follows: "Initially expressing the most striking division within the capitalist world, proletarian dictatorship **once again begins to rally mankind**..." (ibid., p 424), after a certain balance has been reached.

Does this sound utopian? Yes, naturally, it does. However, those who are able to notice this 70 years later do not deserve a great deal of credit. It was much more difficult for Lenin to realize the impossibility of the implementation of such noble thoughts just a few months after making his remarks on Bukharin's book, and not only to realize their unrealistic nature but also to find a different way. What made this even more difficult was the fact that state coercion under the conditions of a wartime economy was invented and, for the first time, applied not by communists. It was used in the advanced capitalist countries—Germany and England—followed by tsarist Russia and the Provisional Government. During the Civil War it ensured the victory of Soviet Russia. The bolsheviks who used such coercion were inspired by the objective of—no more and no less—"once again uniting mankind." Did this happen? It is true that it did not. However, sometimes a failure may teach people more than a number of easy successes.

#### Social Accountability

The words accountability and control buzzed in our ears in their time and many bookkeeping offices were decorated with posters reading "socialism means accountability," although Lenin had never written that socialism means bookkeeping or, let us say, warehouse accountability. Conversely, he frequently used another word combination which was subsequently firmly forgotten: social accountability. What did this mean? Let us cite the words found in one of Lenin's first works: "The product of the individual producer, which is to be used by someone else, reaches the consumer and gives the producer the right to obtain another social product which comes to him in the form of **money**, i.e., subject to a preliminary social accountability, qualitatively and quantitatively. This accountability takes place behind the back of the producer, through market fluctuations" (op. cit., vol 1, p 425; subsequent references to V.I. Lenin's works indicate volume and page only). In other words, social accountability is an act of use on the market of the price accepted by the consumer.

This term is by no means accidentally mentioned by Lenin. In his "Development of Capitalism in Russia" he once again turns to the "market social accountability" (vol 3, p 314); furthermore, he uses the concept of "regulating production and social control over it" (ibid., p 547). Particularly characteristic is a cursory evaluation, provided in this work, of non-market, of pre-market relations, made directly in connection with social accountability and pitted against it. "The product of the farmer, put on the market for sale, began to be subject to social accountability initially on the local, then on the national and, finally, the international market; this way,

the estranged farmer's previous alienation from the rest of the world was eliminated once and for all. Willy-nilly, under the threat of bankruptcy, the farmer had to take into consideration the totality of social relations in his country and in other countries linked to the global market" (ibid., p 310). "The estranged farmer's alienation" was, according to Lenin, similar to the situation of the producer isolated from the market.

Do all such assessments not indicate that at the time that he wrote his first economic works Lenin possessed a deeper understanding of the social functions of the market, losing it subsequently, as manifested by the attempt at a direct conversion to "communist" production and distribution in 1919-1920? No, there was no mental backsliding. To begin with, Lenin never forgot the limited nature of market control, by no means reducing to it all management levers. Lenin answered Skvortsov, one of his critics, who ascribed to Lenin the idea that capitalism ensures a constant proportionality through the market, as follows: "A constant, deliberately maintained proportionality would indeed indicate planning. However, this is not the type of proportionality which 'is established only as the mean value of a number of constant fluctuations' (that is precisely what I pointed out concerning the passage quoted by Mr. Skvortsov)" (ibid., p 620).

(Let us note, incidentally, the definition of planning unexpectedly dropped in the course of this consideration: constant, deliberately maintained proportionality. As we can see, it is not the existence of a **mechanism** of state planned management which is adopted as an indicator of planning but the obtained **result**: Is constant proportionality achieved? This viewpoint makes entirely obvious the absence of real planning in our contemporary national economy which, despite a huge centralized management apparatus, suffers from endless shortages and other disproportions, commodity-monetary in particular.)

Second, let us not ignore the very approach taken by Lenin to the study of social development. He speaks of the "most incredible assumptions—such as that the economic order in a society could be created or destroyed by the will of a group of people, be they members of the 'intelligentsia' or the 'government'..." (vol 1, p 405). He emphasizes that "'the question of the market' must be taken out of the area of sterile speculations as to what is 'possible' and 'necessary,' on the basis of reality, on the basis of the study and **interpretation** of the development of economic order in Russia, and why they are what they are and not something else" (ibid., p 106). That is precisely the way he acted. He noted the progressive nature of a conversion from premarket and precapitalist relations to market capitalist ones. He expected that subsequent noncapitalist relations will, in turn, become nonmarket, the more so since the experience of capitalism in the pre-October years (World War I) had revealed the numerous limitations applicable to market laws. However, when after the end of the Civil

War reality itself proved that the market had no intention of dying, Lenin immediately drew the right conclusions, both scientific and practical. All he needed to this effect were a few months. Considering that it takes us decades to realize the sterility of efforts to impose one's utopias on economic life, how can we resent him for those months?

### Against Juggling Figures

There appears to be only one technical and economic problem which at most various times, from Marx to the present, has been of tremendous ideological and political significance and become the subject of the sharpest possible arguments and political struggles: the question of the rational scale of the economy. Suffice it to recall that it is precisely the vulgar interpretation of the familiar thesis of the superiority of large-scale output that was the ideological substantiation of Stalin's agrarian policy, which turned the cooperativization of the countryside from a natural progressive process into the greatest possible national tragedy. What about the present debates? The fate of ministries and cooperatives, the future of kolkhozes and lessees, the attitude toward private property or toward state concerns, and fabrications about the "unpromising future" of villages or the policy concerning private plots, are all being considered through the lens of views concerning the advantages of large-scale or petty production.

What was Lenin's view on this matter? No two opinions are possible in this case: together with Marx, he considered the concentration of capital under capitalism to be a progressive process and, therefore, he looked at socialist production, based on the latest technology ("electrification") as large-scale production. It would be impossible at this point to list all of his statements to this effect, for they are in the hundreds. Furthermore, this is unnecessary: they are well familiar for the simple reason that those who like to consolidate everything "to the point of senselessness" have backed, throughout those decades, their slogans with references to Lenin.

However, Lenin's views on this subject have never been so one-sided as depicted by their subsequent supporters of gigantomania. Nor were his views on the ways of progress from small to large-scale production static; he considered this motion an inseparable part of progress from a patriarchal to a socialist system. Suffice it to recall the evolution of his views on the socialist economy as a whole: from understanding it as state monopoly, with the state power held by the workers, to the concept of socialism as a system of civilized members of cooperatives. However, even such a tremendous change in his viewpoint did not change his views on the leading development trend, for cooperativization as well is a path from a small private farm to a large-scale collective farm using more advanced equipment.

It is impossible to discuss in this article the contemporary understanding of this most difficult problem, although there are no reasons to conceal the views of the



author, the more so since they have already been partially expressed in KOMMUNIST (No 1, 1987). If we recall the extremely brief judgment expressed by Marx, according to which, all other conditions being equal, smaller capital is crushed by bigger capital, obviously, we can prove that this assessment of the general trend has not become obsolete and that the stipulation about all other conditions being equal has become even more relevant: with the contemporary increasing complexity of the production process, "other conditions" become increasingly varied and ever less frequently equal. Under a set of specific circumstances, farms of any size, including private farms, could prove more efficient, for which reason it would be useful to guarantee the free competition among all types of farms and all forms of ownership. The overall trend in this case would prevail: large-scale socialist production would remain predominant in the national economy.

At this point, however, we would like to consider another matter: What is, as viewed by Lenin, large-scale production? How to interpret the concept itself? Let us consider here again one work which is not all that frequently mentioned: the book "*New Data on the Laws of Development of Capitalism in Agriculture. Issue No 1. Capitalism and Farming in the United States.*" Some circumstantial considerations related to Soviet agrarian policy are not mentioned in this book for the simple reason that it was written in 1915. This was a purely scientific work, the purpose of which, as Lenin wrote to Gorkiy, was to popularize Marxism and to substantiate it through facts.

In that work, Lenin repeatedly attacks the juggling of figures and a predilection for average data based on one-sided or totally random indicators which do not prove anything relative to the nature of socioeconomic processes. One of the most popular and misleading indicators is that of classifying farms according to the amount of land used which, actually, confuses rather than explains anything. Russian zemstvo statistics, Lenin wrote, which were noted for a certain scientific interest in the subject, were almost the first to introduce other classification methods, based on crop, the amount of work cattle, and the use of hired labor. Unfortunately, these works by Russian statisticians were not of a systematic nature.

Lenin substantiates his approach as follows: the scale of application of hired labor must be considered one of the leading indicators of the extent of development of capitalism; the main feature in assessing the dimensions of a farm should be not the size of the cultivated area but the volume of output and the amount of capital applied. The bourgeois economists, who ignored this, reached conclusions which were the precise opposite of reality, "detecting" a trend toward a reduction in the average size of farms whereas, in fact, they were expanding: more capital was used on lesser areas and the volume of output increased. "A 'petty' matter was forgotten: the process of agricultural intensification!" Lenin wrote about one such author (vol 27, p 156).

"Data on the cost of fertilizer and of tools and machinery are the most accurate statistical expression of the extent of agricultural intensification." Such was the criterion substantiated by Lenin through his study of a large number of objective facts (ibid., pp 159-160). The practical use of this criterion radically changes all the different concepts concerning American agriculture. America's "granary," the "wheat factories" area of the central northwestern states turns out to be by no means a model of development of capitalism. Here it is only the average size of cultivated land per farm that is high; in terms of the use of capital and hired labor, however, such farms are inferior to areas of intensive farming, which use less land area per farm. The New England area, where the farms are the smallest, conversely indicates the highest level of development of capitalism in farming. "This conclusion," Lenin writes, "is of a most essential and basic significance in understanding the process of development of capitalism in farming in general, for agricultural intensification and related decrease in the average amount of land in the farms is not accidental. It is not a local or sporadic but a **general** phenomenon occurring in all civilized countries" (vol 27, pp 167-168).

Conclusions which are exceptionally relevant in terms of our present debates on agrarian policy stem from this analysis.

Applying Lenin's approach, we could, in particular, introduce useful specifications in the contemporary debates on the "family farm." The peasant farm, with a small number of people employed and a small amount of land (family plot, leased land, private ownership, petty-cooperative ownership, etc.) will not mandatorily be small according to a truly scientific criterion, as suggested in Lenin's work. In the case of application of substantial "capital" (intensification) it could fully turn out to be large-scale and, therefore, no less efficient than a farm covering a large area.

The problem of combining land, labor and capital investments is of interest today from another viewpoint as well. Economists are familiar with the old argument concerning investments in the agrarian sector of the economy. The sum total of state capital investments in this sector in the decades after the March 1965 CPSU Central Committee Plenum has reached astronomical figures, ranging in the hundreds of billions of rubles. The effectiveness of such investments has been extremely low, even including periods of total lack of increase in net agricultural output. The requirements of the agrarian sector largely define the existing excessive and even unbearable overall investment burden inflicted on the national economy. Is this burden justified, a burden which all of us, including the farmers, are paying for today with the difficulties caused by the disturbed finances of the country?

One argument is frequently cited in support of the need for the further intensification of investments in agricultural production: in the United States capital investments (machines and fertilizer above all) per hectare are

significantly higher than in our country. Why is it per hectare and not per unit of output? Why is it that only one of the three cost elements (land, labor, "capital") is considered? In our country much larger areas of land are used for agricultural production, which employs also several hundred percent more workers. What will be the result of the total social outlays? Nor should we ignore the fact that both American and Western European farming has reached an entirely different stage of development and intensification compared to ours, and that we cannot mechanically duplicate its structure.

Let us repeat Lenin's ironic remark: "'A petty matter' has been forgotten: the process of agricultural intensification!" Is this not related also to a certain puzzle concerning the structure of investments in the agroindustrial complex? We know that in our country as much as one-third of the farm produce is lost because of a backward material storage, processing and transportation base. Grain losses, in particular, roughly equal the size of the huge imports which are an exceptional burden to the country. Under such circumstances a good manager would dedicate all of his efforts to the development of the infrastructural and processing sectors, which would make it possible, without any new outlays for production development, quickly to increase the end volume of output. What happens in our country? In 1989 no more than 8 percent of the tremendous flow of investments in this complex, whose annual amount (from all financing sources) totaled 67 billion rubles, went into the processing sectors of the agroindustrial complex. Does it make any sense to look at the American capital-labor ratio in the production area?

Who is this poor manager who allocates such resources so controversially? It is our departments, which spend "nobody's" money. The market subject, who manages an enterprise "with his own money," on the basis of self-recovery, ranging from a family farm to an agrocombine, would not waste money in that fashion. This makes clear what the countryside truly needs: paying for the product of the peasant's toil a price on the level of socially necessary outlays, i.e., a price accepted not by officials but by the market. State capital investments ("free" construction in the countryside) are being handled by an official, while the income from the peasant family, by the farm itself. That is the heart of the matter.

### Was There Another Plan?

Today Lenin's statement in his article "On the Cooperative," concerning the change in our entire viewpoint on socialism, has become exceptionally popular (see vol 45, p 376). Some authors keep repeating it right and left, whether applicable or not; others say with irritation that it is being given an unjustifiably broad interpretation, for Lenin's two subsequent sentences, which clarify this concept, make no mention of the development of the economic system, merely indicating a shift in the center of gravity, from political tasks to "peaceful organizational 'cultural' work."

Let us note, above all, that here we become involved not in any new argument but in a "suitably forgotten" old one. As early as April 1925, N.I. Bukharin said in one of his speeches that "it seems to us that when we converted to the new economic policy Comrade Lenin had one type of strategic plan for solving this problem, but that when he wrote his article on the cooperative i.e., when he gave us his testament, in terms of the foundation of economic policy he had another strategic plan" (N.I. Bukharin, *"Izbrannyye Proizvedeniya"* [Selected Works], Moscow, 1988, p 129). Several months later, in her speech at the 14th Party Congress, N.K. Krupskaya sharply refuted this. At that time Bukharin was the acknowledged party theoretician and acted at the congress as the main speaker for the majority. Krupskaya was supported by the opposition. The majority, following Bukharin, prevailed while Krupskaya was criticized. Nonetheless, no one supported Bukharin on this matter. That marked the end of the dispute. Today the reasons for this are clear: Stalin, who used all of the anti-peasant and anti-NEP slogans of the opposition, after defeating it, had no use for Bukharin's investigation of Lenin's plans for the development of the NEP in the long term, from the strategic viewpoint. Today, however, it is important for us to understand whether Lenin indeed had a "second NEP plan."

Naturally, we have no reason to mistrust Bukharin's communication that Lenin discussed with him these problems in 1922. However, Bukharin may have misunderstood Lenin's thoughts or interpreted them inaccurately. Therefore, it is important to determine what Lenin actually said. There is absolutely no mention in his works of any "second NEP plan." Lenin wrote nothing concerning a developed presentation of a second plan. However, looking at his works as a whole, we can follow his line of thought.

The conversion to the NEP began by replacing requisitioning with tax-in-kind. This circumstance, however, does not account for the entire essence of the NEP as a way of transition to socialism. Requisitioning, which was equated with "war communism," was useful to capitalism as well, for its application was started in 1916. This coercive method was more related to the exceptional circumstances (dislocation, hunger) than to any social system. The initial decree on the farm tax was promulgated as early as 30 October 1918—before the NEP and the "war communism." At that time its implementation was not achieved. However, the very fact that it was promulgated 2.5 years before the beginning of the NEP makes it clear that the concepts of "NEP" and "tax-in-kind" are not identical. Simply noting the change in methods of farming is insufficient if we wish to understand the reason for the changes in Lenin's views concerning the NEP. We must also pay attention to his concepts on the nature of the system which was being developed.

In September 1917, Lenin wrote: "...Socialism is nothing other than state-capitalist monopoly, aimed at the benefit of the entire nation and therefore no longer a capitalist

monopoly" (vol 34, p 192). Several months after the October Revolution, this thought was substantiated in greater detail in the pamphlet "*On 'Left-Wing' Infantilism and the Petite Bourgeoisie.*" Naturally, it remained valid during the period of "war communism" as well. Neither the conversion to the tax-in-kind in the spring of 1921 nor the conclusion about the need to have commodity-monetary relations, reached by the autumn of that same year, affected concepts on the nature of socialism. All that changed were the tactics of the conversion to it. Then came January 1923 and the article "On the Cooperative:" "With the public ownership of the means of production and the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, a system of civilized members of cooperatives is also a socialist system" (vol 45, p 373). We further read in that article that "...under our circumstances, quite frequently the cooperative fully coincides with socialism" (ibid., p 375). Finally, we read that "now we are justified in saying that to us the simple growth of the cooperative is the same... as the growth of socialism; nonetheless, we are forced to acknowledge the radical change in our entire viewpoint on socialism" (ibid., p 376).

Immediately after the second statement, the question arises of shifting the center of gravity to "cultural" work. Why is this word put in quotation marks? Furthermore, this is a strange contraposition: first political work was the focal point and now it is "cultural" work? Taken out of context, this is not very clear. In context, however, it is. For example, we find on that same page: "Such cultural work among the peasantry, as an economic target, aims precisely at cooperativization." In that sentence, as in many other, the area of culture is identified as identical to that of economics. Particularly clear is the view of the need to combine revolutionary enthusiasm "with the skill to be a knowledgeable merchant, which would be fully sufficient for a good member of a cooperative. By the skill to be a merchant I understand the ability to be an educated merchant" (ibid., p 373).

In order to provide a fuller assessment of the change in viewpoints it would be useful to superimpose the general logic found in this extremely compact article "On the Cooperative" over an expanded analysis of the pamphlet "On 'Leftist' Infantilism and the Petite Bourgeoisie." That pamphlet discussed the five systems existing in Russia: the patriarchal farm, petty commodity output (the majority of peasants), private farmer capitalism, state capitalism, and socialism. Who was fighting whom? "In this case is not state capitalism that is fighting socialism but the petite bourgeoisie plus private farm capitalism that are fighting jointly, together, both state capitalism and socialism" (vol 36, p 296). We further read: "The speculator, the merchant marauder, the wrecker of monopoly is our main 'internal' enemy, the enemy of the economic activities of the Soviet system" (ibid., p 297). The economic foundation of speculation, Lenin assumed at that time, is the petty ownership stratum and private farm capitalism "which has an agent in every petit bourgeois. We know that the millions of

tentacles of this petit-bourgeois hydra grab, here and there, individual worker strata, and that **instead of state monopoly** it is speculation that penetrates all the pores of our socioeconomic life" (vol 36, p 297).

In this case the concept of the interrelationship among forces, such as socialism, state capitalism and the petit-bourgeois element (the peasantry) is extremely clear. The peasantry is also considered as the opponent of socialism. Let us recall yet another view expressed in that same article: the fact that history created two separate halves needed in building a single socialist entity: a contemporary large-scale capitalist technology and a planning organization, as in Germany, and proletarian rule in a state, as in Russia. The economic conditions of socialism are separate from the political ones. How to combine them? The fastest way would be a victorious proletarian revolution in Germany. The failure of the advance by the Red Army on Warsaw in 1920 undermined the hope of hastening such a victory. A turn to the NEP became inevitable, at least as a tactical step. The abatement of the revolutionary wave in Western Europe led to the idea that this was a strategic step. The peasantry which, as early as during the Civil War, had shifted from the position of "internal enemy" to that of ally in the struggle for political power waged by the proletariat, was now turning into an ally in the forthcoming long road of economic building, of building socialism. Even if this was not the "second plan," radically different from the first, in any case it marked a profound change in the initial concepts concerning the NEP (stemming from the essential conclusions discussed in detail in N.I. Bukharin's pamphlet "*The Road to Socialism and the Worker-Peasant Alliance,*" which came out in 1925).

That is where the pivot of the "radical change" was to be found: in understanding the role of the peasantry and the interrelationship between the working class and the peasantry on the road to socialism. If we acknowledge this, we are bound to see that the Stalinist-type collectivization also marked a radical change in the opposite direction. It was an anti-Leninist and anti-people's change.

Here is the final quotation for those who wish honestly to consider both the destinies of the revolution in the past and the fate of perestroika today. In March 1918, at the seventh Extraordinary Congress of the RKP(b), Lenin discussed the approach to the party program or, essentially, the "program way of thinking" itself. The initially drafted program was needed in order not to get lost in the twists and turns of history and to retain an overall perspective, to see the connection which linked the entire development of capitalism and the entire path to socialism. Naturally, we see this path as being straight, Lenin wrote, "and we must conceive of it as straight in order to be able to see the beginning, the continuation and the end, although in reality it will never be straight and will be incredibly complex..." (vol 36, p 47).

The path will never be straight.

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### Lenin and Philosophy: Raising the Problem Again?

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[Article by A. Volodin, doctor of philosophical sciences, professor at the CPSU Central Committee Academy of Social Sciences]

[Text] It is time to raise directly and seriously the question of the fate of Marxist philosophical theory at the end of the 20th century. This is not simply a question of Marxism in general but a more specific one, about Leninism, about the nature of the "Leninist stage in the development of Marxist philosophy," a question of Lenin as philosopher. It is precisely Lenin's theoretical legacy that requires today particularly thorough studies. This is above all because for more than half a century it was precisely this legacy that was subject to canonization and deformation. It seems that the time has finally come now closely to study the ideological formation which has been described as "Lenin's creative contribution to Marxist philosophy" and even "the Leninist stage in the history of Marxist philosophy." Naturally, the rejection of a cult-oriented or, essentially, a religious attitude toward Leninism cannot be painless. It cannot fail to affect the interests of those who find it easier to believe than to know.... However, there simply is no other way to reach the real, unsanctified Lenin, other than the scientific study of his activities and the ideas he developed.

In that case, we must begin virtually from scratch.

#### Mythology Instead of Analysis

The first works dealing with Lenin's attitude toward philosophy in general and Marxist philosophy in particular were published as early as the 1920s. Today they may seem to us as quite undemanding. Nonetheless, as a general rule, they were distinguished by a respectful attitude toward Lenin's writings. We find in them many weak areas and inaccurate claims. However, they show no unconscientious bias (although some of them were influenced by past disputes with people no longer living).

By the turn of the 1930s, a more substantive development of topics appeared, greatly assisted by the publication of Lenin's summaries of Hegel's philosophical works. I would single out among them above all the book by I.K. Luppol "*Lenin and Philosophy. On the Question of the Attitude of Philosophy Toward the Revolution*," the third edition of which came out in 1930.

However, the study of Lenin's philosophical legacy was interrupted brusquely, the moment it had begun. After the familiar party decree of 25 January 1931 "On the Journal POD ZNAMENEM MARKSIZMA," the "development of the Leninist stage" in philosophy in

fact turned into a project of adapting, redoing, restructuring and falsifying Lenin's ideas and statements with a view to make them fit Stalin's ideas.

Here are a few examples.

As we know, in "*Materialism and Empiriocriticism*," Lenin sharply spoke of party-mindedness in philosophy and the party-mindedness of philosophy itself. In this case he had in mind, above all, the inevitable affiliation of any philosopher, in the final account, with one of the two basic philosophical "parties:" materialism or idealism. Furthermore, as he bluntly said, he implied that any philosophical theory is, one way or another, related to the political, the class struggle being waged place in society. Finally, he had in mind the objective, although not always obvious, dependence of bourgeois philosophy professors on the interests of their own class. In his analysis of such topics, Lenin occasionally made extremely sharp statements, such as "philosophy professors are the scientific stewards of theologians" ("*Poln. Sobr. Soch.*") [Complete Collected Works], vol 18, p 364).

However, Lenin never identified philosophy with politics. He always saw, to one extent or another, not only the specificity and relative autonomy of each one of them but also, as a general rule, the complex indirect nature of their relations with other forms of activities. In his work, Lenin repeatedly opposed primitivism, the establishment of direct ties between philosophy and politics, something which was inherent in some Marxist trends.

One may ask, what could be reinterpreted here, what kind of special "Leninist theory" could one develop?! No: Despite Lenin's great personal experience and despite his repeated and unequivocal writings on this matter, the initial developers of the concept of the "Leninist stage," M.B. Mitin and his crew, created the myth of the Leninist concept of party philosophy, the meaning of which they saw in the idea of directly subordinating philosophy to questions of political practice or even turning philosophy into a structural component, into "one of the forms of politics" (see "*Raznoglasiya na Filosofskom Fronte*") [Discord on the Philosophical Front], Moscow-Leningrad, 1931, pp 124-125). This "concept" was shamelessly ascribed to Lenin himself.

Here is another aspect in the formation of the "Leninist stage:" On 20 November 1931, meeting in special session, Soviet philosophers marked the centennial of Hegel's death. By that time the *Leninist Collections* included statements by Lenin expressed in connection with the study of "*Science of Logic*," and other works by the German philosopher. Naturally, in discussing Hegel there was no way to avoid Lenin's summaries and notes. All speakers mentioned them. Here is, for example, the way this was done. In his paper on "Hegel and the Theory of Dialectical Materialism," pointing out after A.

Stetskiy and V. Adoratskiy the "subsequent development" and concretizing of the Leninist theory of dialectical materialism, M. Mitin emphasized, nonetheless, something else: "Comrade Stalin, the leader of world communism and Lenin's best student, is the greatest dialectical materialist of our age, who is developing and applying Leninist dialectics in the complex situation of an expanded offensive along the entire front" (POD ZNAMENEM MARKSIZMA, No 11-12, 1931, pp 50-51). As a student of Hegel, Lenin was pushed aside also in the paper "The Struggle on Two Fronts in Philosophy and Hegelian Dialectics," delivered by P.F. Yudin, again in the shadow of that great leader. The concept that "Stalin is Lenin today" had not as yet become a formula but was already beginning to be applied everywhere in philosophy.

Here is the final illustration: the article by I. Shirokov "The Leninist Stage in the Development of Dialectical Materialism" (PROBLEMY MARKSIZMA, No 9-10, 1932) which came out 1 year later. Despite the difference in content, the essence of its "methodology" is reduced, in the final account, to the sectarian isolation of Lenin the philosopher, pitting him against all other Marxist theoreticians and propagandists of the turn of the 20th century: the Western leaders of the Second International (wholesale and retail), Plekhanov, Zinovyev, Trotskiy, Preobrazhenskiy, Bukharin and, naturally, L. Akseleod, Sarabyanov, Varyash, Deborin, etc. The ideological sectarianism, which was an instrument of Stalin's policy, was presented as the essential feature of the "Leninist stage" in philosophy.

J.V. Stalin's infamous work "On Dialectical and Historical Materialism," which praised Lenin for "defending... for the sake of the party" (!) the theoretical wealth of Marxist philosophy "from the attempts of revisionists and turncoats" (see "*Istoriya VKP(b). Kratkiy Kurs*" [History of the VKP(b). Short Course], Moscow, 1938, p 127) was essentially a direct betrayal of Lenin, a gross distortion of the true concepts, not only those of Lenin but also of Marx and Engels, on the very essence of dialectical materialism. The strained aggrandizement of the Leninist struggle against "philosophical-theoretical revisionism" was cynically combined within the "*Short Course*" with palming off on Lenin "conclusions" which falsified the very essence of Marxist philosophy. If Lenin believed that the aspiration "to seek answers to specific questions in the simple logical development of overall truth" meant a "debasement of Marxism and a mockery of dialectical materialism" (op. cit., vol 3, p 14) conversely, Stalin's "brilliant article," which gave ammunition to dogmatism for many long years, is imbued with an a priori-nature philosophy concept: if the general is clear it is easy—ignoring reality—to draw specific conclusions.... "If development takes place in the order of exposing internal contradictions... it is clear (!)... that one must pursue an irreconcilable class-oriented proletarian policy..." ("*History of the VKP(b)*", pp 105-106), etc.

### The Meaning of the "De-Stalinization" of Lenin's Ideas

Work on freeing Lenin's legacy from Stalinist deformations<sup>1</sup> (which is only at its beginning, encountering the tremendous resistance of powerful inertial forces) was initiated after the cleansing words and actions of the 20th Party Congress. An end was put to the primitive depiction of dialectical materialism as the mechanical combination of the four "basic features" of the Marxist dialectical method and the three "basic features" of philosophical materialism. Civil rights were restored to many Leninist ideas and concepts, particularly his (and Engels') interpretation of negating the negation as one of the laws of dialectics.... Let me particularly mention the initiative-minded role which was played in this process by the rehabilitation of Lenin's writings in the works of B.M. Kedrov and, after and together with him by representatives of the younger generation of Soviet philosophers. Let us name as the first among them, E.V. Ilyenkov, who extended precisely the Leninist tradition of understanding Marxist philosophy as a methodological instrument of scientific knowledge. The dogmatic fences were brought down....

However, this did not happen in the interpretation of the problem of "Lenin as a philosopher." The methods of unbiased scientific research, which were being used ever more daringly and fruitfully in various areas of philosophical and historical-philosophical knowledge, were almost immediately rejected the moment it became a question of Lenin. His ideological-philosophical legacy continued to be used by various official-ideological "teams" only as a theoretical reservoir, as a kind of handy structural material for the building of new arbitrary structures. Lenin's name was not only sullied in such by no means harmless ideological games, but also was used to conceal actions and concepts for which his ideas could not, as during the period of Stalinist tyranny, bear any responsibility whatsoever.

The science of philosophy had to become adapted to this ideological situation which had an overall totalitarian spirit, although different in terms of embellishments and the main actors in the political theater. The result was that the development of essentially new scientific problems and entire disciplines in the areas of logic, psychology, esthetics, gnosiology, anthropology or systemic research, and so on, of which Lenin could not even dream, for they had been shaped by entirely new events and phenomena in real life, had a mandatory prerequisite dictated by the written and unwritten rules of the authoritarian regime, and were to be accompanied by a mandatory respect paid to Lenin's philosophical genius. Many philosophers, particularly the younger ones, feeling, seeing and knowing that some trends of non-Marxist philosophy were dealing with matters of great importance to science and culture and to man and his development, coming closer to such different trends, whether hermeneutics, structural analysis, psychoanalysis, etc., reinterpreting them, whether consciously or

simply as a "preventive habit," and sought various substantiations for their theoretical inclinations and interests in... Lenin.

In short, it was this almost religious ideological veneration of Lenin that had as its reverse side his denigration, reducing his legacy to the role of a label concealing quite different views. No fate more tragic to a philosopher could be conceived.

It is only in recent years that the Soviet people are becoming increasingly freer from an authoritarian attitude toward Lenin. Increasingly, our official speeches make mention of Dostoyevskiy, Gandhi and even Vernadskiy. The very concept of "Leninism" is no longer interpreted in such global terms: increasingly, its limited place (Russia) and time are being emphasized.... From time to time, however, there is a display of the old cult-pragmatic and essentially circumstantial attitude toward Leninist ideas.

At the same time, today we also come across cases not simply of a scornful attitude toward Lenin as a politician and philosopher, as a personality and as a person, but also of open vilification of his work and name. In scientific circles as well, that same nihilism is growing: quoting Lenin is considered bad manners, and as far as writing about his contribution to philosophy is concerned... what kind of philosopher was he, anyway?!

I am convinced that with all of this in mind, we vitally need a scientific, calm and conscientious study of Lenin's philosophical views, theories and ideas, by both his supporters and his detractors. Without it we shall not get rid either of the vestiges of the cult attitude toward Lenin or of the wave of a growing nihilism.

#### **On Lenin's Self-Assessment: A Professional in Politics and Ordinary Marxist in Philosophy**

Until quite recently, a storm of indignation raged among the numerous "fighters for the purity of Marxism-Leninism" ("hackers," in simple terms), caused by the statement made by A.M. Deborin: "Naturally, in philosophy Lenin was Plekhanov's 'student,' something which he repeatedly stated himself. The fact that he learned from Plekhanov, however, did not prevent Lenin from independently approaching an entire range of problems and to correct Plekhanov on some essential points. In a certain sense these philosophers supplemented one another. Plekhanov was a theoretician, above all, whereas Lenin was essentially a practitioner, a politician, a leader. Both, however, contributed exceptionally greatly to the development and intensification of our outlook (A. Deborin, "*Lenin Kak Myslitel*": [Lenin as a Philosopher]. Third edition. Moscow-Leningrad, 1929, p 26).

If we do not seize upon the words and, furthermore, if we take into consideration the reverence which Deborin felt for Plekhanov as a teacher, the core of this statement is accurate: Lenin was not what is known as a professional philosopher, neither by virtue of his training nor the

basic area of his activities (and even type of personality). He was above all, both as a practical and theoretical worker (which blended into a single entity), a politician, the leader of a political party; in the strictly scientific area, he was an economist, primarily a student of agrarian relations in Russia. Lenin dealt much less with specific philosophical work. We can especially single out two known quite uninterrupted periods when his main interests shifted precisely to that area: the period of writing "*Materialism and Empiriocriticism*" and the time he spent studying Hegel. Naturally, there also were numerous shorter periods spent in the study of philosophy. In any case, one feature is clear: Lenin began to deal with philosophy seriously when, once again, this need was inspired by ideological and political features. In terms of basic activities and attitude toward philosophy, Lenin differed not only from Plekhanov but also from Marx and Engels: the latter had undergone thorough philosophical training since adolescence and subsequently, from time to time, returned to purely philosophical studies.

However, and this too seems to be universally acknowledged, the essential feature of Marxist philosophy is that in the area of scientific knowledge it works through its methodological function. Therefore, even works by Marx and Engels, in which specific philosophical problems are not raised and considered, implicitly include a philosophical-methodological component, and are an attempt at the effective use of dialectical materialism or, in other words, they constitute a form of Marxist philosophy. It is on this basis that many of Lenin's nonphilosophical works, strictly speaking, could be classified if not as developments at least as applications, as scientific and spiritual "materializations" of philosophy and, therefore, confirmations of the level and nature of the philosophical thinking of their author (the fact that students of such works sometimes require a great deal of effort to "distinguish" among the philosophical, theoretical-cognitive or methodological component they contain is a different matter).

Furthermore, something about which we can judge from the very first of Lenin's printed works, he was convinced (like some other Marxists) that the main purpose of philosophy had been achieved by Marx and Engels and that their philosophy was "withering away," being reborn in specific scientific studies, in its real application.

This Leninist understanding of Marxist philosophy is confirmed, especially and in particular, by a very important statement in his work "The Economic Content of Populism..." which, incidentally, is quite rarely included in Lenin's philosophical works. His thought is that in Marxism there unquestionably is philosophy but **not strictly philosophical problems**, in the sense of unsolved problems. "From the viewpoint of Marx and Engels, philosophy has no right to lead a separate existence and its material can be distributed among the various sectors of the positive sciences. Therefore, a

philosophical substantiation could mean **either** a comparison among postulates and the firmly established laws of other sciences... **or else** an attempt at the application of this theory" (op. cit., vol 1, p 438). Such an understanding of the philosophy of Marxism, which denies its "independent existence," naturally directed Lenin's thoughts above all to the specific and, essentially, economic-political, analysis of Russian life, to which he dedicated his works written in the 1890s and the beginning of the 1900s.

Naturally, this indicates neither his indifference to philosophy, for which, in his time, he was blamed by G.V. Plekhanov, nor the fact that in his works he did not consider philosophical problems. Conversely, many of his early works not simply deal with philosophical topics and not simply promote the basic principles of Marx's materialism but, furthermore, as can be easily confirmed by his specific writings, they provide a certain expansion of Marxist theory, its development, particularly in the area of historical materialism. Nonetheless, the very thought of considering himself a philosopher was alien to Lenin.

It is true that, willy-nilly, the arguments which broke out on conceptual and general theoretical problems also drew Lenin into the discussion of philosophical problems. However, this was only on one level, is his role of **defender** of the philosophical views of his teachers against their revision by some Russian as well as Western European Marxists.

Even the publication of the book "*Materialism and Empirio-criticism*," were we to look at it soberly, is based not on the need to resolve some significant strictly philosophical problems, but the need to supply an ideological defense of the views expressed by Marx and Engels. Lenin himself frequently emphasized that his work is no more than "brief remarks" (this "brevity," actually, does not exclude their thoroughness) and also that these notes are not simply critical or brief but also the notes of a "rank-and-file Marxist."

To what extent could we ignore such self-assessments? Lenin did not consider himself in the least "ordinary" in political theory or, even less so, in political practice. He was not and did not consider himself "ordinary" in the area of the study of economic relations in Russia and, in general, of the social fabric of contemporary Russian society. He never belittled his role as a student of the new stage of capitalism (with full justification we speak of the Leninist theory of imperialism) or as a student of the problems of the revolution and the state, although here as well, with his typical modesty, he never emphasized the significance of his own person. As to philosophy, however, in this case he quite definitely pointed out that by virtue of a number of circumstances he was forced to defend, to protect from distortions and misrepresentations, that which Marx and Engels had accomplished before him.

### Philosophical Polemics: Coincidental Objectives and Results

In order not to find myself in deep trouble, at this point I must remark the following: the intent of any writing, including in philosophy, could be quite substantially different from (and, usually, to one extent or another, indeed noncoincidental with) the actual results. Furthermore, criticism and polemics are (or, more accurately, could be, for they frequently are not) also a form of ideological and theoretical creativity. Therefore, if from these positions we take a close look at Lenin's "*Materialism and Empirio-criticism*," we cannot fail to see in it both of them.

Having set himself the objective of "investigating the reason which leads people astray as they present as Marxism something incredibly inconsistent, confused and reactionary" (op. cit., vol 18, p 11) and "indicate the reactionary nature of Machism and the accuracy of the materialism of Marx and Engels" (ibid., p 98), in the course of and as a result of his several months long "philosophical addiction" (ibid., vol 47, p 148), Lenin reached a number of conclusions which clearly exceeded the boundaries of his initial project.

Personally, his view on the basic significance of "*Materialism and Empirio-criticism*," is tersely expressed in the conclusion to the book, where he discusses the need for a multiple-aspect, a "comprehensive" study of philosophical systems, such as empirio-criticism, and the essence of each one of the clearly singled out principles of the critical study of Machism and the means for their implementation and interconnection.

One such principle is the identification of the "unquestionable link" between Machism and a school of physics. We do not find in "Ten Questions to the Reviewer," which we can reasonably consider a kind of diagram, a sketch of a work in progress and Lenin's book, the "question" consistent with the problems to be discussed in the fifth chapter, as yet to be written: "The latest revolution in the natural sciences and philosophical idealism." Hence we may assume that it is only in the course of the study of the logic of the criticism that Lenin felt the need to deal with the philosophical aspects of the crisis in physics. It was precisely at this point that Lenin undertook the study of gnosiological and methodological problems which neither Plekhanov nor the literary philosophers who cooperated with him (L. Akselrod, A. Deborin or others) had even raised. Lenin turned out to be indeed the **only one** among the Marxist theoreticians of the turn of the 20th century to address himself to the type and nature of connection (not simply noting its existence) between contemporary positivistic philosophy ("the second positivism") and the development of the natural sciences themselves. It is perhaps the most original and brief albeit somewhat paradoxical conclusion drawn from Lenin's thoughts on this problem that we find in the concept that "reactionary efforts are triggered by the very progress of science" (op. cit., vol 18, p 326).

The logic stemming from the polemics with Machism also led Lenin to refining, concretizing and enriching a number of other Marxist philosophical concepts.

This feature found its most concentrated expression, as we know, in Lenin's interpretation of the concept of matter as a philosophical category. Let us note the fact that Lenin repeatedly—in different and essentially non-coincidental formulations—provided such a definition. This alone shows the importance he ascribed to it. Also important was the fact that in this case Lenin actually criticized Engels, revising some of his concepts, for the latter, for example in his famous "*Anti-Duhring*," concepts such as "matter" and "substance," and "matter" and "nature" were literally considered synonymous and identical concepts. In extending the line followed by Marx and Engels of "separating philosophy from nature philosophy," Lenin took it—in terms of the question of philosophical categories (not only matter but other categories as well)—to its logical conclusion, depriving philosophy of its last claim of dictating to science. This was manifested also in Lenin's characterization of the basic problem of philosophy as being a gnosiological problem. According to Lenin, anything which went beyond the limits of strict gnosiology and the common foundations of the theory of knowledge was a topic within the range of competence of the specific sciences. It is precisely to this that is linked the idea which he considered so crucial, to the effect that beyond said limits the clash between the material and the spiritual factors is only relative.

Yes, in "*Materialism and Empiriocriticism*" Lenin defended above all the "elements of materialism," considering the retreat from these elements the main sin committed by A.A. Bogdanov and his philosophical supporters. Nonetheless, he clearly saw and wrote that the criticism of materialism from relativistic positions, made by Mach and his supporters, affects all materialism other than dialectical. Yet it is this line of essential distinction between Marx's materialism and metaphysical materialism, and even more so the vulgar materialism that the critics of Lenin's philosophical book—both then and now—try to ignore, in a display of rare unanimity.

#### Did Lenin Err in Philosophy?

Let me answer this perhaps not very accurately formulated question with another one: Is it possible to develop ideas and to advance to a new level without abandoning the old, that which is being denied, which proves to be inadequate, narrow and abstract (i.e., an "error" or, more accurately, a delusion) when the philosopher clashes against previously unexpected problems?

Hardly anyone would start disputing the fact that Lenin possessed, to a high extent, the quality which V.S. Solovyev, in describing the type of intellect that A.I. Herten had, "mental mobility" ("*Soch.*" [Works], in two volumes, vol 2, Moscow, 1989, pp 640, 641). Lenin's

activities in the philosophical area as well were distinguished by mental mobility. This means that we would not understand a great deal of his philosophical views unless we start considering them in their dynamics, their evolution or, in other words, in their historical foreshortening. Yet...

How much ink, paper and print have been wasted in discussing the Marxist principle of historicism, and how timidly we have applied this principle in considering Marxist philosophy itself and Lenin's ideas in particular. There have been quite a lot of discussions concerning the various periods and stages in the history of Marxist philosophy, as we suggest its various period classifications. Is this the sole purpose of historicism in this area? To acknowledge that Marxist philosophy is not simply a certain unity of views ("monolith") and not simply a system, an integral nature of ideas, but a conflicting integrity, which develops, changes, which is flexible, also means to acknowledge that as new ideas appear on the higher stages of this development there also occurs a "removal" of obsolete, rejected and abandoned former ideas which have revealed their own incomplete, to say the least, or truly erroneous incapacity or, to use a more customary term, their historical limitation.

Who among us, Soviet historians of philosophy, would dare even to show a slight hesitation on the subject of the relative veracity of any idea expressed in "*Materialism and Empiriocriticism*?" God forbid! In this case there is a strict operating taboo, which protects "prejudices we cherish" (A.I. Herten). This is despite the fact that virtually all "specialists in Leninism" say that in 1914-1915 Lenin's philosophical views had reached a new level. New? Does this not mean that the old did not suit him entirely? Even abstracting ourselves from Lenin's frame of mind, is this not the same as admitting that in the period when "*Materialism and Empiriocriticism*" was created, he was wrong in something or, to say the least, that he wrote something that was not considered right some 5-6 years later? What happens? Silence.

Nonetheless, in 1914-1915 Lenin looked at some philosophical problems in a truly different way compared to the past. This was not only because he had "turned" Marxism in a certain way (a different way does not always mean a new way) but also because there was indeed a growth, a development of Lenin's thoughts and, if such was the case, a critique of "*Materialism and Empiriocriticism*."

In summarizing Hegel's "*Science of Logic*," Lenin formulated the following aphorism: "The Marxists (with the 's' thickly and repeatedly underlined—author) criticized (at the turn of the 20th century) Kantians and Humists more in the Feuerbach (and Duchner) than in the Hegelian fashion" (op. cit., vol 29, p 161). It is clear from the context that, not least, Lenin had in mind precisely the struggle which the Marxists waged against the Machists and that he considered their "Feuerbach-style" criticism poor, one-sided, and a bare and futile rejection, compared with Hegel's criticism of Kant, in



the course of which the great German dialectician developed the ideas contained in the theory he rejected.

Does it not seem to you, reader, that in speaking here about the Marxists of the turn of the century and their limited and unsatisfactory nature of their one-sided negative attitude toward Machism, Lenin also engages in self-criticism, expressing a certain dissatisfaction with his own "*Materialism and Empiriocriticism?*"

I know, many people will disagree with this. They will disagree to such an extent that even in books in which such Leninist words are simply bound to be quoted, they nonetheless are not, although Lenin **himself** questions his own idea?! This is inadmissible....

Wherever, nonetheless, such words are quoted, usually it is a question of all sorts of Marxist philosophers, primarily of the Plekhanov school, as long as it is not Lenin. Why?

In the aphorism we mentioned, Lenin writes quite clearly about Plekhanov that "Plekhanov criticizes Kantianism (and agnosticism in general) more from the vulgar-materialistic than the dialectical-materialistic viewpoint, since it is only a limine (i.e., from the start—author) that he **rejects** their views rather than **corrects** (the way Hegel corrected Kant) such considerations, intensifying, summing up and expanding them, indicating the **link and conversions** of any and all concepts" (ibid.).

This is a very important statement, precisely for the reason alone that previously Lenin had not used such sharply critical words concerning Plekhanov the philosopher. It is by this token that Lenin criticizes himself and corrects himself, considering that in the past he supported Plekhanov's criticism of the Kantians and the Machists.

Let us now consider the words "rejects from the start." In this case, they directly apply to Plekhanov. However, they also characterize to a significant extent Lenin's own position: in "*Materialism and Empiriocriticism*" he twice noted the accuracy of and need for rejecting from the start any positivistic views, whatever the variety in which they are presented (see op. cit., vol 18, pp 344, 349).

All we have to do is compare these statements with some views expressed by Lenin in connection with his study of Hegel, such as, for instance, pitting "intelligent idealism" against "stupid materialism" (ibid., vol 29, p 248) or his thoughts concerning the "gnosiological roots" of philosophical idealism ("philosophical idealism is **nothing but** rubbish from the viewpoint of gross materialism....," etc., op. cit., vol 29, p 322) and we can easily see how significantly different Lenin's attitude toward philosophy in general and idealistic philosophy in particular becomes 6 years later.

The main thing is the appearance in Lenin of a profound philosophical reflection, an awareness that by no means

have all philosophical problems—even some of the main ones—been solved by the Marxists and the identification and formulation of a number of such new problems and defining the line to be followed in their development.

#### Did Lenin Write a Work Such as 'Philosophical Notebooks?'

A book bearing that title showed up, as we know, for the first time, in 1933, edited by V.V. Adoratskiy and V.G. Sorin. It was a compilation of various materials which recorded Lenin's work on problems of philosophy during different periods in his life, between 1895 and 1920. The publication of this book was of great importance, for it proved the great interest which Lenin showed in philosophy throughout his virtually entire career, and brought to light previously unknown Leninist views on a number of problems and, particularly, the set of remarks related to his study of Hegel's works. Against this background it became clear that the writing of "*Materialism and Empiriocriticism*" in 1908 was not an almost accidental excursion which the author took into a totally alien area. Most importantly, the "*Philosophical Notebooks*," indicated that in 1914-1915 Lenin's thoughts on problems of dialectical materialism had taken a new, a very meaningful turn.

Perhaps... however, this would contradict the already followed firm ideological line of canonizing Lenin, the mechanistic concept of a falsely understood monolithic nature of his ideas. Although the "*Philosophical Notebooks*" were reprinted several times and expanded with new data (other data were deleted such as, for example, an exchange of notes with N.I. Bukharin concerning A.A. Bogdanov, on the subject of V.I. Nevskiy's article), nonetheless, they were not included in Lenin's collected works: more suitable material for the elaboration of Stalin's philosophical Talmud was "*Materialism and Empiriocriticism*," and the ideas it contained were presented quite primitively and coarsely.

That is partially the reason for which the quite clear disparity in the standards and nature of philosophical views expressed by Lenin in 1908 and in 1914-1915, essentially ignored by Soviet philosophers, although quite clear, became a topic of interpretation essentially by foreign authors; here as well, and the more time passed the more so, at least in the case of some Sovietologists, it was used as grounds for pitting one Lenin against another: the first, as the gross vulgarizer of Engels' (but not Marx's!) "science-oriented" philosophy, in a spirit of primitive and contemplative materialism, and the other as representative of the "praxiological" trend, who had virtually discarded the materialistic theory of reflection. In itself, pitting, by way of comparison, one set of ideas against another, would not have been all that bad, had there been a conscientious, a thorough study of Lenin's writings and of all the circumstances surrounding their creation and adoption. However, considerations of a most sharp ideological confrontation clearly pushed scientific interests into the background.

On the other hand, instead of seeing behind the sometimes self-serving discussions about the "early" and "latter" Lenin essentially an exploitation of a fruitful idea on the need to study Lenin's thoughts in their development, based on the "law" of switching course, Soviet philosophers began to promote in their works the incredibly shallow thought that in both of his "main philosophical works" Lenin proceeded on the basis of the same position—the position of dialectical materialism—and, noting their link and continuity, they essentially turned away from the true problem, the problem of the historical approach to Lenin as a philosopher.

In saying this, I do not mean in the least that nothing has been done concerning the study of the "*Philosophical Notebooks*." On the contrary, I must point out here a number of meaningful works, above all those written by B.M. Kedrov, M.M. Rozentel, A.Kh. Kasymzhanov and others. Nonetheless, it is my firm conviction that we have not as yet undertaken their serious historical-philosophical study.

Above all, however, we must stop considering the "*Philosophical Notebooks*" as something integral, as a "work by Lenin," as his own "effort." This is merely a collection of his manuscripts from different times, of rather disparate theoretical potential at that, compiled not by him but by editors and issued almost 1 decade after his death. In my view, in publishing Lenin's complete collected works it would be expedient to break it up and to print the summaries, sketches and notes concerning books and other materials, now found in volume 29, chronologically, in the respective volumes, along with Lenin's works which were published at the time he drafted these philosophical manuscripts. Only this would enable us better to understand their place in the overall development of Lenin's thinking and, furthermore, the interconnection between Lenin's philosophical studies during one period or another and his work on other scientific and political problems.

Naturally, this does not exclude the publication of a significantly more complete and even more than one volume collection of everything that Lenin wrote on the subject of philosophy, including excerpts from his correspondence, which is so greatly needed by specialists and students. Such a collection should include recollections which, in a number of cases, prove to be the only source which, however, requires thorough critical investigation (concerning their accuracy) in characterizing individual aspects of Lenin's philosophical biography.

As to the backbone of "*Philosophical Notebooks*," which is a summary of Hegel's works and sketches related to their study in 1914-1915, let us not forget in the least in their analysis and evaluation that unlike, shall we say, "*Materialism and Empirio-criticism*," this "work" is no more than "personal notes."

This does not mean in the least any belittling of the significance of Lenin's "*Philosophical Notebooks*;" its purpose is to emphasize their direct, their organic or, to

put it even better, their genetic link with his published works in 1914-1916, chronologically related to them. It is only by considering the specific historical context that it becomes possible to answer certain questions related to determining the place which Lenin's study of Hegelian philosophy holds in the overall development of his views.

What led Lenin to turn to Hegel? The usual answer to this question is provided in the following general manner: the need developed for a methodological preparation for the study of the age of imperialism and the development of problems of the socialist revolution. This, however, is more an answer to another question, that of the objective role of the philosophy in the 1914-1915 studies. The motivations, it seems to me, could be found on a different level.

Let us note the following: Lenin's study of Hegel preceded an equally thorough study which he made in 1913 of the four-volume "*Correspondence Between Marx and Engels*" (as well as, partially, work on the article "Karl Marx"). From this "*Correspondence...*," Lenin realized how thoroughly his teachers had studied problems of dialectics and, particularly, its methodological aspect. I believe that what impressed Lenin the most was Marx's remark in one of his letters dated 14 January 1858, concerning his intention to describe "in two or three printer sheets, in a form accessible to a person with good common sense, the rational aspect in the methods which had been discovered by Hegel but which he also mystified" (K. Marx and F. Engels, "*Soch.*" [Works], vol 29, p 212; see V.I. Lenin "*Konspekt 'Perepiski K. Marksa i F. Engelsa 1844-1883 gg.*" [Summary of the "Correspondence Between K. Marx and F. Engels 1844-1883"], Moscow, 1968, p 35).

On the other hand, it is necessary to note here the doubt which was catastrophically increasing in Lenin's mind during that time to the effect that the dialectics which were so extensively discussed by Plekhanov, Kautsky and other theoreticians of the Second International, were indeed the true Marxist method. How was it possible, guided by dialectical materialism, to find oneself standing on politically erroneous social-chauvinistic positions?! Was there no fault here in the very understanding of the method? It was in seeking an answer to precisely this question that Lenin turned to Hegel, guided by Marx and Engels, thus essentially, for the first time realizing for himself the theoretically inexhaustible nature of this "source" of Marxism.

Therefore, the main problem, the solution of which Lenin sought in studying Hegel, could be formulated as a problem of historical typology, of a variety of forms of dialectics and, in the final account, of distinguishing between dialectics and pseudodialectics. In philosophy this was no new problem, for it had drawn Hegel's attention as well as that of Marx and Engels. However, it was not as yet an object of close consideration from the viewpoint of Marxist philosophy. In speaking of Lenin's contribution to the philosophy of Marxism, in my view

we should pay the greatest possible attention precisely to this aspect of his philosophical thoughts, frequently overshadowed by other, secondary or even totally fictitious details and particulars.

It follows from this that the nihilistic-scornful attitude toward Lenin as a philosopher, which is becoming so fashionable today, objectively impoverishes our general theoretical positions and methodology for pseudodialectics, i.e., dialectics in words while eclecticism and sophistry in fact, are today as well quite frequent. I must also point out that many of today's eclectic considerations in the spirit of "pluralism" and "common sense," which occasionally turn into a direct refusal to analyze the real contradictions in the various areas and levels of social development, are nothing other than the price paid for ignoring this aspect of Lenin's philosophical legacy.

Almost 150 years ago A.I. Herten noted that "it takes no particular wisdom to be unfamiliar with Hegel and to reject him; one could advance only after studying him conscientiously." Today, I believe, we could similarly say that lack of familiarity with the philosophical ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin and their rejection do not require a great deal of intelligence. The realities of the end of the 20th century, as is obvious, demand another critical analysis of these ideas. However, here as well one could "advance" only after a conscientious study.

#### Footnote

1. Let me emphasize precisely Stalinist and not simply Stalin's for these deformations were the result of the efforts of an entire galaxy of dogmatic ideologues who actively functioned also after 1953.

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#### New Elements in the Social Structure

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[Article by Ye. Starikov, candidate of philosophical sciences, docent at the Voronezh State University]

[Text] The memorable 1929 drastically changed the social structure of our country and shaped an essentially different model of social differentiation, still effective today. During the period of the destruction of the NEP, and of the "great change," it was not simply the by no means best variant of underdeveloped, "barracks" socialism that prevailed. The upper hand was gained by a way of social development with its peculiar "Asiatic"<sup>1</sup> features, which inevitably affected the entire aspect of the society.

This means, above all, that whereas the Western European model of social structure, arbitrarily singled out by some authors, is characterized by the existence of types of ownership independent of the state, a developed civil society and a class structure, in which the political organization of the government is no more than an

element of the superstructure, the reverse is the total penetration of the state into all superstructural areas, and the blending of power-political relations with ownership relations (on the question of the phenomenon of "sovereignty-ownership" see K. Marx and F. Engels, "Soch." [Works], vol 25, part II, p 354), converting it into a decisive element of the base. In other words, this means that the state is the supreme owner of all means of production and, hence, of the individual, whose social life entirely depends on the leviathan state. It is a social structure, understood less in the traditional meaning of the term, than as an essentially different type of classification, for the class-forming features and social relations among the different groups somehow becomes usurped and determined by the omnipotent governmental system.

Both models are based on two radically different and opposite types of exchange of activities, which leave their mark on the entire social life and societal structure: 1. **The market**, i.e., a commodity-monetary, horizontal (since the commodity is the universal equalizer) equivalent exchange, based on the law of value, and 2. **Redistribution**, which is a noncommodity and nonequivalent vertical product exchange, which is achieved through the confiscation by the central authority of the added (and occasionally part of the necessary) product with a view to its subsequent physical redistribution; it is an exchange in the guise of noneconomic coercion and the personal dependence of the producer.

In 1929 these models were replaced, and the Western European path of development was abandoned. We abandoned a socialism in which the subject of ownership is within the bounds of a civil society and not an all-embracing state apparatus, and in which there are developed commodity-monetary relations, while the state is merely an element of the superstructure. This model was wiped out by the "Asiatic" pressure and replaced by an archaic redistribution model which had clothed itself in progressive extreme-revolutionary garb.

The processes of the natural formation of socialist classes under these conditions, "classes for themselves,"<sup>2</sup> were blocked by the processes of "creation" of artificial and distorted social new formations originated by the party-state apparatus, the end result of which, whether its creators wanted it or not, was the creation of a "nomenclatural" caste-corporation. The live, growing and developing social organism was replaced by an artificially structured society-machine, incapable of independent democratic renewal. Here as well we recall G.V. Plekhanov's words to the effect that if a revolutionary government "will seek salvation in the ideals of a 'patriarchal and authoritarian communism,' by introducing into such ideals merely this type of change, instead of the Peruvian 'children of the Sun,' and their officials, national production will create a socialist caste," as a result of which "with such a supervision the people not only will not be educated for socialism but will also totally lose any ability for further progress, or else would retain this ability only thanks to the appearance of that

same economic inequality the elimination of which was the direct objective of the revolutionary government" (G.V. Plekhanov, "Soch." [Works], vol II, Moscow-Petrograd, 1923, p 81).

The result of the absorption of society by the state and the usurping by the state of the main class-forming feature was the disappearance of economic classes, in the real meaning of the term. In this sense society indeed became classless. However, social differentiation and social conflicts were not eliminated but merely replaced their European clothing with an entirely different one. The class struggle related to the ownership of the means of production was replaced by a struggle for the redistribution of the key instruments, and control over the channels and terminals of the redistribution network. Within the framework of the market the material well-being was based on income from ownership of means of production or on manpower; under different circumstances, income is replaced by a salary, i.e., revenue based on the status held within the distribution system. In this case, in order to become part of the redistribution network one must have a corresponding social position which will determine the precise channel through which he will have the right to belong to a specific group. Briefly stated, redistribution is a structure-forming base for social differentiation, dividing society into two big functional parts: a. ordinary producers, who create the added product; b. "handlers," who can exclude from or add to the redistribution network, and who perform dispatcher functions. Such an exclusion assumes a clearly manifested nature of revenue, reminding us of a phenomenon which Marx described as the "rent-tax."

What could this be other than a class division of society? How to describe these two major social groups? To answer this question, let us consider their most essential features.

The noneconomic, power-political nature of confiscation of the added product inevitably creates disparities not only in the socioeconomic but the actually existing legal status of the two groups. The distribution functions are codified as an illegitimate right, granted exclusively to the people belonging to a specific social group ("the nomenclature"). The officially proclaimed equality of everyone in the eyes of the law thus becomes a fiction which poorly hides the actual inviolable immunity of the members of the high elite.

Therefore, the special functional status in the social division of labor and the related inequality of rights and obligations are two features sufficient to confidently claim that we are faced with essentially new strata. We could add to these two basic system-forming features a number of derivatives which complete the picture. We could include among them the increasing exclusivity of the privileged communities, based on the factual endogamy (marrying only people "within one's circle"), the distinguishing features of their clothing, life style and way of life (known in sociology as "prestige consumption") and, finally, the estate mentality, an awareness of

one's "elitism," and scorn of those who are condescendingly known as "working stiff" or "ploughers." A tremendous psychological barrier separates the "distributor" and "producer" groups, to which are added mutual lack of understanding and scorn, to the point of hatred. "We versus they" was the way B.F. Porshnev, the Soviet historian and sociologist, described in his time this psychological complex.

The inseparable tie between state ownership and political power and the hierarchical nature of this power-ownership, delegated downward along the numerous levels of the administrative apparatus, create a vertical-pyramidal structure of the "nomenclatural" estate-corporation. The numerous redistribution channels create within it an abundance of functional subgroups which, in turn, also have their own pyramidal structure and control a limited area of the distribution tap. They could "stop the oxygen" for some or, conversely, "favor" other.

The myth of the efficient control over distribution "in the interest of the entire society" cannot conceal the fact that the entire "dispatcher" activity is largely subordinated to the corporate interests of the higher and middle functional groups. Despite the multiplicity of hierarchical status within the leading stratum, their overall involvement in the handling of distribution consolidates them within a group "for themselves," something which cannot be said about the rather weak and heterogeneous stratum of producers. This stratum is splintered in a number of departmental, professional, regional and other "admitted to receiving" the goods seemingly distributed from above.

It is necessary to emphasize that the dependence of the purchasing power of the wage, based less on labor results than on the status of the person, gives careless workers a feeling of steady economic protection, thus ensuring their support of an equalization policy in labor wages and developing an understanding of justice exclusively as full equality in consumption. With such practices there may appear (and do appear) faulty common interests shared by poor workers and "good" superiors; there always is (and is used) a possibility of somehow bribing these pseudoworkers, who are being paid quite a decent amount of money for poor work. It is on this basis that the "vertical" ties of patriarchal dependence and among customers are established. In turn, this is a basis for a phenomenon which I would describe as "command populism." Thus, after the miners' strikes, the frightened bureaucracy plunged into a tempestuous "flirtation" with the workers. Indications of surprising "love of people" could be seen, for example, in the "worker" meeting sponsored by trade union officials from the NGSPS in Luzhniki on 4 October 1989, and in the activities of the United Front of Working People in various cities of the Russian Federation, as well as the "party" meeting which was held on 22 November in Leningrad.

Another consequence of the vertical-corporate relations among producers is the possibility of directing their social discontent into the channel of the struggle among the working people themselves, in the course of which any success achieved by a given professional group will seem like a defeat of all other. Was this not the case with that same miners' strike, when the other worker detachments immediately began to raise jealous questions: "Could the miners be 'getting fat' at our expense?"

Two different social infrastructures and distribution systems exist within these stable classes, caused by the division within society. The working people make use of the state trade system, the "commercial market" (kolkhoz and cooperative trade) as well as, in the case of "especially admitted" representatives, of restricted departmental "markets" (orders, plant orders, ambulatory enterprise trade, etc.). In all cases, the words "market" and "trade" must be in quotation marks for, as justly noted by V. Novikov, "the personnel of our commercial stores do not work in trade. In order to trade one must begin by purchasing a commodity which must then be sold at a profit. Our stores are engaged not in trade but in distribution." In short, state trade is not a market element but a redistributive, a peculiar regulatory mechanism used by the "masses."

A very special concealed social infrastructure rises to an unreachable height above this wretchedness. It is for the elite, ranging from specialized industrial shops and entire enterprises to a network of special distributors and special services, housing built on the basis of special plans, etc. As V.N. Yaroshenko, USSR People's Deputy said, "essentially a system of separate ways of life has been established in the country." The struggle against such distorted phenomenon has been initiated. However, speaking of the activities of the USSR Supreme Soviet Commission on Privileges, and the noisy campaign against such privileges which was mounted in the press, let us briefly say the following: the system of illegal privileges is immortal as long as redistribution remains. Prohibitions and other administrative measures are helpless in this case.

Historical experience teaches us that the lengthy prevalence of total redistribution is, in principle, impossible. Mandatorily, market trade relations develop within it. This has taken place in our country as well, where for quite some time there has been a "second economy" and where, in addition to the official distribution system, illegal or semi-legal "gray" and "black" markets have appeared. The "gray" market applies to bartering goods in short supply; the "black" market is clandestine, using a much lower rate of exchange of the ruble and a relatively free price fluctuation. Being illegal, the latter assumes the same type of secrecy as the special distribution system. It too is a system of channels for supply, control over the functioning of which creates yet another status system, this time unofficial.

What is the correlation between the official and unofficial status? First, both are based on redistribution or,

which is one and the same, the blend of power-ownership. The difference between them is that in terms of appearance and strengthening, the official status of the dominating role in this dichotomy is that of power, while ownership (or, more accurately, the "divided" conventional ownership, delegated "from above" and "dispersed" among the various levels of the administrative pyramid) is its derivate component. Anyone holding a high position in the status structure is mandatorily someone with some power. Such individuals control, metaphorically speaking, the sources or the "upper reaches" of the redistribution flows. The longer we travel from the "upper reaches" down to the "estuary," the more the official status drops, for the official power drops while the unofficial status and, respectively, the informal power, rises. Most of the so-called official structure of "distributors," including those on its lower levels, consists of "simple" Soviet people. Actually, however, they control only the final phase of the process, the channel leading to the immediate consumer. Hence the tremendous gap between the official and unofficial status of this social group. Thus, those holding seemingly nonprestigious professions, such as receiver of glassware utensils or low-paid but "omnipotent" meat cutter wield great power in society.

Income from the unofficial status is identical to income based on official status and is a dividend. Thus, the wage of a worker, which depends less on the end results of his labor than on the type of work and the wage rate, is a peculiar sort of dividend-wage for putting in a number of working hours. However, in addition to the dividend-wage a criminal dividend—theft—has become exceptionally widespread. This refers to the "pilferers." They are in the millions: control checks at food industry enterprises alone lead to the detention of one worker out of three. In the service industry, in addition to this there is also the dividend-bribe: the client overpays essentially for a worker conscientiously to fulfill his direct official duties.

Whereas within the official status system power ensures control over redistribution, conversely, in the sum total of unofficial status control over redistribution inevitably leads to the appearance and the growth of power. Artificially creating a narrow "outlet" in the redistribution channels, interested groups and individuals make others feel their entire significance and make the needy dependent on them and, consequently, gain broad power functions. Shortage means power! We can agree with the statement by A. Radov to the effect that "today nothing is impossible to the 'united trade union' of commercial bigwigs. For example, they can remove anyone or, conversely, promote anyone and place him in virtually any high governmental position. If we consider the manager of a food store, his real power is usually several hundred percent greater than the power of the first secretary of a party raykom." I believe that this is not a great exaggeration, as confirmed by the familiar and well publicized criminal trials of corrupt groups in Moscow, Krasnodar, Uzbekistan and the Transcaucasus.

Therefore, today a system of status holders, which turn around relations in the area of access to goods, is the firm foundation of our societal structure. Power leads to total control over redistribution or, conversely, to the establishment of hierarchical structures of social status, officially or unofficially accepted by society. Gradually, the ranks in both structures lead to a common denominator, becoming a single and integral formation. The process of institutionalization of unofficial statuses expands increasingly. However, society remains stable as long as the official, the governmentally approved, the traditionally codified prestige remains. If the opposite prevails, a social crisis begins. The symbiosis between the personnel of the party-state and ministerial-departmental apparatus, traditionally holding the power and high official position, and the unofficial status of workers in trade, services, and so on, holding a similar rank, is particularly dangerous to both the economy and to society.

Let us also note that the market relations which were established and are developing within the redistributing economic organization and the concealed special private property are elements of corrosion and corruption of the redistribution system itself. Nonetheless, they cannot become the foundations for the type of market economy we would like to attain, for they create merely parasitical structures which reproduce and develop themselves only as a result of breakdowns in the organization of economic life. Correspondingly, "black" as well as "gray" market relations and most of their bearers are indelibly marked with the sign of a rotting system, without which they have no chance of survival.

This "market" and private property belong to the "Asiatic" type of organization of relations, as we conventionally describe it. Their features are the following: 1. A nonproduction commercial-usurious nature of economic life; 2. Reliance on speculative superprofits, i.e., on maximizing profits not by accelerating capital turnover but, conversely, by creating a scarcity of goods. Hence features, such as the noncompetitive type of behavior and aspiration to gain trade monopoly through conspiracy or the noneconomic coercion of competitors; dependence of economic activities on redistributing structures, i.e., on a corrupt power, which in turn creates the phenomenon of the "bureaucratic bourgeoisie," well familiar to third world countries; the absence of a market standard and business ethics and the erosion of standards, ethics and morality in general. We are faced with clearly asocial and "mercantile-Asiatic" features which gravitate toward the reproduction of precapitalist relations.

It is not the forces which are the bearers of dirt and social baseness and which strengthen the archaic status which is unnatural in terms of progressive development, but social groups oriented toward maximally progressive achievements within the **production process** itself that will become the true bearers of future market relations. It is only people related not to trade-distribution but directly involved in material and spiritual production, interested in free economic competition, people who are

unafraid by virtue of their high professional qualities, who can become the bearers of renovation.

Meanwhile, during the transitional period, it is unlikely that we would be able to avoid the temporary strengthening of the structures of the second economy which will try to integrate within the newly created market mechanism and to control it. Under circumstances in which the redistributing mechanisms become paralyzed, while the market mechanisms have not as yet become strengthened, we should expect the appearance on the surface of social life of an entire range of unattractive features inherent in early-capitalist relations. This will inevitably create (and is already creating) a mass negative reaction to the market in general. We must be prepared for this and take energetic steps to block the spreading of "Asiatism" in the developed market and to strengthen civilized market principles.

In our characterization of the present overall social structure, let us reemphasize its fragile magma-like nature. Nothing else is possible in a society which lacks full and unquestionable ownership (which, in our country, is frequently and erroneously associated with private property although its subject could be any juridical person, a labor collective, for instance). Naturally, given the existing situation, there are no real economic and legal subjects in our country. However, no first-rate objects can exist in a "subjectless" society (the author borrowed this idea from V.M. Vtorov's article). No economic (class-forming) social structuring mechanisms function in such a society. They are replaced by noneconomic, by administrative-arbitrary mechanisms which are made of that same amorphous magma of artificial classes and functional distribution-consumer "castes." The internal crystal-shaped grid of classes has been destroyed and all of its component elements have been integrated in vertical-corporate structures (departmental, regional, etc.). The brittle magma of atomized individuals is spread among artificial cells.

The social macrostructure becomes extremely simplified under the circumstances of an overall lack of classification. Essentially, it is reduced to two basic estates: producers and distributors. However, the microstructure becomes drastically more complex. It assumes a discrete-cellular nature with a clear predominance of vertical-corporate over horizontal, and administrative over economic relations. As a result, the workers become divided into departmental, regional, professional and other quasicast groups, distinct in terms of social status and, consequently, degree of legal protection, availability of elements of the social infrastructure, quality of consumption, etc.

The process of class consolidation on a national scale is inevitably related to the equalizing of the rights of its individual detachments.

Departmental "separatism" of workers, petty group privileges, and multiplicity of statuses are all a source of weakness of our "blue collar workers," who nurture

group egotism to the detriment of their interest as an entity. For the time being, they are merely a potential class. The internal heterogeneity of this class "within itself" is reinforced by the fact that it lacks the necessary intellectual-constructive stratum, its own "intelligentsia." Without it, however, it is impossible to develop a viewpoint on the current problems of social life, as shared by a given group of people, and clearly to articulate general class interests. "An economic class," justifiably notes V.G. Gelbras, "which has not created its own intelligentsia is doomed to defeat even if it were to seize the political power. Only a dictatorship but not a hegemony of a class is possible without an intelligentsia." The aspiration of some forces to set the working people against those engaged in intellectual labor is by no means accidental. Hence the obvious predominance until recently (until the July strikes of 1989) of narrow-group or individual interests of a **consumer** and not **political-legal**, a general-class nature.

Yet another feature of our society, which intensifies the unjustified social differentiation, is material poverty. Its negative impact on all social processes is quite obvious. We see here the functioning of a general sociological law which was clearly formulated in his time by George Orwell. In particular, he wrote that "a general poverty enhances the significance of petty privileges and thereby increases differences among groups.... In the final account, the hierarchical society is based only on poverty and ignorance." The low living standard of the population creates further aspects of adverse differentiating significance.

In addition to the departmental and regional groups we named, the producer stratum is divided into strata which may or may not have within the labor collective an informal right to an apartment, a car, etc. Furthermore, under the circumstances of a growing commodity hunger a great multiplicity of new "rationing-procurement castes" appears. A coupon for sausage can divide workers jointly operating a machine tool. "Granted/not granted" butter may split veterans of one and the same war—the Great Patriotic War!—into "urban" and "rural" (PRAVDA, 18 October 1989). The strengthening of the "coupon right" and availability leads not only to a drastic increase in the number of "caste-forming" characteristics and consumer statuses but also to an enhancement of the role, the inflation of the distribution apparatus, and to the increased dependence of the population on the arbitrariness of local "controllers." Frequently, working people are even set against one another in the area of distribution of vital benefits.

The profound lack of coincidence and conflict between the artificial social structure of the society-machine and the structure of the society as an organism (which, by virtue of this fact, becomes inevitably distorted), which reflects the new processes, forces the majority of the population to exist simultaneously in several different social dimensions. In particular, it is a question of processes of marginalizing of our society.

In itself, to be marginal, to be "a man at the crossroads," i.e., to shift from one social class to another, to move from the countryside to the city or vice versa, is neither good nor bad. Social changes have always taken place even in societies with a rigidly established "hereditary" social structure. There also are so-called "planned" marginals: university students or, more generally, young people as a whole, as a specific transitional group which finds itself "on the crossroads of life." Therefore, it is entirely inaccurate to identify the concept of "marginal" with that of "lumpen." Lumpenization is an extreme case of marginalization. Everything is good in moderation, including a marginal status, for it is a feature of social mobility only up to a certain level (albeit quite arbitrary) which, if crossed, is already an indication of an unstable social structure.

In terms of the value characterization of specific manifestations of the borderline situation, determining the trend ("ascending"- "descending") of vertical social moves is quite important. If the "descending" variant prevails, there is a systematic drop to ever lower levels of the social structure, and a reduction of its periphery (such as semi-unemployed, the "subproletariat," the "oxen") with the prospect of total lumpenization. The duration of the marginal status is extremely important: the less time one spends in a "suspended state," the better. A lengthy "suspension" on the edge of the social structure as well leads to loss of class.

Finally, any shift to a new social quality is accompanied by an inevitable sociopsychological stress. In civilized societies an entire system of all sorts of shock absorbers is used to ease it (unemployment compensation, centers for sociopsychological rehabilitation of war veterans, migrants, and former prison inmates, centers for the professional retraining of the casualties of structural unemployment, etc.). Otherwise, the tension related to changes in way of life, unless they are softened or, worse, if intensified through the introduction of an entire range of bureaucratic obstacles and universal indifference to social outsiders, which has become traditional in our society, inevitably leads to mass psychological breakdowns fraught with social anomalies. Furthermore, due to the lack of official shock absorbers, the marginals create their own means, which are unacceptable to society, plunging into alcoholism, drug addiction, sectarianism, etc.

The mass migration from country to town is the most powerful and, at the same time, the most visible channel of marginalization. In itself, an intensified process of urbanization (abstractly considered) is progressive. However, the form which it took in our country had clearly distorted features: the mass migration of the rural population to the cities was not paralleled by a corresponding development of the social infrastructure which, over long periods of time, blocked its integration with the urban subculture. A ruralizing of the towns occurred: entire blocks of material and spiritual culture of rural life were moved into an alien environment. Having lost their ties with the rural subculture and unable to integrate

with the urban one, the residents of the slums developed a typically marginal "barracks" subculture within which fragments of rural traditions became interwoven with hastily absorbed "values" of a quasiurban "pidgin-civilization." A social "rootlessness" was coupled with purely ordinary "rootlessness," the impossibility of organizing, of establishing stable and widespread relations within the framework of this class which was new to the migrants, by virtue of the absence of a civil society. The former rural residents who, as it were, were not allowed to become first-rate urban residents, formed a brittle atomized human mass with broken social relations and a semiwrecked system of spiritual values, i.e., an ideal material for bureaucratic "management" and accelerated lumpenization. The migration processes in our country became particularly severe also because large masses of people frequently shifted into a different ethnic environment (naturally, this does not apply exclusively to the Stalinist resettlement of ethnic groups). In this case social marginalization was somehow multiplied by ethnocultural marginalization, which caused further difficulties.

One of the main reasons for negative phenomena, however, was the existence of a second economy. Such an economy also creates a second social structure (according to estimates of the USSR Gosplan Scientific Research Economics Institute, today no less than 30 million people are involved in the second economy). Under such circumstances, one and the same person could be simultaneously functioning in different social dimensions. Thus, for example, to an ordinary seaman who sails to foreign ports or an official of the Ministry of Foreign Trade the basic purpose of his labor activities frequently is the illegal or semilegal transportation of goods in either direction, and a profitable resale of items brought into the country. By no means is it mandatory for the second unofficial role to be criminal: an example of operating simultaneously in two economic areas, accepted by society, in redistribution and the market—are "hacks" and urban workers who farm their private plots.

A significant drop in the status of many mass intellectual professions (engineers, teachers, physicians, agronomists, etc.) forces the people to abandon their profession and find jobs which do not require a high educational standard. As a whole, there are some 4 million such diplomaed workers in the country (about 12 percent of their overall number); 80 percent of agricultural specialists have moved to the towns. Another separate social group is that of the members of the humanitarian professions, who were kept during the period of stagnation in the area of physical (as a rule unskilled) labor as a result of the bureaucratic pressure on the creative process.

A philosopher-yardman, a writer-stoker, an agronomist-secretary or an engineer-loading worker are indicators not only of the grossest possible breakdowns of the command-administrative production system and cadre deployment or distorted wage policy. They also are proof

of the accumulation of a dangerous "combustible material" in the country. Historical experience proves that such a lumpen-intelligentsia is the most active bearer of social discontent. In the "best of cases" it is a channel of a "brain drain" to the West, for this social group includes many truly talented people who were unable to get along with the bureaucracy.

Our country also includes other marginalized social groups, the potential political weight of which greatly exceeds their numbers. This includes, above all, about 1 million "Afghans." Here as well we must take especially into consideration the fact that, according to Major General K. Tsagolov, "all soldiers without exception experienced a mental trauma," and that the difficulty of adaptation of the veterans of the Afghan War to peaceful life is, furthermore, greatly multiplied by all possible bureaucratic obstacles. Considering the high political activeness of the "Afghans," this sociopsychological stress triggers the heightened interest in them on the part of many politically involved forces.

Following the reduction of the armed forces, the size of the "Afghan" group was increased by socially related 150,000 former officers, ensigns and midshipmen (more than half a million people, with the members of their families). Of these, more than 20 percent have no housing whatsoever. Even those who remain in the service, A.D. Lizichev notes, face a number of problems. "Many hundreds of thousands of officers are still without a place of their own. Many wives of officers, midshipmen and ensigns cannot find jobs. There is a grave shortage of preschool institutions." What are we to do? The Ministry of Defense and the Main Political Directorate look at this problem from the purely physical and, at best, social aspect, totally failing to realize the political consequences of such savings from the social needs of their subordinates. Such a social conglomerate has already repeatedly appeared in history, along with the underestimating of its real political role. In his time, for example, Palmiro Togliatti wrote on the subject of Italy at the start of the 1920s: "We failed to realize that yesterday's frontline veterans, the declassed urban population strata, were not isolated individuals but specifically a mass and, essentially, a phenomenon with its specific class features."

Let us particularly note the existence of various categories of second-rate manpower, resembling departmental "serfs." Noneconomic coercive labor—the sad legacy of the Gulags—is quite a widespread phenomenon to this day. "Zeks," "chemists," troops of construction battalions, railroad battalions, disciplinary battalions, and the population of the LTP [Medical Observation Centers] and PND and of BNS [Hospitals for Drug Abusers], restricted workers [limitchiki] and, finally, foreign workers, are a very partial list of this multi-million strong caste under the jurisdiction of various ministries, reclamation and water resources and timber industry, the Ministry of Transport Construction and the former



Gosagroprom above all. In terms of output the MVD itself is in sixth place among the production ministries in the country.

The mass use of second-rate manpower leads to the preservation of the low level of the capital-labor ratio of the national economy, the demoralization of a significant mass of working people and the extensive dissemination of a camp subculture in society. Noneconomic coercion is a characteristic feature of the redistribution economy in which everything, including manpower and man himself, is subject to redistribution. Not only restricted workers and members of construction battalions but even ordinary categories of working people do not enjoy full rights. It is a question, in particular, of those entangled in procedures of residential permits, departmental housing or waiting their turn for such and similar instruments of departmental serfdom.

In frequent cases, keeping a person on the lower rungs of society and even outside society was achieved by organizing various castes of untouchable citizens, whose record was not "clean:" former prison inmates and their relatives, people who had the misfortune of having been treated in mental hospitals, people who had lived in occupied territories, "dissidents," or members of "punished" nations. All told, all of these categories of "the damned and the branded" constituted an especially low caste known as "nonleaveable," i.e., people who were not allowed contacts with the outside world. This "non-allowability" was their, so to say, common denominator. Within that group there were a great deal of levels of deprivation of civil rights.

All such restrictions and prohibitions were implemented with the help of legal regulations (frequently secret) by various departments. These were acts scandalously at odds with the constitution. To this day such legal documents block the channels of "upward" mobility to the Soviet "pariahs." Conversely, they provide the only possible way to the social bottom, literally shoving the individual down to it.

Nonetheless, let us note that the trend toward marginalizing clashes with a countertrend: the stabilization of the social structure. Thus, the move of huge human masses from country to town has already essentially taken place and the time for their consolidation and structuring as a contemporary urban community has begun. Over the past 30 years the intensiveness of such social changes has declined by a factor of 3. Increasingly, urban workers, employees and intellectuals are being reproduced on their own basis, which leads to their greater internal unification and the development of uniform and unadulterated traditions.

However, this is merely a trend, albeit the main, the determining one. As a whole, by no means has the stabilization of the social structure and the urbanized way of popular life been completed, for it is not before the year 2000 that the number of people born in the

cities will exceed the respective figure for the countryside. Therefore, the process of the crystallizing of strata will develop as a process of further adaptation to an urban environment.

Of late an additional powerful destabilizing factor has emerged on the horizon, which leads to a severe shaking of the still hot social magma. I am referring to the conversion from an early industrial and industrial production base to its new technological foundations. Reindustrialization has been completed in the leading Western countries. The production process has taken a more progressive path of development, leading to "high technologies" and the information industry. This shift was paralleled by a growth of structural unemployment, a decline in the share of the industrial proletariat of the traditional type and an increased number of workers with a postindustrial training. We are as yet to complete this stage of structural economic perestroika with the entire inevitable social tension. Many old and ineffective social groups must vanish (common laborers, nonspecialist employees, etc.). This will create new problems.

Difficulties will increase also because the redistribution system makes it possible to support the existence of groups which have outlived their time of transferring the produced income from the pocket of the worker-producer, in the current understanding of this term, to the pocket of the worker-rentier, who is not interested in mastering another skill, retraining or mastering new forms of production activities. The latter, given the total independence from the market as a criterion of the efficiency of his labor, is entirely subservient to the apparat, for through good relations with it, receiving unearned income is secured. The comfortable atmosphere of reciprocal connivance leads to the moral condemnation of people with a competing type of behavior. Division and not the market and conflict-free relations with superiors instead of good work are the principles governing their lives.

This is what leads to the formation of a bloc of "stagnant" social groups, a peculiar couple consisting of the conservative part of the apparat and the worker-rentier, based on a mutual interest in patriarchal benefactors-distributors and declassed dependents-receivers. Instead of an orientation toward the use of new technologies and market forces, this stagnant unity will try to retain and defend the extensively spreading moral and physically obsolete production forces and redistribution production relations. There will be an intensified "new edition" of Luddism, and anti-market feelings will be converted ever more actively into anti-Western xenophobia and jingoism.

Objectively, these forces of stagnation are opposed by the bloc of the most dynamic segments of different social groups interested in the free utilization of their high professional and cultural possibilities. The level of their professional training is inconsistent with their real wages and their high general cultural demands with the infernal habitat and the equalizing and denigrating pressure

applied by the bureaucracy. Such strata aspire toward a high quality of life achieved through their own efforts and highly efficient productive activities rather than by grabbing advantageous status positions in the distribution area. They could be characterized as an obstacle to the spreading of "social entropy," and as bearers of labor ethics and high standards, including political and legal, the scarcity of which is felt particularly acutely in the country. These strata are the social base of perestroika.

In conclusion, let us note the exceptional difficulty and drama of the social processes which are currently taking place in our country. This is explained by the fact that within our social structure three groups of elements of different quality have become interwoven, related to typologically different technological standards of production—preindustrial, industrial and postindustrial. The difficulty of reaching the postindustrial age and, correspondingly, the difficulties of perestroika are explained by the weakness of the new progressive elements and the inordinate large numbers and distortedly high percentage of social groups belonging to the preindustrial and early industrial type. The conversion to a qualitative higher stage of production, which is exceptionally difficult in itself, is further burdened in our country by preindustrial and precommodity economic, social and psychological structures. For that reason the clash among social interests in the period of perestroika assumes unparalleled sharpness, formulating particularly strict requirements both concerning the political leadership of the country as well as the social scientists who study the social structure and engage in social forecasting. A great many things in this area remain unstudied and work of tremendous scale awaits researchers.

#### Footnotes

1. The concept "Asiatic" is used by us here not in its geographic but its typological meaning, characterizing the existence of features of specific socioeconomic structures and units not mandatorily "tied" precisely to the Asiatic region. For example, such structures ("Asiatic" according to Marx) were encountered in Europe as well (Mycenaean Greece), Africa (Egypt) and America (the Inca Empire in Peru). Many more such examples may be cited.

2. The concepts of "class within itself" and "class for itself" were introduced by Marx. The former applies to a large group of people with common objective class features within a system of production relations but subjectively not considering itself an entity sharing common class interests. A "class for itself" is a community sharing not only objective but also subjective class features. It is the subject of actions aware of its quality as a specific community.

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#### The Great Forgery

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[Article by G. Lisichkin, doctor of economic sciences, USSR People's Deputy; synopsis of the article "Top Secret," published in the appendix to the journal *DETEKTIV I POLITIKA*, Nos 1 and 2, 1990]

[Text] Many systems related to the building of a socialist society are being refined and reshaped in the course of perestroika. Naturally, in that connection, again and again we turn to Marx, Engels and Lenin, who dedicated their entire lives to the creation of the theory of scientific socialism. When major shortcomings are detected in the building which we erected, as G.S. Lisichkin notes, many are those who hasten to formulate major claims not only against those who erected the building and those who managed the construction (Stalin and his loyal students) but also those who drafted the initial plans and who scientifically substantiated the accuracy of their computations.

A number of recent publications quite clearly and unequivocally state that the sources of Stalinism are found in Marxism. A viewpoint is becoming popular, according to which the Marxist classics are guilty not only because they created an unfounded theory of scientific communism but also laid the foundations of an unfounded practical mechanism for the administration of society. This applies to Lenin, who is accused of, precisely, being the founder of the Administrative System, with the help of which Stalin and his circle carried out their criminal actions no longer in theory but in practice.

One of the main squares in Vienna is named after Marx; not far from it is Engels Boulevard. Obviously, the classics of scientific socialism did not prevent here, as they did in our country, the organization of a humane way of life. Furthermore, the very fact of such a grateful reminder of their names confirms, according to the author, the acknowledgment by the Austrians of the great participation of these scientists in the building of a type of society in which the well-being of the people has been secured (and is growing) and where many of the civil democratic rights of which we are only beginning to dream are guaranteed. To the Austrians Marx's and Engels' theory did not hinder the building of their future but, conversely, proved to be necessary.

We have already paid a high price for this type of swinging from one extreme to another. However, forgetting it, we are once again reluctant to begin to build from scratch (having first destroyed everything to its foundations and only then...), not knowing what, not knowing how, not knowing with whom, without continuity of ideas, without the so greatly necessary elementary human memory. As we have realized on the basis of our own bitter experience, no benefits can accrue for such

memory-free activities. That is what it makes so important to establish a proper correlation between the teachings of Lenin and those of Stalin. To do this, we must begin by asking the following: "Was Lenin a 'Marxist-Leninist'?"

G.S. Lisichkin is convinced that "Marxism-Leninism" is a separate theory which was systematized by Stalin in the collection "*Voprosy Leninizma*" [Problems of Leninism]. This work underwent 11 editions. Eleven volleys were fired at Lenin's doctrine, using explosive bullets. His works were torn apart and then glued together in accordance with the type of logic which Stalin needed, adding components with special characteristics and the newly created product was not identified as Stalinism but mislabelled, claiming that this product was the work of the great masters.

It is important to note that Lenin himself, naturally, never described himself as a Marxist-Leninist. The reason was not false modesty but the same as that of Engels, who had not popularized but actively developed creative Marxism, and who had written about himself that he was merely the continuator of the cause of the great teacher. Lenin played the same role.

It was Stalin who introduced something distorted in the social sciences. He separated Lenin's theory from Marx, thus securing for himself the right to introduce any amendments and supplements to it he wished, in order to support the ideological practice of throwing his weight around in a great country.

As a consistent Marxist, Lenin was sharply different from the way Stalin presented him to us, donning himself in the garb of "Marxist-Leninist."

Like all bolsheviks on the eve of the revolution, Lenin deeply trusted Marx and Engels, who claimed that a specter is roaming in Europe, the specter of communism.

He trusted the main, the basic concept of their philosophy, the fact that Europe is pregnant with socialist revolution. However, he ironically noted that all too frequently the classics had been wrong in predicting its start. It was this skepticism, according to the author, that prepared Lenin for the fact that, when the Marxists made their last error in predicting the date of start of a global socialist revolution, he did not panic but tried quickly to restructure the strategy and tactics of the proletarian revolution (which is what took place during the NEP). However, this was "afterwards." On the eve of the October Revolution, at the head of the bolsheviks, Lenin constructively was preparing for the global socialist revolution, the inevitability of which had been predicted by Marx and Engels, warning the communists not to be caught unawares.

We know that the founders of scientific communism assigned Russia a special, a strike role, in the global socialist revolution. Lenin and the bolsheviks heroically assumed the hard and noble mission of starting a global socialist revolution, hoping that after its victory the

more developed European countries would gratefully help Russia to surmount its backwardness and take its place in the rank of the advanced countries. Lenin wrote about this prior to the October Revolution (in 1907) as well as in the first years following its victory: "The Russian working class will win freedom for itself and will provide an impetus to Europe with its revolutionary actions, despite their many mistakes, and let the common people later boast of the impeccability of their revolutionary inaction" ("*Poln. Sobr. Soch.*" [Complete Collected Works], vol 15, p 249).

Taking into consideration this view on the prospects for the development of a global revolution, the Comintern's First Constituent Congress, which was held in March 1919 in Moscow, quite logically announced a program of struggle for a global proletarian dictatorship and world communism, while the Comintern itself was proclaimed the revolutionary instrument for this global state of working people. Such a vision of events had its grounds: a revolution had broken out in Germany in November 1918; albeit for a short time, Soviet republics had appeared in 1919 in Hungary, Slovakia and Bavaria; in 1920 the workers in Italy seized the enterprises; the revolutionary upsurge in France and Great Britain increased. Still...

In August 1920, at Warsaw, the Red Army, which was trying to connect with the revolutionary proletariat of Europe, suffered a defeat. This was not an ordinary military defeat which may have been repaired by mobilizing additional resources. The defeat at Warsaw indicated that the European proletariat was not ready to support Russia's revolutionary thrust. This was already a failure of the classical scenario of a global socialist revolution.

Lenin's merit is that he immediately realized this general error. As early as September 1920, at the Ninth All-Russian RKP(b) Conference, the two viewpoints on the subject of military aid to the revolutionary movement in Europe collided. A division appeared among the bolsheviks.

For example, at the Fourth Comintern Congress, Bukharin suggested that the following stipulation be included in its program: "...Each proletarian state has the right to Red intervention," for "the spreading of the Red Army means the spreading of socialism, proletarian power and revolution." Although this motion was tabled on Lenin's recommendation, the congress adopted the appeal "To the RSFSR Red Army and Navy" which read as follows: "...We unanimously name you fighters of the Communist International, heroes of the common struggle waged by all mankind... The time for universal disarmament and an end to war has not come yet."

In one of his letters (dated 5 August 1921) V.I. Lenin wrote: "Yes, whoever fails to understand the meaning of replacing the slogan of 'civil war' with that of 'civil peace' is silly, if not something worse" (op. cit., vol 44, p 78). As we know, Lenin's appeal for "civil peace" which,

as he thought, should be established everywhere both within the country and as in all neighboring countries (so that the competition between the two systems would be in the economic and not the military area), remained a voice crying out in the desert. Lenin the Marxist found himself in the minority, in isolation, not understood by the bolsheviks who were supporting him only because at that time there were no forces with which to wage a war of all against all. The majority of them agreed to a "civil peace" as a tactical, a temporary maneuver, until they could gather their strength for the acceleration of the global revolution.

Marx, Engels and Lenin, G.S. Lisichkin emphasizes, were wrong not only in forecasting the time of victory of the global revolution and the means of achieving it, but also in assessing the viability of capitalism. They believed that capitalism was already decayed all the way down to its roots and was unable to march in step with technical progress, and to self-renovate and self-develop. It is true that here as well the Marxists made a major stipulation. They did not criticize capitalism for its abstract social injustice. Conversely, they said that no system dies before having implemented its civilizing role in the history of society to the end. Naturally, this also included capitalism. This meant that the Marxists agreed not to attack so drastically capitalism with the appeal for its immediate destruction, having realized that its historical and civilizing role had still not been entirely fulfilled.

Another of Lenin's merits is that he not only realized that there is no revolutionary situation in Europe leading to the victory of world socialism but was also able to see that capitalism was not all that weak and decayed as it had seemed to the Marxists before the October Revolution.

What was the reflection of all of these tremendous changes in theory inside "Marxism-Leninism?" Naturally, as one can understand from Stalin's works, the global revolution was somewhat delayed but it could break out any time, for all imperialist contradictions were worsening rather than abating. Therefore, Soviet Russia had to be not only ready for it but also to hasten its maturing process by all possible means, material and military included. Making no corrections to the practices which revolutionary Russia had introduced in the Marxist theory of the world revolution, in his work "*Ob Osnovakh Leninizma*" [On the Foundations of Leninism] (1924), Stalin took up the theory of Marx's continuing "permanent" revolution.

According to Stalin, Marx and Lenin were ardent supporters of the continuing revolution, a revolution to its victorious end, to the destruction of the last bourgeois on earth, regardless of the circumstances under which this process would take place. Having rejected the most serious stipulations of Marxism concerning a global revolution, Stalin cleverly turned Marx, Engels and Lenin into the godfathers of his own "Marxism-Leninism" (i.e., Stalinism), into his ideological allies,

converting them into the type of dashing Budenny-style cavalymen, into fine swordsmen ready on the first call (and even without it) to rush into any country to establish by force justice, as he interpreted it. According to the author of the article, this frenzied "Marxist-Leninist" faith in world revolution and in the process of decay allegedly taking place in the modern capitalist countries was the first major forgery which, for decades on end, Stalinism concealed behind the mask of true Marxism.

The second major theoretical forgery committed by Stalin in the development of his "Marxism-Leninism" was providing proof of the possibility of the victory of socialism in a single country. As we know, Lenin did not believe the possibility of skipping stages of historical development. For that reason he sharply criticized those who demanded the immediate "introduction" of socialism in a backward country such as Russia in 1917. "The bricks from which socialism will be built have not been fired yet," V.I. Lenin noted. He also said: "...The term Socialist Soviet Republic means the resolve of the Soviet system to achieve a transition to socialism but not at all the acknowledgment of the new economic order as socialist." Furthermore, in the 'material', economic and production sense we are still not at the 'threshold' of socialism..." (op. cit., vol 36, pp 66, 295, 303). "Naturally," Lenin categorically stated, "the final victory of socialism in a single country is impossible" (op. cit., vol 35, p 277).

In this respect Lenin firmly stood on Marxist positions. Socialism in a single country is as much a nonsense as feudalism or capitalism in a single country. The new socioeconomic system always appears as a universal human phenomenon, asserting itself immediately in several countries, which a more or less similar degree of maturity of their conditions. Stalin revised this Marxist concept and a new theoretical concept was introduced in the "Marxist-Leninist" catechism, according to which socialism could be "introduced" into a country which was totally unprepared for it economically or culturally.

Lenin proved that it was not mandatory to wait for Russia to become rich and cultured before making a socialist revolution. The sequence could be different and reversed. In that case as well a revolution would accelerate the maturing of the conditions needed for the victory of socialism. The difference in Lenin's approach to the building of socialism, compared to the one which Stalin imposed on the country, was that Lenin intended initially to create the conditions needed for the building of socialism. He intended to make those same "bricks" from which "socialism will be built," whereas Stalin rushed immediately to build socialism itself, without firing the necessary "bricks." In other words, Lenin defined for Russia an entire historical age of transition from feudalism and capitalism, in which the country existed, to socialism. That age was named the NEP.

The administrative-command system which existed (by necessity) during the period of "war communism" was undermined in its very foundation, and the country's

economy began increasingly to reject arbitrariness and bureaucracy, as it followed objective economic laws in its development. Lenin's Marxism consisted of the fact that he did not intend to have the country skip the development stages which it had not crossed yet. He clearly realized that the level of economic socialization in the country was still so low that there could not even be a question of a direct conversion to socialism.

A juridical, arbitrary, coerced socialization and economic socialization based on the intensified division of labor and upgrading its effectiveness are two different things. However, they are different to the Marxists. As to the "Marxists-Leninists", they saw no difference whatsoever. To them nationalization and confiscation were the beginning and the end of the conversion of private into public property.

As early as 1918, however, Lenin spoke of the transitional stages to socialism, emphasizing that we neither know nor could know how many stages will be transitional to socialism" (op. cit., vol 36, p 48). Stalin totally ignored transitional stages, unless we consider "transitional" his efforts aimed at the total coercive uprooting initially of private and, subsequently, cooperative ownership. Therefore, "Marxism-Leninism" proceeds from the task of directly instilling socialist forms of social life, ignoring the degree of maturity of objective conditions.

G.S. Lisichkin notes the following: Stalin's "Marxism-Leninism" led our society astray from the Leninist way and, to this day, we are wandering in the jungle of the dogmas of "war communism," unable to reject this burdening legacy of the past which led us into a severe critical situation. To this day we are being threatened with the threat of the restoration of capitalism whenever we start thinking and looking at reality. The reality is that it is impossible to build socialism in a single country and that the new system presumes an immeasurably closer cooperation (scientific, economic, cultural) than ever before with anyone disposed to accept such cooperation. Faith in socialism in an individual country inevitably leads to the erection of thick walls between countries, to an "iron curtain" policy behind which one can do, unchecked, anything one wishes.

The third distinction separating Stalin's "Marxism-Leninism" from Lenin's Marxism is that in the 1920s Lenin was able to reach a conclusion concerning a new correlation between the development of capitalism and socialism. Together with Marx and Engels, Lenin believed that the maturing of socialism, as of any other system, begins and takes place by following a natural historical path, within capitalism. In his *Economic Manuscripts of 1857-1859*, Marx had already written that "production relations" and "communications relations" develop within the bourgeois society, and are also the mines which will blast this system into pieces. "...If in this society, such as it is," he wrote, "there are no hidden material prerequisites for production and corresponding relations of communications needed for a classless society, any attempt at blowing it apart would

be quixotic (K. Marx and F. Engels, "Soch." [Works], vol 46, part I, p 103). In terms of such a dialectical approach taken by Marx to the evolution of capitalism, Lenin noted: "We do not find in Marx even a speck of utopianism in the sense of fabricating, fantasizing about a 'new' society. No, he studies, as a natural historical process, the **birth** of the new society **from** the old, and the transitional forms from the latter to the former" (op. cit., vol 33, p 48).

In its Stalinist interpretation, capitalism is considered a society which can make preparations for socialism only on the material and technical levels, through the respective development of production forces. The shaping of socialist production relations under capitalism is proclaimed impossible. In *"On Dialectical and Historical Materialism,"* Stalin wrote: "...The transition from capitalism to socialism and the liberation of the working class from capitalist oppression can be achieved not through slow change or reform but only through a qualitative change in the capitalist system, through revolution."

In 1923 Lenin acknowledged that the movement of the capitalist countries toward socialism "will not develop as we previously expected" (op. cit., vol 45, p 402). He spoke of the "ripening" of socialism within capitalism. If we agree with this and display such an optimistic view of the inevitable future ripening of socialism and the movement toward it of different nations, in that case, the author emphasizes, the idea of the birth of world socialism remains, without a world bloodshedding revolution but through a creative, an evolutionary way. At that point we must not erect a fence by building socialism in a single country. At that point the NEP, as the continuation of the foreign relations maintained by Russia with its neighbors, will seem not a rejection of a global proletarian revolution but merely another way of advancing toward the set objective.

The fourth major theoretical forgery committed by Stalin, blasphemously "sanctifying" it once again with the names of Marx and Lenin, was the theory of the vanguard role of the proletariat, the leading, the head social force in society, followed by the poorest peasantry and the toiling intelligentsia. The latter was called upon to perform not an independent but a subordinate role as a "stratum." According to the "Marxist-Leninist" evaluation, the proletariat was assigned first rank (guild); obviously, the peasant was second ("led," less "mature"); finally, the third was assigned to the intelligentsia (although "labor" but not very reliable). The division of all people into first, second and third classes and "an interclass," became a reliable guarantee for the intensification of the civil conflict and, therefore, of social instability and alienation. Naturally, all of this has no relation whatsoever to Lenin and his interpretation of Marxism.

In itself, the October Revolution—as the seizure of power—was the least bloody of any revolution known to

history. Lenin is to be blamed less than anyone else for the subsequent development of events.

The people would never have become involved in a mortal fratricidal conflict about who would govern Russia—Lenin or Kerenskiy. However, either of these leaders had a program which affected the most profound interests of every individual. When the Civil War, was the most unnatural of all wars, broke out, both the “Whites” and the “Reds” were forced to resort to equally horrible methods.

Lenin’s rejection of the concept of the immediate victory of socialism in the course of a global revolution and, in this connection, his acceptance of the need for a radical change “in our entire viewpoint on socialism,” which was expressed in the “serious and long-term” institution of the NEP and the change of the “civil war” slogan with that of “civil peace” were all factors which made it necessary also to change the attitude toward social forces, now oriented not toward a revolutionary but an evolutionary way of building socialism.

This was manifested above all in the attitude toward the peasantry. At the 10th Party Congress, Lenin said: “...We must not try to hide anything but openly state that the peasantry is dissatisfied with the form of relations which were established in our country, that it no longer wishes such type of relations, and no longer intends to live this way. This is unquestionable. The peasantry clearly expressed this wish. This is the wish of the huge masses of the toiling population. We must take this into consideration and we are sufficiently sober politicians to say openly the following: let us revise our policy toward the peasantry” (op. cit., vol 43, p 59).

This was the start (no more and no less) of the acknowledgment of economic equality in relations between urban and rural working people. Neither the town nor the country were to receive something for nothing from the other. Everything had to be earned through one’s own efforts, and no discussions concerning “revolutionary awareness” or the “elder” urban brother, who would impart wisdom to the “junior,” ignorant and backward brother, who could not realize the advantages which would accrue to him in the shining future, were to take place. The setting of price parity between farm and urban goods, expressed the foundations of the new Leninist social policy, the purpose of which was not to make one class superior to another but to achieve a dynamic, a sensible compromise between the conflicting interests of town and country.

Lenin’s abandonment of a frontal application of the idea of dictatorship of the proletariat was also influenced by his initial observations of the actual behavior of the proletariat under the conditions of the freedom it had gained in the revolution. Lenin noted, above all, that there were differences among the members of the proletariat. It was hardly accurate to consider it a homogeneous social community while ignoring the qualitative distinctions among its constituent groups.

Naturally, G.S. Lisichkin believes, whenever rebels are engaged in the destruction of the landed estates, they act as an entirely homogeneous mass. Later, however, when the people go to the fields to cultivate the land taken away from the exploiters, this homogeneity immediately disappears. Some people work to the limit, others work indifferently, and others again amaze those around them by their ability to weasel out of even the slightest assignment. Today all of us are quite familiar with this phenomenon. At that time, this was immediately noticed by those bolsheviks who idealistically hoped that by giving the land to the peasants and the factories to the workers, with this single act they would secure eternal labor enthusiasm and incredible industriousness which would make the economy blossom.

In order to correctly understand the way Lenin imagined relations among the different social forces and social groups after the victory of the October Revolution, we must remember his words to the effect that “capitalism left us... the inability, the lack of habit to work jointly....” (op. cit., vol 42, p 5). Also: “The Russian is a poor worker compared to the progressive nations. Nothing else was possible under the tsarist regime and the durability of the remnants of serfdom. To learn how to work is a task which the Soviet system must set to the people, in its entire magnitude” (op. cit., vol 36, p 189). It would be difficult, having said all this, to believe that Lenin dreamed of a dictatorship by precisely those social forces which had not as yet become accustomed to “joint work,” or that he tried to entrust the full power of a great country to a “poor worker.” Nor did he wish the comprehensive lumpen-proletarianization of Russia!

For that reason (particularly after relying on the civilizing aid of the West was no longer possible) he turned his attention to the intelligentsia, hoping that it would be able to help the people to surmount its backwardness. In his “Draft Theses on the Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions Under the Conditions of the New Economic Policy,” in 1922 Lenin wrote: “If all of our leading institutions, i.e., the Communist Party and the Soviet system and the trade unions do not reach a point at which they would protect, like the apple of their eye, every specialist who works conscientiously and knowledgeably, and treat him lovingly, although he may be totally alien to communism ideologically, there could not even be a question of any serious successes in building socialism” (op. cit., vol 44, pp 350-351).

Lenin’s characteristic interpretation of the dictatorship of the proletariat can be seen also in his following remark: “A communist who has not proved his modesty and ability to guide the work of specialists, to understand their work and to study it in detail, such a communist is frequently harmful. We have many such communists in our country, and I would trade dozens of them for a single conscientious and knowledgeable bourgeois specialist” (op. cit., vol 42, p 346).

In practice, this was reflected in the respective deployment of leading cadres. Under Lenin the party guard

consisted, overwhelmingly, of members of the intelligentsia and the educated workers. Interesting data in this connection may be found in the study conducted in 1924 by the RKP(b) Central Committee Organization and Placement Administration. It showed that the leading positions among senior workers at that time were held by intellectuals. In the People's Commissariat of Education, for example, they accounted for 93.3 percent; they accounted for 76.6 percent of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, 69.7 percent of the People's Commissariat of Finance and 63.2 percent of chairmen of guberniya executive committees.

Stalin attentively saw to it that the more of an upstart, the less literate and, above all, the more subservient a person was, the faster and more steadily would he rise to holding a position at the "top," for Stalin's interpretation of proletarian dictatorship was based on the conviction that it is only the poorest and most illiterate that are the bearers of all that is pure, noble and sacred. By 1925, there already were some 30,000 totally illiterate party members. Among the delegates to the 16th Party Congress, in 1930, the majority had primary or incomplete secondary training. It was they that, as their presence in the power authorities grew rapidly, provided the social grounds on which the Stalinist doctrine, cleverly described as "Marxism-Leninism," could grow and richly blossom.

The fifth distinguishing feature singled out by the author is related to the concept that "the majority is always right," which Stalin included in his philosophical doctrine. He ascribed to the term "bolsheviks" itself an entirely different meaning compared to its initial one, which was simply a record of the results of the vote taken at the second Party Congress in the election of its central authorities. Within "Marxism-Leninism" it assumed a symbolic meaning, asserting the right of the majority to the truth and unquestionable obedience to it by the minority, on which so-called party discipline was based.

Lenin himself, as we know, did not fear to be in the minority and courageously, to the end, fought the "majority" if he felt that the right was on his side. Therefore, if we follow Lenin, it is not cowardly obedience that should be taken as an example of true party discipline but the knowledgeable and argued defense of one's convictions to the very end, involving a rejection of responsibility for resolutions which, in one's opinion, threaten the common project with failure.

Lenin did not pit universal human values against the idea of revolution and the liberation of labor but, conversely, considered the revolution itself as the main prerequisite for the harmonious development of the individual. In this case there is no place for suppressing the minority by the majority, and the following conclusion is entirely natural: "...From the viewpoint of the basic ideas of Marxism, the interests of social development stand above those of the proletariat..." (op. cit., vol 4, p 220).

Within Stalinist "Marxism-Leninism" taking "isolated units" into consideration is excluded. Here it is classes, millions of people, entire nations that are in charge, naturally in the name of the happiness of the proletariat and of all other working people—the majority. The role of the individual in "Marxism-Leninism" has been reduced to the familiar "cog." The very majority in this case is viewed as a mass of irresponsible and rightless "cogs," which operate within the machine in which universal human values are considered secondary.

Shortly before his death, Engels quite self-critically acknowledged that both he and Marx had been "wrong" in overestimating the extent of maturity of capitalism and mistaken about the real conditions for revolutionary struggle: "History proved that we and all those who thought like us were wrong. It clearly proved that the state of economic development on the European continent at that time was by no means as yet so ripe as to abolish the capitalist production method and that the "capitalist foundation" on the basis of which such a development occurred "still possessed a very great capacity for expansion" (K. Marx and F. Engels, "Soch. [Works], vol 22, p 535). Engels wrote: "History went even further: it not only dispersed our old errors but also totally changed the conditions under which the proletariat must wage its struggle. The method of struggle which was used in 1848 has now become obsolete in all respects..." (ibid., p 533).

The same fate befell Lenin as well. In August-September 1920 a different Lenin was "born," who was puzzling to his closest fellow workers in the party. We know the caution, not to say suspicion, with which Lenin's closest surroundings looked at his articles written shortly before his death. As to the fate of Lenin's political "testament," the manner in which the party members were informed about it immediately after his death, not to mention in all subsequent decades, provides the clearest and most significant proof of the new Lenin, the Lenin who had been able to understand that the bolshevik strategy and tactics, developed on the eve of the October Revolution and immediately after it, had to be rejected and replaced by an absolutely new policy, for objective conditions turned out to be entirely different; this Lenin was not only not needed by the bolsheviks but simply obstructed their lives and work.

Lenin's tragedy was not only that he had erred in assessing the situation within which the revolution was to take place, but also that Lenin the bolshevik found himself after 1920 not even in the minority but simply in a state of theoretical isolation inside his own Bolshevik Party. He felt this sharply, as can be seen by the "Testament." Lenin looked at the leaders who were closest to him—Trotsky, Zinovyev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Pyatakov and Stalin—all of them, for one reason or another and, to one extent or another, he believed them to be unprepared successfully to work for the socialist reorganization of Russia.

Alas, history proved how accurate Lenin's anticipation was. After his death, it was that same "Marxist-Leninist" theory which guaranteed that whoever took over was bound to follow the path followed by Stalin, would prevail in the party.

The huge numbers of victims in our country in the post-October period were by no means victims to Stalin's terror, writes G.S. Lisichkin at the end of his article. No single person could so simply deal with tens of millions of healthy people. In order to deal with them they had to be disarmed. They had to be disarmed ideologically. It was "Marxism-Leninism" that performed this task. The way this philosophy was imposed upon a great nation is a separate matter. The time has come, however, to realize that there will be no salvation for us until we get rid of the evil spells of Stalin's revision and falsifying of Lenin's legacy.

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### **The Party As I See It; KOMMUNIST Precongress Survey**

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[Text] "...My advice is that at this congress we make a number of changes in our political system." V.I. Lenin

In this issue we are beginning to publish answers to the precongress survey conducted by our journal. The purpose of the editors was to gather opinions on the new aspect of the CPSU.

In the course of recent decades, the party created by Lenin lost many of its initial features, replacing them with other, by no means always attractive. This change in appearance cannot be explained by the natural time-governed process of reforming. The very essence of the political organization was distorted. What to do now? Could we restore the lost democracy of internal party life without losing, in the course of this action, organizational stability and discipline? Could it be that the law-governed state which we would like to build fits a parliamentary-type party better? This question is debated today more than any other.

The questions we decided to include in our survey, questions which are most frequently asked in meetings with readers and discussed in many of the letters to the editors, are the following:

1. What ways do you see for taking the CPSU out of the crisis and for giving the party a new face? What should be kept and what should be abandoned? What targets should the renovated party set for itself?

2. What type of internal party relations should there be, so that the voice of the rank-and-file communists can be clearly heard? How do you imagine the correlation between democracy and centralism in party life and activities, under the conditions of renovation? Is it

possible to ensure party unity with freedom to organize factions and platforms, and how to achieve this?

3. What is your view on the party's place and role in contemporary society? On what basis should relations with the governmental structure, the social organizations and mass movements be built? How do you conceive of democratic control over a ruling party?

The selection which we submit to your attention includes the first three answers. Naturally, they are debatable. However, we would like for the people's views concerning the party to trigger the desire to think and argue.

**Vladimir Yegorovich Kurtashin, chairman of the board of the Kriogenika MGO, member of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium**

1. The crisis in which the party has found itself is justifiably related to the discontent caused by the activities of the party apparat. It is precisely this apparat that in the past few years has been harshly criticized and this mood has been transmitted to the broad public throughout the country, which expects the immediate removal of the party apparat from power and transferring the power to the revived soviets. The party apparat, in its present aspect, exists only because the party in our country stood above the state and, in controlling the activities of state authorities, was forced to set up within it a large number of corresponding units. We know that the USSR Supreme Soviet drafted and is implementing a program for building a law-governed state in which the CPSU, like any other public organizations, would become a structural component of a parliamentary system headed by a president. The moment the role of the party has changed in a law-governed state, automatically its present structure will break down and its position in society will change. In principle, I support the idea of a party without an apparat, raised at the February 1990 Central Committee Plenum, although this is something for the future.

The CPSU became the initiator of perestroika—a revolutionary process aimed at the democratization of our society. Naturally, this process could not develop smoothly. In the most difficult situation which developed the question of power became pressing: Who will manage the restructuring of society, maintain a normal situation in the state and ensure its socioeconomic development? For the time being, there is no law regulating the work of the soviets or defining their rights. However, even should they be granted all the necessary plenary powers, for a long time to come they will be seeking their place within the social structure, familiarizing themselves with their new role and earning their authority from the people.

I believe that the CPSU can today most successfully implement the array of social changes, relying on the widespread network of primary party organizations. Otherwise, the democracy which is developing without a controlling power will progress at an accelerated pace, inevitably worsening the life of the people, making the



implementation of the plan for the healing of our society impossible. However, this should be a renovated party. I see the renovation above all in the critical revision of one's positions by every party worker. Perestroika of party work is frequently understood as "going to the people:" sitting less in offices and visiting enterprises more frequently. No! The main task of the party agencies today is to do everything possible to transfer the power to the soviets and to strengthen the soviet authorities with their best people. Today's party apparat includes thousands of highly professional people with different types of training. Such activities could enhance the authority of the CPSU.

2. In order to hear clearly the voice of the rank-and-file party members we must grant them real economic and political rights and opportunities. This can be accomplished by allowing the primary party organizations to keep most of the party dues. Such funds could be used, for example, for publishing their own printed organ.

As to combining democracy with centralism, this question is closely interwoven with that of possible party unity despite the free formation of factions and platforms. If we allow freedom of factions and platforms within the party its unity will be quite relative. If we abandon democratic centralism, in my view the very existence of the party will become questionable.

In this case I see two solutions. Either to allow, within the framework of democratic centralism, the possibility of factions on the level of tactical differences, while preserving unity of view on strategic objectives, or else forbid factionalism. This would secure CPSU unity but, at the same time, will also lead to the accelerated founding of other parties (out of the "factions" and "groups"). In my view, the second option would eventually strengthen the CPSU.

3. The answer to the third question in your survey is the logical extension of the answer to the second. Under the conditions of a law-governed state a multiparty system could exist, implying equality among all parties acting within the country's constitutional framework. In a multiparty system, the existence within the party of permanent, organizationally established factions, becomes inadmissible, in my view. In formulating collective decisions, a variety of platforms, and options may be suggested and, on this basis, temporary factions may develop. Once a decision has been made, however, it must be implemented by all party members. Permanent factions, an internal party struggle, instability and the need for daily search for compromise would not allow the party to implement its policy efficiently and consistently. All of this, in the final account, can only lower the party's authority in society. Nonetheless, the "minority problem" must be solved. The solution may lie in the founding of a second party, whose ideology would be communist or left-wing socialist, under the conditions of

a multiparty system. It would rally on a socialist platform opposition forces which presently are members of the numerous people's fronts, some of which have quite vague programs.

The principle of demarcating between the functions of the party authorities and the soviet and economic structures must be observed efficiently and consistently. The party must not interfere in their daily activities and perform "dispatcher" functions in resolving various economic problems. It must be a specific political vanguard which provides broad scope for the initiative and political creativity of party members on the basis of glasnost and openness, for a constructive dialogue and criticism and with extensive autonomy of the party organizations.

**Iren Aleksandrovna Andreyeva, chief art expert, secretary of the board of the USSR Designers Union, All-Union House of Clothing Models, USSR People's Deputy**

1. Let me immediately emphasize that I am not a party member. Therefore, my answers to the questions in this survey are in a way a view on the party from the outside, the wishes of a person who is not indifferent to its fate.

Now, my answer to the first question. In my view, the CPSU can come out of the crisis by strengthening its positions as an organized force defending the main ideas of perestroika: the new forms of ownership, land ownership and use, enterprises independent of departments, freedom for private enterprise, elimination of monopoly, etc. Naturally, to accomplish this it must unite its members and convince them of the high purpose and realism of this objective. However, this implies neither military discipline nor fanaticism. It requires a sober understanding of the nature and consequences of change and honest and even personal interest in them, and giving up corporate advantages. This objective must not put party members above nonparty people.

As of now it becomes absolutely necessary to abandon the "double" position in society, i.e., the fact that leading party workers are employed at enterprises and establishments, rayons, cities, and oblasts, performing their functions along with (and essentially above) boards of directors, councils and presidiums. Party groups and regional organizations must function as autonomous and voluntary associations, as influencing but not mandating authorities. Their purpose must be social influence, agitation and propaganda of the party objectives, substantiating means of implementing suggestions under the specific conditions of enterprises, establishments and rayons. At that point, supervising the ideological consistency of meetings would yield to a lively struggle of opinions. There would no longer be any need to give assertions and pledges or make clumsy efforts to avoid bluntly formulated questions, which sometimes is one of the major faults of the party authorities and party workers, who present all of this as manifestations of democracy and pluralism of opinion (and, what is saddest of all, they are frequently sincere). This form of

work (presented schematically here) would make it possible for the party to get rid of the vast party nomenclature which quite frequently encourages poor thinking and promotes unprincipled people, ignorant of problems of party work, and thus become truly part of the people and not a superstructure above the people.

It seems to me that the party must show concern for keeping in its ranks those who consciously joined it, who are prepared to work and not simply to claim membership. However, this should apply precisely to such people and not to the almost 20 million members. At that point the CPSU would probably become stronger not through quantity but through skillful actions and support of the masses, which would support it and would involve themselves in the struggle for the formulation of its objectives.

One more thing. The party must firmly abandon the practice of appointing and approving leading personnel for all governmental institutions, enterprises, kolkhozes and sovkhoses. It should only nominate its candidates for elected positions, like any other public organizations.

Had the party not observed a nomenclatural-hierarchic principle of management (within the party itself and in various governmental structures), the party organization in Azerbaijan would not have found itself helpless in the face of pogroms. The party leaders would have lived among the party members, would have been promoted from among them and would have always acted in accordance with the real situation, remaining in the thick of events, and sensibly detecting moods not according to "signals" which come (or, rather, crawl) up the hierarchical ladder and are cleansed at each rung by the superior nomenclature. Only in that case could they have controlled the situation.

2. Under our system of government, the correlation between democracy and centralism in party activities and life greatly depends on the same correlation found in the very concept of the Union. If the party has set as its task the struggle for a Union of equal and entirely sovereign republics, the party itself must be structured on the same principle: a union of equal and sovereign republic parties. In my view, no other way is possible. The following is of essential importance: the country's specific social conditions dictate a variety of forms of structuring the party, predetermining the specific nature of requirements facing its members and their rights and obligations.

In that case the central party authority must be something like the supreme representation of equal members pursuing the same objective. All problems of CPSU activities and ways and means of work in the local areas must be summed up here and discussed, but not decreed. The main task of the center is to formulate new strategic and tactical plans and the theory of party activities and governmental structure. The central authority must also resolve problems of party participation in the election of

supreme government authorities and formulate general political tasks during the period of elections for republic and local governments.

An orientation toward all social strata and groups of the country's population is a feature of the CPSU. Therefore, it is entirely legitimate for the party members already now to understand the specific nature of each such group. The assertion in the country's economic life of a variety of forms of ownership will strengthen social differentiation. This will require a finer choice of methods of political work. Comprehensive management will become simply impossible. Furthermore, taking into consideration the future multiple party system, it is clear that the struggle for influencing specific social groups and the voters' choice will inevitably require the enhancement of the primary party organizations, the broadening of their rights and the assertion of democratic relations between the rank-and-file party members and the authorities they have elected on all levels (as was the case during the revolution and in the first years after it).

Party unity, conceived in the sense of ideological unity with a multiplicity of ways and means of attaining the overall objective, not only allows but, in my view, needs factions and platforms. It is only under such circumstances that the rights of a minority can be secured and that a constant renovation of means of political activities and initiative on all levels of the party structure become possible. The struggle among factions and platforms for power within the party, which frightens everyone, would substantially lose its sharpness and fierceness if a party position can be held only by winning in truly democratic elections, and providing that this does not automatically open the way to appointments to governmental positions and privileges. In that case, any conspiracy loses its final objective. The ideological struggle within the party is both desirable and necessary. It is an indicator of the activities of any social organism. Nor should we fear a party opposition.

As to the methods of ideological struggle, their choice would be based on discipline and the moral foundations professed by the party members and the talent of its organizers, rather than stipulations in codes or bylaws. As we know, the rigid hierarchical "democratic centralism" and discipline based on merciless punishment for the violation of vassal unity does not prevent the usurping of power.

A political party can be viable and active if it rallies not only (and sometimes perhaps not exclusively) around tempting ideas but around inordinate, outstanding personalities who are the bearers of, agitators and fighters for such ideas. Mediocre and tarnished managers cannot rally the people even around a lofty objective. Such is the situation everywhere in life—in science, production, art, culture and even ordinary daily life.

Some of the speeches which were delivered at the February 1990 Central Committee Plenum eloquently show

why we have such hitches in the ideological area and why the crises which shake up the country appear so suddenly: their prerequisites and accumulating symptoms are not being subjected to a comprehensive and timely analysis in the press and in party debates. Following the old dogmatic rule of concealing, keeping silent and embellishing and, above all, lacking fresh ideas and original approaches and daring views on unruly (all of a sudden!) reality, the party's ideological team was unable not only to anticipate events but even to follow in their footsteps. An ugly manifestation of this was the wave of strikes which rolled over the country, and national explosions which occasionally turn into frenzied nationalism facing self-confident but helpless "ideologues of internationalism." It is only outstanding and talented individuals that can lead the masses. Such individuals do exist, as the party of perestroika have indicated. However, the old party network covering the entire country is still hindering them, including (perhaps, most of all) the members of its own organization.

3. It seems to me that in the present circumstances, and precisely in our country, the Communist Party (like other parties) should remain outside the governmental structure of management. Without alienating itself from the people, i.e., without standing above the people (unlike the state authorities), it could aspire to achieve its objective by engaging in agitation among the people, testing their trust in it at elections for higher, regional and local authorities. Preparations for elections and electoral campaigns in the nomination of their candidates, and the struggle for votes are the foundations of party political activities. Through its deputies and other officials in the state, should they be elected or appointed from among its members, the party implements its plans, pursuing its political line in accordance with the promises given to the voters.

Relations between the party and state structures, public organizations and mass movements could be structured, I most sincerely believe, only on the basis of the constitution and the law. The law must clearly indicate the limits of the party's influence on workers who are party members, wherever they may be employed. Such limits must be particularly strictly observed in the case of state apparatus employees. In elected bodies, the party deputies perform their functions on behalf of the party faction. In higher positions, they work within the limits allowed by the law. In the judiciary, the actions of functionaries who are party members must be totally free from party prejudice, something which must be also legislatively stipulated.

A party program can be applied by the government only to the extent to which it has been accepted by the voters, i.e., based on the majority of votes cast by party members elected to the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet (as well as soviets on other levels). We must also see to it that the possible blending of party with state authorities is prevented. In my view, party organizations should be banned in government agencies and establishments. The party members who work

within the state apparatus should be members of organizations functioning in residential areas. The same applies to the judiciary.

In my view, the main guarantee that the ruling party will be kept under control is a multiparty system and a multiparty structure of the parliament and the government. I believe that a multiparty system in this case should be understood in the broad meaning of the term, bearing in mind also the participation of other social units with social objectives. This would include mass organizations of the defenders of nature and the various associations of democratic citizens. They could have their own factions in parliament, join with deputies belonging to other organizations for purposes of reciprocal support or in opposition to the ruling party. Control over the party is possible only with extensive glasnost and openness of all activities of the state authorities.

Finally, here is something of exceptional importance: the renovation of our state and of the party will be truly democratic and irreversible if the minister of defense, the KGB chairman and the minister of internal affairs will be prohibited by law from being members of the leading party bodies.

**Petr Kirillovich Luchinskiy, Moldavian Communist Party Central Committee first secretary, USSR people's deputy**

1. The country is living through a crucial period which reminds us of the period of sharp changes and revolutions which, according to Marx, "constantly criticize themselves, stopping in their motion, and going back to something which already seemed completed, in order once again to start and with merciless thoroughness deride the half-way nature and poor aspects and unsuitability of their initial attempts..." (K. Marx and F. Engels, "*Soch.*" [Works], vol 8, p 123).

A difficult situation has developed within the party itself. On the one hand, the party members remain the most active segment of society. In Moldavia, as all over the country, the majority of people's deputies (80 percent) are party members. It is true that not all of them think alike: someone has estimated that as many as eight different trends exist within the CPSU. Political differentiations have become obvious and tangible. On the other hand, despite the slowness of perestroika on all party levels, we have finally been able to interpret that which we have structured and are restructuring. That is why the question of what legacy we are abandoning is so relevant to us. What makes it even more complex is that we are dealing with the legacy of 7 decades.

The CPSU Central Committee draft platform is the first serious attempt during perestroika to answer this question and, at the same time, "to anticipate," to forecast events, to indicate the real trends leading to the radical renovation of the party and the revival of its Leninist aspect.

But let us not flatter ourselves. The debate which has developed on the draft platform is triggering in some

party members the entirely reasonable concern that everything could end in half-way measures. Supporting its stipulations is worth little without specific actions which could pull the CPSU out of the crisis.

Above all, they must pertain to our practical activities in connection with the revision of Article 6 of the USSR Constitution, for abandoning the monopoly of power will create an entirely new situation for the party. The previous situation led to the political passiveness of the party members. There was no need to struggle for power, for it had been constitutionally codified. Yet political struggle is the foundation of any party's viability. This immediately enhances the role of political dialogue. The need arises for an active search for supporters and for fast changes in the ways and means of work. Dogmatism becomes particularly pernicious, for the party must be mobile and flexible.

It has already become obvious to all that the apparatus-hierarchical diktat which had been established in the past resulted in the inability of many cadres to perform the role of authoritative political leaders, as required by perestroika. This has largely been the reason for the fact that in the republic in the past 5 years 56 first secretaries in 49 party gorkoms and raykoms have been replaced.

The administrative stereotype related to numerous "hearings" in party committees proved to be strong. Such passive "hearing" led people away from real problems, replacing specific actions. Resolutions which were passed created the appearance of work and reliably protected people from investigations "from above." In the Moldavian Communist Party Central Committee, for example, as many as 200 resolutions of all kinds were being monitored annually, frequently duplicating each other or even contradicting the spirit of the time. Last January, the Central Committee Bureau decided that most of them would be either no longer monitored or would be placed under the jurisdiction of the republic's Council of Ministers.

The party must start with waging a decisive struggle against its bureaucratism, which encourages the creation of unmanageable structures. The Moldavian Communist Party Central Committee apparatus has five secretaries and more than 130 senior officials. An instructor cannot go directly to a secretary. He must first apply to the department head, the deputy, the head of sector, etc. It becomes very easy for a bright idea to become lost on its way "upward" in this bureaucratic hierarchy. Therefore, why not have within the Central Committee a group of secretaries in charge of the basic areas of party work, with their own consultants, temporary creative collectives and public commissions? We are already doing something in this respect. The Moldavian Communist Party Central Committee departments are setting up groups of scientists, specialists, and members of the creative intelligentsia and of social movements, who could provide scientific help in the development of strategic problems. All of this, naturally, does not replace

the main thing, the need to be always among the people and check with them our practical actions.

Asserting within the draft platform our support of the ideas of the October Revolution and the socialist way of development, as well as the creative spirit of Marxist-Leninist methodology is of essential importance. The party's strategic objective has been formulated: a humane and democratic socialism. The main thing is to create proper conditions for human life. By this I mean, above all, the liberation of the human spirit and freedom of conscience, ideas and actions. In the recent past the party frequently defined the frame and code of human behavior, within which all people had to fit. Such "fitting" basically applies not to the real, but to the averaged member of society. Anyone who "did not fit" this pattern was, at best, considered "not one of us." I am convinced that the principle here should be simple: as long as someone does not violate the law and morality, all of his views, thoughts and actions should be, in any case, worthy of the attention of his comrades. This, precisely, is what a real acknowledgment of personal freedom means, as the main value in life in a renovated socialist society.

The course of CPSU reformation should lead to a new party image. The party must become a truly democratic self-governing political organization. I have no doubt that the renovated party will regain its authority and, having combined the interests of the various population strata, will successfully compete with the other political forces.

2. It is important to establish an atmosphere of party comradeship within all CPSU organizations. There should be neither generals nor privates in the party. Everyone must equally participate in the shaping of the leading organs on different levels and in the formulation of their resolutions. The extent of responsibility is something else. It must be distinguished only by the volume of work assigned to one party member or another.

I believe that the party organizations have not been granted sufficient rights in holding direct elections for delegates to congresses and conferences. They should be given the right to direct elections for leading bodies of city and rayon party organizations. We must also develop a mechanism for shaping the structure of the CPSU Central Committee and the Central Committee Auditing Commission directly at congresses of communist parties of Union republics and conferences of kray and oblast party organizations. For example, we could consider allocating for party organizations of a national republic, kray and oblast a certain number of members of the Central Committee and of the Auditing Commission. In that case establishing a Russian Communist Party will not create any kind of imbalance within the party.

The direct participation of the party masses is necessary also in the structuring of the party apparatus. No single

official within it should be appointed without the recommendation or direct delegation of power by the primary party organization. The primary party organization should also have the right to recall such an official. Bearing in mind the level of politicizing of society, it is possible for some of the apparatus, let us say as much as 70 percent, to consist of members of elected agencies. For example, a party committee may be elected and some of its members may become full-time party workers for 1 year, without losing their job. Such approaches would prevent the apparatus from alienating itself from the party mass, to be part of the rank-and-file membership and to be answerable to it for its actions.

I believe that we must firmly restructure the principle of democratic centralism. I do not believe that it has become obsolete. However, the correlation between democracy and centralism must be drastically changed in favor of the former. Let us recall how, until recently, some party leaders would preface their speech with the words "on behalf of" or "as instructed by," thus presenting their own view as that of an entire party organization. Under the conditions of a democratic management, basic decisions must be definitively made only after extensive discussion on the primary levels or after a survey of all party members.

Something else is unquestionable as well. The principle of periodical accountability of party authorities to their superiors has clearly become obsolete today. In the past, this led to the diktat applied by the superior apparatus. The lack of options strengthened hierarchical dependency, which turned into arbitrary behavior within the party. Each leading authority must be subordinated only to its own party organization and every member of the party committee, to the organization which nominated him.

A mandatory prerequisite of party life and activities is the conscious discipline of the party members. The power of the party masses presumes only the rejection of hierarchical procedures and diktat "from above" but not the abandoning of internal party discipline. Decisions which have been jointly made must be mandatory. I emphasize: jointly made, i.e., not on the basis of simple majority but taking the minority view into consideration.

Not so long ago the very formulation of this question would have shocked virtually every one of us. The false concept of party unity led to various forms of suppressing the minority. Today the democratization of internal party life has led to the appearance of new forms of unity among party members, such as clubs, and to horizontal structures where various action programs are being created. The existence of political movements with different platforms was obvious also in the nature of the speeches of the participants in the February 1990 CPSU Central Committee Plenum. It would be undemocratic and, furthermore, harmful to the development of socialism basically to exclude the possibility of choosing ways different from those suggested in the draft CPSU Central Committee platform. Difference of opinions is

necessary: if we must make a choice we must have a variety of options. If at the discussion stage two views are expressed, both leading to the common objective, they should be preserved for the sake of party unity. The solution suggested by the minority should be tested in practice in a number of areas, after which we should see whether its platform was justified or not. Party unity is a process of constant coordination of different views and positions. The existence of permanent organizationally established groups and factions, however, should be excluded on a statutory basis. At the same time, we must guarantee the right to initiative, opinions and protection of the minority if it unquestionably accepts the CPSU program and bylaws.

3. Under circumstances in which several sociopolitical movements in the country have already proclaimed themselves independent parties, the CPSU faces the need to justify its right to remain a ruling party by politically competing with the other social forces and organizations. If it is unable to anticipate the processes occurring in society and falls behind perestroika and acts as the rearguard, it faces the threat, as the draft platform rightly notes, of being shoved to the margin of political life. We surveyed a large group of party workers and members of the *aktiv* on the subject of the future party. Many of them (as many as 89 percent) are optimistic, and believe that the party will be reduced quantitatively but will change qualitatively. There also are those who believe that society will return to its previous understanding of the party's role and place.

It is already clear today that the policies of the CPSU and those of the state coincide in a number of areas, although they should have their own specific features. They must not be totally identical. Party policy is the policy of a single organization, a part of the social system. It can find legislative confirmation and will be implemented by the state authorities with the support of the majority of the country's population.

The politicizing of independent formations, which express the views and interests of the various strata in our society, creates prerequisites for the appearance of other parties and leads to a new political situation characterized by the struggle for power and for influencing the minds of the people. Political dialogue is the most reliable means of gaining assistance and allies in all circles. Unfortunately, virtually everywhere the new autonomous movements were perceived as illegal, as antisocialist formations. Clashes and totally unjustified confrontations broke out between many party committees and public organizations.

The recent relations existing between the Moldavian party leadership and these formations are a clear illustration of this fact. A way of thinking based on irresponsible command management methods, inadmissibility of dissident thinking and of the variety of opinions, which had developed in many party and other leading officials,

violently opposed any different viewpoint. The authorities relied essentially not on political work among the masses but on prohibitions and administrative total permissiveness.

The Moldavian Communist Party Central Committee and the local party organizations were unable to come closer to the various social and ethnic population groups. A great deal of time and efforts were wasted in discussing what was separating them, in reciprocal criticism and in accusations, which invariably led to an impasse. Yet no effort was attempted to take seriously into consideration the useful and constructive aspects of the views held by the opponents, to define the areas where each one of them could apply his forces and to consolidate them.

Today we are trying to change the situation. We actively oppose the division between communists and working people in the republic. Increasingly, a political dialogue and joint actions are being given priority. A mechanism of social opposition has begun actually to develop. I am convinced that we must learn the policy of compromise, for a sensible compromise in big politics is a means of achieving real results by joining forces.

Historical experience indicates that the party can influence a social movement most efficiently through the direct participation of party members working within it. Let us remember Lenin's work "The 'Left-Wing' Infant Disease in Communism," which was written in 1920 and which called for communist participation in various trade unions and parliaments and the possibility of reaching a compromise with other parties. In our view, it would be expedient to continue to look for efficient ways of work in this complex area.

I believe that in a democratic society it is unnecessary to try to invent special forms of controlling the ruling party. The activities of any political party should take place within the laws, and it is through legislation that such a party should be controlled. The mass information media could be used as social control. Naturally, there should also be effective control exercised by its political rivals.

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### **Personality, Doctrine, Power**

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[Article by G. Bordyugov, V. Kozlov and V. Loginov]

[Text] "...To those 'critics' who, with a grin or with malice give us instructions..." V.I. Lenin

**From the Editors:** "Your attempts to lift the responsibility from Lenin is historical shamelessness" (I. Prokhorenko, Kiev); "Thank you for protecting Lenin from abuse" (M. Zhavoronkova, Ryazan Oblast); "A rehabilitation of coercion in the revolution" (V. Gordeyev, Vitebsk); "It is high time to defend history" (V. Butuzov, Zaporozhye)... These are merely isolated

examples of the polarity of opinions in the flow of responses to the article by G. Bordyugov, V. Kozlov and V. Loginov "Obedient History or New Publicistic Paradise. Melancholy Notes," which was published in *KOMMUNIST* No 14, 1989.

The abundance of editorial mail and the wide range of evaluations and judgments expressed by the readers motivated the editors to turn once more to the authors of the article and ask them to shed a more detailed light on Lenin's personality, based on the historical conditions in which he lived, worked and acted.

We tried to sum up the questions exciting the readers in the course of questions which S. Khizhnyakov asked of G. Bordyugov and V. Kozlov, candidates of historical sciences, and V. Loginov, doctor of historical sciences.

**Perestroika began with a critical analysis of the period of stagnation and took our memory back to the times of Khrushchev's "thaw," followed by discussions on the Stalinist period. Finally, the wave of "re-evaluations" reached the year 1917 and Lenin, isolating in some areas or, conversely, bringing closer a variety of social concepts. Which ones, precisely?**

Today we cannot reach a consensus not only in our approaches to contemporary economics or politics but also in the analysis of the past. Nonetheless, even despite such diversity of voices, a variety of sociological studies recently conducted prove that Lenin's reputation remains, as in the past, exceptionally high among the broad population strata. He is firmly in the lead in terms of popularity among past and presently living political leaders. Incidentally, Stalin is in one of the last places.

Most critical of Lenin today are two seemingly conflicting trends. One is that of the "extreme-left" radicals, sometimes known as "Westerners;" the extreme "right" includes those who are sometimes known as "national-patriots." The essential difference in their views notwithstanding, they agree on one thing: their rejection of Lenin and the October Revolution. At this point, it becomes very difficult to distinguish where political "ignorance" ends and political reckoning begins.

Clearly, the supporters of such trends in our social thinking have developed the firm conviction that the entire 72-year distance covered by our country since the October Revolution has followed a straight road into a desert and that nothing other than wreckage was found along this way. Therefore, any progress, any advance is possible only by returning to the starting point at which, allegedly, this road "to nowhere" began.

On this subject all we must note is that there has been no single straight 72-year path whatsoever. There were "markers" and "years of great change." There also were multiple choices in the further advance, starting from each of those markers.... However, it is not simply a question of this alone. The very aspiration to return to the "starting point" not only does not advance political

thinking but, conversely, drags it back to long covered stages and moth-eaten forms of social awareness.

Finally, there also is a moral-ethical aspect of this problem. As in the past, Lenin remains the symbol of the struggle of the oppressed against the oppressors and the poor against the rich, a struggle for equality, fraternity and justice. Some people may not like these ideas, and some may not share them and consider them "utopian." Well, Hertzén himself noted in his *Letters on the Study of Nature*, "that a philosopher can brilliantly prove the stupidity of one reality or another and thus consider it eliminated, at least in his own mind. However, the historian perfectly well knows the powerful and thick roots that grow sometimes from such an alleged "stupidity" in real human life. No "utopia" would have remained in power a single day had it not expressed the entire specific range of interests and aspirations of sufficiently powerful social forces, had it lacked broad mass support.

Therefore, in choosing a new path it is not all that simple to "delete" from history 72 pages and thus to "break" with the past. We have already tried this. This task must be studied, we must proceed from it and go on from there....

**Lenin lived and worked under circumstances in which various ideas which had been absolutely accurate in the past and the present had already become wrong in the future. This was not because some kind of changes had occurred in the area of, so to say, "pure reason" but simply because the circumstances had changed drastically. Was such the case?**

Precisely. Lenin had to live and work at a time when "circumstances" kept changing constantly. Remember how from April to September, in no more than 6 months in 1917, the context of the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" radically changed three times. This was not the result of the whim of the "leader" or done for the sake of instant "advantages" but because the "slackened revolution," as Lenin called it, had itself taken three sharp turns.

At the turn of the 1920s, when the Civil War was ending in Russia and the stabilization of capitalism was beginning in the West, Lenin immediately realized that a new world, a new reality was developing. It was a unique reality which demanded changes in the political system, a conversion from confrontation to civil peace and to an essentially new policy of social reformism, a "gradualness" and cultural work and which, perhaps, necessitated a radical revision of "our entire viewpoint on socialism."

"One can find in Lenin anything one wishes!" ironically comments a reader. Yes, one "finds it" if, as in the past, Lenin is torn up into quotations, providing that we consider the contradictory nature of such quotations a "doctrinal fault" and not the result of objective changes in life itself, and master the harsh truth that sometimes any stupid "consistency" or delay in the study of the new "circumstances" and slowness in the shaping of new

political decisions force thousands or even millions of people to pay with their sweat and blood....

**In the search of Lenin's "sins" his detractors are reviving the oldest possible accusations such as, for example, that the revolution was made by Lenin and the bolsheviks "with German money." What can we add to that which has already been refuted by history?**

Today the lovers of "sensational exposures" are indeed ready to pull out of the archives of the White Guards any version which could, to any extent, discredit Lenin. The legend of the "German gold" belongs precisely to this type of "version."

During World War I, the German and the Austro-Hungarian governments and intelligence services, finding themselves in the difficult situation of fighting on two fronts, spent millions of marks to organize subversive work behind the lines of their enemies—France, England and Russia. The network of such agents was extensive and, judging by a number of major subversive actions, operated successfully. With the help of some German social democrats, German intelligence tried to establish contacts with various revolutionary organizations in Russia, which opposed tsarism.

Respective offers of cash subsidies were made to Finnish, Ukrainian and Caucasian nationalist and socialist groups. They were also offered to the SR (Chernov), the mensheviks (Chkhenkeli) and the bolsheviks (Kollontay, Shlyapnikov). Parvus, who developed during the war direct cooperation with German intelligence and who had made a huge fortune in military procurements and commercial speculations, played a particularly active role in such efforts.

However, as well-informed foreign agents reported to the police department, all such offers were firmly rejected by the SR, mensheviks and bolsheviks. The bolshevik SOT-SIAL-DEMOKRAT publicly condemned Parvus as a traitor and a renegade "licking Hindenburg's boots." In his memoirs, Shlyapnikov points out that the moment Parvus' role was exposed all emigre bolshevik groups and organizations immediately "terminated all relations" with him.

In March 1917, when the question of the return of the emigres to Russia through Germany arose, German agents once again tried to become a party to such talks. Once again Parvus as well offered his assistance and money to organize the crossing. However, once again Lenin categorically refused, stating the essential inadmissibility of using any whatsoever "services" offered by such individuals. He also rejected the offer of being granted personal permission to travel through Germany.

Meanwhile, the RSDWP Central Committee had no funds and money was indeed needed for the trip. Nonetheless, within a short time funds were collected. As early as 10 March, the Central Committee Bureau sent 500 rubles to Lenin from Petrograd. Collections and donations by emigres yielded several hundred francs. The

board of the Swiss Social Democratic Party offered a 3,000-franc credit. Approximately 3,000 kronen were to be contributed by Ya. Ganetskiy, an old party member, who was at that time head of a major commission sales office in Stockholm and had considerable personal resources.

In the decades which have passed since 1917, on at least 3 occasions a total review of all documents has been made with a view to determining whether any money advanced by Germany for subversive work in Russia went to the bolsheviks.

The first occasion was at the start of the 1920s. At that time, after the respective "expository" statement by E. Bernstein, the German Reichstag set up a special commission and, with German pedantry, checked all government documents and officially announced that no data confirming the "exposure" and been found.

The second time was after the end of World War II, when a group of Western historians began to prepare secret German documents from 1917 for publication. Once again no proof "exposing" Lenin for having accepted money was found.

A third revision of all documents pertaining to this matter was undertaken by A.I. Solzhenitsyn in the course of his work on "*Lenin in Zurich*." He established that there indeed had been German agents in bolshevik circles and that Parvus had indeed received substantial funds contributed by German intelligence. However, he was unable to find a single document proving that the bolsheviks had had anything to do with these funds.

Nonetheless, several documents exist which, throughout this entire time, have given the "detractors" some hope. They were published not abroad but in our own country. In 1923, after Lenin had written his confidential "Letter to the Congress," which suggested that Stalin be removed from the position of general secretary, these documents were published in the journal PROLETARSKAYA REVOLYUTSIYA.

These were cables sent by Ya. Ganetskiy, intercepted by Russian counterintelligence, according to which the "case" charging Lenin of espionage in favor of Germany was concocted in the summer of 1917. The cables discussed money transfers made from Stockholm to Petrograd. Where did the money come from and whose was it? Today the archives enable us to determine also this source of financing of the Bolshevik Party. It involved Karl Moor, the oldest Swiss social democrat. Shortly before 1917 he had inherited a great deal of money and loaned it to many social democrats. An agreement was reached with him on making a big loan to the bolsheviks. How much did they receive? In January 1926, after a special commission established the full amount of the loan for 1917-1918, he was repaid the sum of \$38,430 (about 200,000 Swiss francs at the then rate of exchange).

**A great many people believe that the beginning of the Civil War was largely related to bolshevik policy. In particular, it is a question of the fact that the food dictatorship applied under Lenin's pressure and, subsequently, the organization of committees of the poor predetermined the division of the peasantry and broadened the mass base of the counterrevolution. What is your reaction to such views?**

As early as 29 April 1918, when Lenin submitted to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee a report on the forthcoming tasks of the Soviet system, there was not even a question of a food dictatorship. The intention was to pursue the food supply policy by roughly following the course which had taken shape since March 1918, i.e., to preserve grain monopoly and fixed prices, and to obtain grain by trading with the countryside. The People's Commissariat of Supplies, which had the monopoly, had at its disposal industrial items it had acquired with government loans and, under certain conditions, shifted to the countryside, thus stimulating grain deliveries. However, almost 10 days after Lenin's report, the Sovnarkom passed the decision on instituting a food supply dictatorship. What had changed during those days?

On the same day that Lenin addressed the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, Hetman Skoropadskiy assumed power in the Ukraine with the help of the Austrian-German occupation forces. This drastically worsened the overall military and political situation. Above all, however, these events dealt a severe blow to all bolshevik estimates related to food problems. The point was that the relatively food procurement stability of Central Russia was actually hanging on two thin railroad threads: Rostov-Voronezh and Tikhoretskaya-Tsaritsyn. The Rostov-Voronezh track was cut off by the haydamaks and the Germans at the Chertkovo Railroad Station, and grain procurements from the Northern Caucasus could be delivered only along a single track which was also under constant threat. The possibility of such catastrophic changes had been anticipated as early as April 1918, not only by the bolsheviks but by their opponents as well. At the second Extraordinary Congress of the Workers Cooperative, Yegorov, who represented the mensheviks, said that if not today, tomorrow we may expect that, should such crucial stations which link us to the rich Donets Oblast, the Northern Caucasus and the Kuban become occupied by the Germans and the haydamaks, we would find ourselves cut off from the entire south. The only area under our control would be Siberia.

After Rostov was occupied by the Germans and the haydamaks, Lenin based his policies precisely on this worst scenario of the development of events. Let us not tire the readers with all the figures and computations which were made at that time and which, to this day, have not been refuted by anyone. Let us merely mention the bottom line. If all grain procurement channels from the Northern Caucasus would be totally blocked (and if we were to pursue the same food procurement policy) instead of 25 pounds of grain, as planned by the People's



Commissariat of Food Supplies, per person per month, no more than 3 pounds could be issued. For the sake of our young readers, who may have trouble recomputing this in today's metric system, let us say that it was approximately a question of 3-4 bread sticks. That was for one entire month! That was all on which one could rely in the worst case. Events, however, developed not simply according to the worst variant as predicted by Yegorov but according to the very worst. As a result of the uprising of the Czechoslovaks at the end of May 1918, Siberia and some of the areas along the Volga were also cut off.

The population became more nervous and predisposed to mount hunger rebellions and engage in outbreaks of violence. The beginnings of this development of events were detected precisely on the eve of passing the decree on food dictatorship. This was confirmed by the tragic incident in a Petrograd Rayon—Kolpino—the entire scenario of which indicated how precisely hunger rebellions could break out in all Russian cities. The slightest provocation turned out sufficient for the excited crowd to plunge into looting bread stores, beat up representatives of the Soviet system, etc. As reported in PETROGRADSKAYA PRAVDA, the reason for the trouble in Kolpino was not the lack of bread or a drop in bread rations but merely the fact that all products had been taken to one bread stand instead of being distributed among all the stores and that sales began 1 hour later—at 10:00 a.m.

Such was the stressed atmosphere and a state of emergency in which the decree on extraordinary measures to stabilize the food supply situation was being drafted. On 8 May 1918, based on Tsyurupa's report on the food situation, the Sovnarkom resolved to issue a decree granting emergency powers to the food supply commissar. At that same session Lenin drafted a series of regulations pertaining to the food dictatorship decree. In particular, he called for stipulating in the decree the fact that the dictator's resolutions would be monitored by his collegium, which had the right, without interrupting their execution, to appeal them to the Sovnarkom; strongly to emphasize the idea of the need to undertake and wage a merciless terroristic struggle and war against the peasant and other bourgeoisie hiding grain surpluses; to stipulate more clearly that people with grain surpluses who did not ship them to railroad stations, collection centers and grain stations would be proclaimed enemies of the people and sentenced to jail terms of no less than 10 years, confiscation of all property and permanent banishment from their community. Lenin also suggested to add to the decree that the working people, the poor and the peasants with no surpluses rally in waging a merciless struggle against the kulaks.

The decree triggered most heated debates. It was described as questionable, abundant in exceptionally risky prescriptions and experiments. From the contemporary viewpoint, the decree indeed contained the possibility of very serious political changes, including some related to broadening the area of coercion. However, no

single opponent of the bolsheviks (neither then nor today) has been able to answer the question raised by Shlikhter and which could have been asked at that time by Lenin himself: "...What would today those who are faced with such a food dislocation do?... Go hungry while we face the fact that there are huge population masses who do not wish to be hungry?"

Already then no one concealed the fact that introducing a food dictatorship meant declaring civil war. It was only by the force of arms, People's Commissar Tsyurupa said, that grain could be obtained.

**However, the general food supply situation had still not become so catastrophic as to take this step. Was the resolution on food supply dictatorship an indication that Lenin was somewhat nervous and hasty?**

A feeling of nervousness not only existed but kept increasing. However, not in Lenin's mind but among the population of the areas which were in the worst food position. Following are some randomly selected news on the food situation at the end of May 1918: Yaroslavl: "The population is excited and is looting goods at the stations;" Bogorodsk: "The population is excited and there is a threat of pogroms;" Gzhatsk: "The hunger is absolute... We categorically beg to be shipped grain;" Vladimir: "We have no reserves at all... The situation is most critical.... The guberniya is on the brink of anarchy."...

If we try to imagine more clearly the picture of this anarchy and the pogroms, which were beginning to break out because of hunger, the situation looks even worse. On 20 May, in Nizhnyy Novgorod, "early in the morning a crowd of men and women, who had been waiting in line at food stands, marched on the city soviet government and the food supply commissariat. Along the way curious and malicious people joined the the crowd. The excited and excitable crowd hurled itself at the food supply commissar who faced it and beat him up. The outrages of the crowd having assumed a threatening nature, troops were summoned. The crowd was asked to disperse and a few warning shots were fired in the air." On 23 May a report from Simbirsk stated that "today at the marketplace where grain was being requisitioned, a crowd beat up severely the representative of the procurement committee." In the final account, all of these excesses developed into the slogan: "Down with grain monopoly and, with it, with the Soviet system!"

**Actually, could this not have been better for the country's population?**

Yes, it would have for a certain percentage of the population, and not only for those who were the natural opponents of the Soviet system but also its unstable allies. In the grain growing areas, where the food supply situation was not catastrophic, compared with January, in May 1918 the peasants had changed radically. The bolshevik Chistov relates that "at that time they welcomed words in support of the soviets with enthusiasm.

Now the middle peasantry is fluctuating between revolution and counterrevolution. The middle peasantry has responded to our explanations as follows: "We know and we thank the Soviet system for giving us the land. We shall never forget! However, we also want free trade. It is then that the situation will be good." This "will be good" sounded quite strange if we compare the situation of the peasants in the grain growing areas with the situation and mood of the peasants in the consuming guberniyas. According to food procurement workers in one of the uyezds of Tver Guberniya, "the peasants are becoming insane with hunger. Hungry crowds are beginning to roam the fields, like wolves."

The well-being of some guberniyas, where one could dream of free trade based on grain surpluses, was built at the expense of other guberniyas, whose population had already become panicky. The hungry and tortured people could think only of their pressing needs and of their own group, ignoring everything else. This mentality was consistent with their actions: "All of them blend within one thing: pogrom." The fact that people insane with hunger acted insanely was quite natural. Everyone understood this. However, one could also not fail to see that increasingly a certain political will was becoming more obvious behind the natural disasters. Political forces hostile to the bolsheviks were already openly trying to use in their own interests the discontent of the population caused by the hunger. No moral considerations concerning the inadmissibility of such actions in such a crucial time could stop them.

A single concept backed all of these hunger-triggered excitements: the idea that hunger was the result of the inability of the Soviet system to manage the economy. This constant insinuation frequently hit its target. Unfortunately, such "insinuations" have also influenced some of our contemporaries, who have been considering these events. As a rule, the fact that the hunger was the result by no means of the inability of the Soviet system but the inevitable consequence of cutting off one-third of the commodity grain coming from the Ukraine and the narrowing of the channels of grain procurements from the Northern Caucasus following the loss of the Rostov-Voronezh rail spur, the breakdown of the transportation system, and so on, is not taken into consideration. Nor is the polarizing of interests, when on one end we have a relatively prosperous peasantry in the producing guberniyas, including not only major grain holders but the poor as well, and on the other the population of the industrial centers and the peasantry of the consuming guberniyas in Central and Northwestern Russia. As a rule, people rendered insane with hunger were unable to engage in abstract considerations which to them were worthless. All they could see was the immediate reality. The reality was such that it indeed seemed to many people that everything was the result of the grain monopoly and that if such a monopoly were to be lifted they would be saved from hunger.

The fact that the elimination of firm prices under such circumstances could also lead to the elimination of the

Soviet system was perfectly understood by all. However, those who suggested, in their adventuristic aspirations, the lifting of fixed prices and the removal of the bolsheviks, neither saw nor wanted to see something else. Making the struggle for grain part of the area of market relations, considering grain shortages in that part of Russia which had been cut off from supplies, would have led those who had no money to pay the "free" prices to undertake all possible actions. This element would have swept off the face of the earth everything and everybody, including the authors of the idea of lifting the grain monopoly and a return to the Constituent Assembly. Yes, the bolsheviks declared civil war in the food supply problem. However, they also called for consolidation based on the class principle and the struggle of the have-nots against the haves.

What could "free" prices, the lifting of grain monopoly, etc., provide? They too would have triggered civil war. However, this would have been a war for a piece of bread, and the number of casualties of such a war would have been incomparably higher. The main thing would have been that it would have also led to clashes among the poor. After their blood had been drained, in the final account they would have simply surrendered the power to the force which would begin to defend the rich from the poor. Practical experience indicates that, given the scarcity of food supplies, the unfair mechanism of free trade cut off initially the poorest, followed by the middle population strata, from bread consumption. Could the bolsheviks take this path?

**Were other suggestions possible? Without eliminating grain monopoly, organize on a separate basis procurements to worker organizations? We know that this demand was formulated, for example, by Rykov and Larin.**

This, however, was an actual "save yourselves" appeal. What about those who were unable to do so?

In areas with a relative grain surplus (a surplus for a given area only) there was a tendency to separate oneself from the rest of the country and to pursue a selfish local policy. A decision calling for independent procurements would have only intensified this trend. The interests of the free grain procurers would have inevitably clashed with those of the local food procurement authorities in the areas of grain-growing guberniyas. Alarming cases had already been noted. For example, the food supply managements in Kazan, Tambov and Saratov guberniyas and Western Siberia arbitrarily announced a strict ban on exporting grain from their territories. The consuming guberniyas, whose situation was far from satisfactory, could only object or else worry about preserving their food supplies for "their own" people by prohibiting the entry of "foreigners" in their own cities. Such was the case, in particular, in Vologoda and Rybinsk. The agents of the local authorities of the hungry rayons had literally to fight in grain procurement areas for each additional pood of grain. Frequently all they could do was appeal to the center with a demand to send a commissar with dictatorial powers.

In May 1918 Lenin received from the workers in Vyksa a telegram. They reported that, fed up with hunger, they were boarding their boats with their detachments and going for bread with machine guns. What was Lenin to do? Stop these workers with armed forces? This was absolutely inconceivable. The only possibility left to the bolsheviks was either to protect the sated from the hungry with armed force, for otherwise they could not stop the hungry workers armed with machine guns, or else try to turn this largely spontaneous movement for salvation from hunger into an organized system and thus to prevent pogroms. How? The hungry themselves indicated the way: support us, and we shall find grain.

Lenin chose his own way. In answer to the Vyksa workers he expressed the hope that they would implement their plan as true revolutionaries, i.e., that they would set up detachments of selected people who were reliable, who were not looters, and who would act in accordance with instructions, totally agreeing with Tsyurupa, for the sake of the common cause of rescuing from hunger all the hungry and not only themselves. What else could he do at that point?

**In other words, Lenin and the bolsheviks faced the problem of somehow "organizing" not only the life of the people under conditions of hunger but also the civil war and the food problem?**

Such was precisely the problem, and the bolsheviks made no secret of it. However, the dictatorship could not be limited to food supplies. This was perfectly well understood not only by the bolsheviks but by their political opponents as well.

The consolidation of those who had become rich and were now subject to a variety of threats, and their aspiration for self-defense created certain grounds for dictatorship. However, those who were hungry and were trying to survive also needed a dictatorship. This idea was in the air. The entire question was whose dictatorship, precisely, would prevail? Inevitably, the bolsheviks had to take the path of instituting a stricter dictatorship and spreading it far and wide.

The entire course of events of May 1918 indicated that a civil war had already started. Time alone could determine definitely the ways and means by which it was to develop, and the eventual winner.

**You believe that at that time dictatorship was inevitable. However, the bolsheviks did not stop there. They went further. In particular, they created committees of the poor which became a factor of division among the peasantry, its polarization, and the establishment of a mass base not only for the revolution but also the counterrevolution in the countryside. This was not denied by the bolsheviks themselves. Why did they have to go that far?**

It was the events themselves, above all, that went "farther." A hungry month of May was followed by an even hungrier June. We already pointed out that the Czechoslovak uprising at the end of May 1918 drastically

worsened the food situation in Central Russia. At that time the bolsheviks could afford even less to ignore the possible total loss of the Northern Caucasus, which was what happened by the end of July 1918. The development of events not only made the bolsheviks convinced of the need for the exceptional steps they had taken, but also clearly indicated that unless not only an armed force consisting of worker food detachments was not to be raised but also that a social base be found in the countryside itself, no grain would be obtained and the country would plunge into anarchy.

The country was entering a period of absolute shortage of grain. This tragic impasse was subconsciously expressed by Gukovskiy, the people's commissar of finance: "We brought in and obtained it (grain—authors) through taxes, monopoly, and so on. Now, when this is no longer possible, if we cannot obtain grain by force, the peasants are not about to give it to us." On 3 June the Sovnarkom cut through this Gordian knot. It totally rejected any other principle pertaining to food procurement policies. As Tsyurupa later recalled, at that time Lenin held the party back from such a turn in food policy which, if adopted, as it subsequently became clear, a catastrophe was bound to follow.

Was there a social force in the countryside on which it was possible to rely: Such a force did exist. It was quite strong, although unorganized. However, there was also the danger that the kulaks in the grain growing areas would unite with their own poor by bribing them, and would use them as a force to oppose the poor in other areas, the workers, the authorities, and so on.

Yes, with the resolution of 11 June on the committees of the poor, Lenin divided the countryside. Had he failed to make this decision, considering that the Civil War could no longer be stopped, armed hungry Russia would have fought sated Russia. In any case, a dictatorship would have appeared as a result of this bloody mess.

**Some readers have asked the following: Here you are, defending Lenin and justifying his various political steps. In principle, therefore, does it mean that you are justifying both violence and Red terror?**

The formulation of this question is somewhat incorrect. In what sense? If there is a choice between violence and nonviolence, there is no doubt as to the choice: naturally, nonviolence. As we know, even prior to and after the October Revolution Lenin emphasized that "...Ideally, we are against any kind of coercion of the people." When the question of survival itself is formulated differently, when violence is inevitable, when it already exists, all that is left at that point is to choose between greater and lesser violence. This becomes an entirely different type of choice. Nonetheless, even when violence becomes necessary it does not stop being "evil."

As to Red terror, this is a topic of a separate and quite serious consideration, for in this case it is a question not only of the decisions made by the supreme authorities and by Lenin personally but also of what is described as

local excesses, which the bolsheviks themselves opposed. As to Lenin's attitude toward such matters, let us simply cite the following facts:

We know that the Sovnarkom resolution on Red terror was passed on 5 September 1918, in answer to a number of acts of terrorism committed by the counterrevolution (Volodarskiy was assassinated on 20 June; Uritskiy was assassinated on 30 August and Lenin was severely wounded that day). The attempts on the lives of the representatives of the system, caused by the weakness of the system itself, was perceived particularly painfully. The aspiration to protect them was related not simply to the special feelings felt for the leader but also the special role of authority. Under circumstances in which the power system is weak occasionally this principle becomes the most important organizationally. That is why protection of the lives of people who have been granted special rights becomes a matter of life and death.

After Uritskiy's assassination, by resolution of the Petrograd Cheka, according to official reports, 500 hostages were executed by firing squad. Peters, one of the heads of the VChK, described these events, in an interview granted to the newspaper UTRO MOSKVY as "hysterical terror," when spineless revolutionaries lost their sense of balance and plunged into excessive rage. Prior to Uritskiy's assassination, Peters said, there was no shooting (of hostages—authors); after it, such executions became exceedingly numerous and frequently indiscriminate. However, even this unseemly political hysteria in Petrograd was not a simple case of revenge. Terror is a particular form of struggle in any situation related to the fact that the power is held precisely by the leaders of the revolution and the counterrevolution, people who have been granted exceptional powers.

In this situation, Lenin behaved with much greater restraint and dignity. It is indicative that the powerful outbreak of Red terror, the responsibility for which, by the logic of things, should have been Lenin's, did not shake his personal authority, even among the peasantry. As Ryazanov, the representative of the VTsIK recalled, after the investigation in Ivanovo-Voznesensk Guberniya, "terror is linked among the peasants with remembrance of Comrade Lenin's illness; the peasants say: 'How good it is that Comrade Lenin is getting better. Now things will be much better.'" Also influential in this case was Lenin's personal stance. As Lunacharskiy recalls, Lenin used all of his remaining strength after fighting his illness, in the struggle to prevent the country from falling into the grip of revenge. Many bourgeois paid with their lives for the assassination of the commissars and for the attempt on Lenin's life. The people's anger was so violent that more hundreds of people would have died had Lenin not demanded that the anger be restrained. The fact that the leader had difficulty in restraining the workers from attacking the prisons was mentioned by Ryazanov to the inmates, members of the Socialist Party, who were detained in the Butyrka jail in September 1918. The same was pointed out by Dzerzhinskiy in his interrogation of Melgunov.

**Could one say that, in general, the bolsheviks did not make any errors and that all the decisions they made were correct...?**

Naturally, no. The main error made by Lenin was an inaccurate evaluation of the way the decisions which were made, particularly that about the committees of the poor, would be implemented locally. It would be absolutely incorrect to blame, shall we say, the local authorities for the excesses created by the extraordinary food procurement policy. In such cases the central authorities must anticipate the consequences of their decisions. They were unable to do so. It is true that there was no time to spare. For example, the decision on committees of the poor itself did not contemplate the alienation of the middle peasantry from the activities of the committees of the poor. In the local areas, however, the situation developed differently. The committees of the poor alienated the middle peasantry. This was the worst possible political error. Lenin also overestimated the possibilities of the committees and even more so the extent of "socialism" among the poorest peasantry.

The fact that the rural poor behaved totally differently from what one could expect on the basis of any initial projections was obvious. The study of reports from the local areas indicated that, relying on the forces of the proletariat, the rural poor occasionally expropriated the grain of their own kulaks and divided it among themselves not only to feed themselves but also to speculate with it. As a result, situations developed in which one big kulak was replaced by a dozen petty swindlers.

**However, the question of errors is much broader. Many contemporary authors note elements of utopianism in Lenin's speeches before and after the October Revolution. The conclusion we may reach from your story on the outbreak of the Civil War is that Lenin's actions were governed above all by pragmatic considerations, i.e., he reacted to real changes in life. In that case, how do you assess Lenin as a politician?**

During the time of heated debates at meetings of the VTsIK, in April 1918, Martov noted that Lenin was trying to combine what could not be combined: Don Quixote with Sancho Pansa. When Lenin speaks of socialist tasks, according to Martov he speaks like Don Quixote, as a person or representative of a group which thinks that the very fact of the seizure of political power would be sufficient to establish socialism. When Lenin speaks of state capitalism, he speaks like Sancho Pansa, who stands on firm grounds.

It cannot be said that this view is fully consistent with Lenin's position. It would be hardly accurate to consider Lenin in the spring of 1918 as a strict pragmatist lacking romantic aspirations for the future. The thoughts of the lofty Don Quixote may be found in a number of theoretical concepts of that time. The pragmatic Sancho can be seen in the practical actions of the heads of the Sovnarkom, aimed at resolving the crisis. Don Quixote and Sancho will always walk hand-in-hand. Sancho will

not allow Don Quixote to leave the firm grounds. Don Quixote will not allow Sancho to take the path of a type of political pragmatism which would totally block any path to socialism and would turn Russia back to a "normal" capitalist development.

The demands formulated by the masses and accepted by the bolsheviks were frequently clothed by them in socialist garb. It was such socialist garb that, in our view, also misled Lenin, when he should have found the right words, concepts, images and forms to substantiate the Realpolitik. For example, state control of production and distribution, grain monopoly, etc., had existed before the bolsheviks as well. However, when Lenin described the rationing system, which was one of the links in the chain of such steps, as an attribute of socialism, this becomes a theoretical error which nurtures the idea of a "noncommodity" socialism. Hence the conclusion drawn at that time that rationed distribution means socialism while free trade is not socialism. Objectively, however, it was a question of something else: Was free trade possible in general, under the conditions of 1918, let us say, or was it impossible?

In Lenin as well ideological aspects occasionally assumed the role of a filter which prevented the making of timely and rational decisions when it was difficult to make them fit the image (not even the concept) of socialism. This was a specific reflection of the spirit of the times. For example, the People's Commissariat of Food Supplies was fighting the All-Russian Sovnarkhoz on matters of food policy or the attitude toward cooperatives. Essentially, it was an interdepartmental dispute. Each side, however, had to "swear loyalty" to socialism. You must agree that, as a whole, this "tradition" has been preserved to this day.

On the other hand, in the age of great change, such illusory-ideological forms play a tremendous mobilizing role. For example, when the question arose as to what flags should be hoisted in leading the masses to one type of action or another, the left-wing SR, for instance, said: we cannot raise the people under the flag of the Constituent Assembly; we can under the banner of the socialization of the land, giving the factories to the workers, etc. In other words, a socialist dressing of a political action played the role of an organizer of mass action, willingly accepted by the masses. This had to be taken into consideration.

Today we find that in dealing with history we are actually trapped by the self-assessments of those times and are only determining, with a plus or minus sign, our attitude toward them. In other words, we have purely forgotten that we cannot judge an age of change by its awareness. When individual journalists, who study the ideological texts of that time, proceed from their alleged consistency with real processes, we believe that this is a major error in the very formulation of the question of doctrine, imposed by reality. It would be much easier for us if we learn how to "divorce" the real process within which the pragmatic Sancho Pansa operates from the

ideological and frequently illusory forms of description and interpretation of this process and the elements of utopian "Don Quixotism," which are inevitable in times of revolution. In that case we would be able to see how Lenin frequently succeeded in going beyond the limits of his own theoretical evaluations. This applies above all when they conflicted with the real practical needs.

**In brief, you do not tend in the least to consider Lenin an impeccably tuned political machine which could, whatever the circumstances, impeccably assess the various options. A great deal was based on intuition, on approximate projections and, in all likelihood, this was inevitable. Nonetheless, in what area do you see Lenin's weakness as a politician?**

Today many people would mention support of that same doctrine, and others would even speak of blind attachment to, and defense of coercion, errors in strategic evaluations (orientation toward global revolution, etc.). Strictly speaking, the simple thought which stands behind all such accusations is that Lenin is guilty for being a man of his time and not of the present. To criticize Lenin from such positions is easy. In their time, this was precisely what was written about Herzen, Chernyshevskiy or L. Tolstoy: they had not understood, they had not taken into consideration, they had not realized... Therefore, any discussion about Lenin on this basis should be left to those who tend to replace historical analysis with the investigation of texts. Weaknesses indeed existed. These weaknesses were pointed out by Lenin to his own contemporaries.

In October 1919 Osinskiy (Obolenskiy) wrote about Lenin the following: "...We have a great political leader to whom belongs the unquestionable leadership of the party and the revolution—Comrade Lenin. He is a great and a tactical politician and the incomparable creator of political-organizational lines and slogans—the political algebras. At the same time, however, he is not an organizer-technician in terms of individual features. He is not an expert in organizational mathematics. This has always been acknowledged by Lenin himself. That is why side-by-side with Lenin there was first Sverdlov, who used algebraic formulas to resolve specific mathematical problems. What made Sverdlov good was that politically he was entirely reliable. Under his guidance his organizational apparatus was structured, including in terms of personnel, in such a way that everything was under control.... At the same time, he could accurately concretize any general directive, build the necessary apparatus for it, and select, place and activate the necessary people whom he was able (which is the main feature of an organizer) to recognize, promote, assess and use."

In all likelihood, from time to time, Lenin must have felt his kind of organizational vacuum, as was the case after Sverdlov's death, and would appeal to people who possessed that special sense of the apparatus, despite many of the adverse consequences stemming from this fact.

**Does it not seem to you, in this case, that Lenin's concentration on political algebra created a kind of organizational crack into which, after his death, apparatchiks, headed by Stalin, rushed?**

Such a danger indeed existed. As the tasks broadened and changed so did the party apparatus. The need for people increased. The thin stratum of the old party guard was overstrained. New organizers had to be recruited. Where to find them? From the new party reinforcements, the so-called "newborn" communists. With the advent of new strata, of undistinguished people, the question of Russia's readiness or lack of readiness for socialism became entirely apparent. Appointed to responsible positions, these average people introduced into professional revolutionary activities an entire array of new features. Through them the overall cultural level was immediately manifested in the blossoming of bureaucratism. With the direct support of the masses, bureaucratism is not terrible. Nor is it terrible even when people contaminated with some kind of anarchic diseases are promoted. However, the moment this "undistinguished person" appeared, Russia revealed itself.

"Actually," Osinskiy noted, "in order to convert algebraic formulas, in the most important areas organizers are good performers (and, frequently, poor), 'officials,' if one may describe them as such, and either work or do not.... In our country, a mass of people who are 'able to organize things,' are in responsible positions, people who manage not to insult the pride of others, who are without strong character.... Popular in our country are puppet generals, reliable talentless people and 'political' little people...., a number of practical organizers who either do nothing or engage in secondary projects.... Under Sverdlov there were decent organizers."

The Central Committee Organizational Bureau, which was established at the Eighth Party Congress, to begin with, could not be as reliable as would be a single person; second, it was unable to assume an independent position; third, it actually broke down (among all comrades with organizational talents Krestinskiy was the only one working in that bureau).

In order to avoid an organizational breakdown, that same Osinskiy suggested to Lenin cadre changes and replacing the missing Sverdlov, the "genius of organization," with a kind of collective genius consisting of an organizational dictatorship of three Central Committee members (Stalin, Krestinskiy and Dzerzhinskiy). In rejecting the principle of collective leadership, which inevitably involves certain interrelationships among people and the outbreak of frictions, likes and dislikes and the struggle for primacy, Osinskiy considered the solution to lie in a strictly bureaucratic option, in changing organizational forms within the framework of an already established system of relations. It also became clear, as Osinskiy himself pointed out, that such palliative steps (the creation of the Politburo and the Organizational Bureau), which were adopted at the Eighth

Congress, also failed to solve the main problem: that of reviving party work and rescuing the party apparatus from "carrion and decay."

In 1920 this problem was manifested quite seriously and assumed the form of a party debate on the "upper" and "lower" strata. One of its reasons was the inability to establish efficient control from below over the activities of the holders of power. This major fault in the structure of the state had been detected as early as 1919 and could not be eliminated by replacing Sverdlov even with an entire collegium.

**In your view, what was it that Lenin feared the worst as a politician?**

Above all, he feared that which was literally hanging over the proletariat state. It was the alienation of the party and its leadership from the masses. Reports to this effect reached him from everywhere. For example, he received a report from Voronezh Guberniya which frankly stated that "the commune is being converted everywhere to "yes people" and "no people," and that "the RKP has turned in some areas into an unpleasant-closed and disgustingly autocratic caste."

As the Civil War drew to an end, such problems began to acquire increasing importance. Lenin began to seek ways to resolve them. He tried to develop not an organizational palliative, as did Osinskiy, but a political solution: nonparty peasant conferences, the resolutions passed at the Ninth All-Russian RKP(b) Conference of September 1920 on closing the gap between the "highs" and "lows" in the party, etc. In particular, Lenin called not only for appointing a Central Committee commission which was to draft practical steps to eliminate material inequality within the party; this was widely known. On his initiative, the so-called Kremlin Control Commission was also established. The resolution passed at the conference included the following item which was not to be made public: "...In order to eliminate the discontent caused by Kremlin procedures, to suggest to the Central Committee to assign a commission consisting of Ignatov, Ukhanov and Muranov, who will be given extraordinary powers and will be answerable to the Central Committee Politburo. The commission is to complete its work within 1 month."

**Could you describe its activities in greater detail?**

The All-Russian Conference and Lenin himself based the idea on creating such a commission on the fact that since inequality in living conditions among party members was felt particularly strongly in Moscow, the question of Kremlin privileges was most pressing. It was deemed necessary for an impartial and prestigious commission (which included members of the opposition within the party) to study the situation in the Kremlin and to determine the actual amount of existing privileges and reduce them to limits which could be understood by all party members and, at the same time, would refute

rumors. In turn, the VTsIK Presidium approved the membership of the commission and put its own machinery at its disposal.

Although the commission was unable to complete its work within the stipulated time, the final report was submitted to the Central Committee quite quickly, on the eve of the 10th Party Congress. As a result of its investigations, the Kremlin commission arrived at the following conclusion: as to housing conditions, people living on Kremlin territory were classified into four groups. In particular, the report stated that "the first group includes the people's commissars and other senior comrades (Trotsky, Shmit, Kamenev, Steklov and others), who have proper housing conditions and that, considering the urgent need for housing, more people could be assigned to their premises without harming their work...." This recommendation did not apply to Lenin, for five people lived in his three-room apartment: Lenin, his wife, brother, sister and servant.

In the matter of food supplies in the cafeterias of the Central Committee, Sovnarkom and VTsIK and the Comintern, the conclusion was the following: "The rations of the Sovnarkom and, particularly, the Comintern, must be substantially reduced, taking into consideration the overall food situation. The commission believes that the sick must be fed in their own cafeterias on the basis of general conditions, eliminating the group of the 'perennially sick,' which is a cause of justified discontent and indignation on the part of the toiling masses. As to individual allotments to senior workers ('orders' as we say today—authors), the commission deems necessary that a uniform fixed ration be established in order to avoid a situation in which some comrades receive supplies several times monthly."

The Kremlin Commission repeatedly reported the results of its work to the Politburo and the Central Committee Plenum. In particular, the 10 November 1920 Plenum resolved that "the Tarasovka dacha area, with all its facilities, is to be put at the disposal of the MSRД (Moscow Soviet of Worker Deputies—authors), with the recommendation that the dachas be used as worker rest homes and for the children of workers, said dachas to be vacated within the shortest possible time."

However, even these steps failed to resolve the main problem, although they were approved by the party. By the end of 1920, when the crisis of "war communism" was already obviously ripening, the lack of channels of communication between the "upper" and "lower" strata (the only compensating factor of the direct "leader-masses" link—Lenin—was, to a certain extent, cut off by the apparat from information from below) greatly obstructed prompt decision making. In those circumstances, essentially all that remained was to wait for the spontaneous protest of the masses to bring to the surface of political life contradictions which, for the time being, were not reaching the leaders of the system. It was precisely this, unfortunately, that happened in the period of conversion to the NEP, when the policy of the

bolsheviks, headed by Lenin, could by no means be considered a model of political anticipation. The agony and the crisis of the obsolete "war communism" system lasted all too long, and was resolved, in the final account, by Kronshtadt.

**Last question. Can we speak of some kind of apparat continuity of Lenin's and Stalin's leadership?**

In our view, such a formulation of the question is, in any case, preferable to the traditional claims of the doctrinal predetermination of Stalinism based on the ideas of Marx and Lenin. We already mentioned Lenin's exceptional nature as a politician. It was thus that, willy-nilly, on the basis of his own qualities, he structured the entire mechanism for political decision-making. What would happen if this unique master is replaced by a so to say "ordinary" person without changing the mechanism itself? Would we not have, instead of a leader, an official who cannot be a leader but who, by virtue of the fact that the entire power pyramid has already been structured in a certain way, finds himself at its top?

Yes, Lenin chose a working collective, a "personal" team and, strictly speaking, this team should have been dismantled with the death of the leader, for without him it could not remain unchanged. Without him, it soon became clear that the ties linking these people were weak. Therefore, while giving Lenin his proper due, we must realize something else as well: generally speaking, he did not initiate (or, more accurately, was unable to initiate) any substantial changes within the power mechanism. When he fell gravely ill, he faced several circumstances and, furthermore, was ignorant of many other things: the way he was being separated from the party, and the interpretation which would be given to his final ideas. He no longer had the strength, the "air" needed for making changes in the political mechanism.

Could Lenin assume that the established system would be reproduced subsequently with many minor features? We believe that he could have detected, yet failed to do so, some of the symptoms. For example, he could have paid attention to the phenomena related to the so-called "Samara upturn," when in February 1921, in the elections for the Samara Guberniya party committee, the majority vote went to the "worker opposition," headed by Milonov. Until that time, the party had called for tolerance toward opponents, equality, and so on. What about now? Let us look at the documents: "...Whereas in the past there was simply bureaucratism, today we have bureaucratism to the second or third power.... Whereas in the past trips taken by senior personnel, the 'question of houses,' the organization of a separate cafeteria for senior workers and all other privileges were being fiercely attacked by the 'Milonovists,' now such privileges were increased.... Whereas on a Russia-wide scale the opposition speaks a great deal about freedom of criticism and 'democracy,' here, in Samara, the moment it assumed power, all democracy and freedom... were suppressed most mercilessly."

Let us consider symptomatic the letter which K.A. Mekhonoshin and N.I. Podvoyskiy sent Lenin during the time of the extremely grave situation, on the eve of the Kronshtadt mutiny. These old party members wrote to Lenin, you went to the workers, you acknowledged the errors and called for thinking of others. However, in other countries, in such a situation, the government resigns, whereas we offer minor apologies. This was a very grave accusation.

Here as well, one could accurately say that Gorbachev in fact began where Lenin stopped: the problem of "changing the team" must take place by changing the very principle of the functioning of the political system. The sick and dying leader made a responsible statement on the need for changes in the political system. However, in real life such changes were limited to insignificant matters.

One could only speculate as to the type of guarantees against the usurping of power by a dictator and by the representatives of the apparat bureaucracy he could have proposed at that time at all. The problem of the irreplaceability of the leader, which arose under Lenin, remained after his death and showed its sharp edges throughout Soviet history. It would be erroneous to blame Lenin for this. In the final account, he left the party in the hands of the old guard on which he relied. Sadly, his hope was not justified. The subsequent leaders were unwilling in this case to follow the right direction, a direction which must be followed today.

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### Tragedy of Intolerance

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[Letters to the VKP(b) Central Committee on the eve of the "great turn," prepared by L. Koshelev and L. Rogovaya, scientific associates at the archives of the Institute for Marxism-Leninism, and O. Khlevnyuk, candidate of historical sciences]

[Text] Everyone was dissatisfied and waiting for change: these were the moods, to judge by thousands of letters received by the VKP(b) Central Committee, prevailing in Soviet society in 1926-1927. At that time, there was sufficient cause for discontent. Regardless of the successes in restoring the economy and victory over hunger and universal destruction, society was still firmly in the grip of numerous socioeconomic and political problems. People perceived these problems, above all, through the burdens of everyday life, material disorder and, often, uncertainty in tomorrow.

Having freed itself of hunger, the country still did not have enough to eat. Studies of nourishment for the rural population in October 1927, for example, showed that bread and potatoes remained the ration for peasants. Depending on the region, a person was entitled to from

550 to 600 grams of flour, 435-680 grams of potatoes, and only about 100 grams of meat, 4 grams of butter, and 17 grams of sugar or sugar substances per day. These were the average figures. The tables of many poor peasants were far more modest. Usually, urban workers were only slightly better fed than peasants.

The housing problem was extremely acute. There were many homeless in the cities, so boarding houses were operated. Thousands of workers lived in barracks and dormitories. Elementary living conditions—running water and sewers—remained a luxury. Watches, sewing machines and samovars were a sign of material well-being. In November 1926, there were 37 beds and 3 couches per 100 people in working families. Incidentally, because of crowding, it was often difficult to find space even for simple household items.

Joblessness had serious economic, political and moral costs. The unemployed lived in poverty in the literal meaning of the term: they made ends meet from casual earnings, scant aid, and by selling things they had once purchased. Unemployment pushed people onto the path of crime and encouraged prostitution and bribery. Young people suffered from this especially strongly. The unemployed were an "explosive" social mass: they often arranged demonstrations, and once they destroyed the labor exchange, demanding fair distribution of jobs.

Many problems had also appeared for those who had jobs. The difficult labor conditions, worn-out equipment, mass industrial injuries, and low earnings all caused discontent. In 1926, more than 100,000 people participated in strikes for these reasons (in all, more than 2 million workers were employed in factory and plant industry at that time). Poor peasants and farm laborers were also in a serious situation and, incidentally, even the lot of relatively prosperous peasants was difficult. Necessity drove many peasants to the cities, but there they often only added to the ranks of the unemployed.

These burdens were also seen especially sharply because expectations of rapidly overcoming all difficulties and swiftly achieving a social ideal prevailed in society. The Bolsheviks led the country under such slogans, and now they were being reminded ever more often of the need to "pay the bills." "We have changed," claimed one of the authors of a letter to the Central Committee, demanding to be given "that which was promised." Growth in the feeling of person dignity, caused by the revolution, unquestionably is a progressive phenomenon, but under conditions of economic and cultural poverty, often outstripping basic common sense, it provoked a mood of equalization and social demagogy. The most widespread word in most of the letters is "give!" The most common answer to the question, "Where will we get it?" is "Take it and divide it!"

For various reasons, many communists also maintained such attitudes. Some assumed that equalization would strengthen their power, putting powerful levers of distribution into their hands. Others sincerely did not accept



the NEP, had lost their real-life guidelines under the new conditions, and were still unable to free themselves of nostalgia for the heroics of the Civil War which, despite everything, was their "starring hour," a time full of promise. Young people hungered for the romanticism of revolutionary struggle. Many Komsomol members were eager to "free" the country from capital and to aid the Chinese revolution. The Central Committee received many letters on this subject. The attitude of these people toward their "own bourgeois" was synonymous.

Of course, the NEP man, the prosperous peasant, or the highly paid specialist, against whom the authors of many letters ardently spoke (they themselves, by the way, were not upstanding people in terms of their intolerance), were not "sacred." However, their work (and the letters admitted this too) brought good to society. Strong peasant farms produced a significant share of agricultural output. Flexibility and enterprise enabled private merchants to penetrate into the most neglected corners of the market, where state trade was not very nimble. Even urban workers obtained more than one-third of their goods from the private sector. Labor productivity in private enterprises was higher than in state industry, despite the constant oppressions. As far as the numerous abuses and wastes that then encompassed both private, as well as state sectors of the economy, this was no longer the concern of the state and its administrative or punitive agencies. Simple administrative prohibitions only did harm and contributed to the blossoming of the underground economy. Even a confirmed supporter of "the purity of socialism," such as Yu. Larin, wrote of this in *BOLSHEVIK* in 1927. Having estimated that, along with the 300,000 obvious hired workers in capitalist industry, there were also up to 500,000 workers throughout the country, in fact organized by capitalists into various kinds of false artels, as well as through the distribution of work at home (understandably, without any labor legislation or control on the part of state or trade union agencies), Larin suggested legalizing the underground industry, permitting private owners to hire more than 20 workers. This, he thought, would improve the situation for the proletariat employed in private enterprises and would facilitate state control over private owners.

Judging by the letters to the Central Committee, many people understood the need to find a reasonable compromise between socialist ideals and the socioeconomic realities of a backward country. As opposed to supporters of equalization, they suggested not sharing the "pie," but increasing the part of its funds accessible to everyone. The authors of some letters acted as "theoreticians" for this idea, while others appealed for help with its implementation in practice. Cooperative workers from Krasnodar, whose letter is published below, in aspiring "not to flood the labor exchange, over-crowded as it is, with our own people," asked to be granted the opportunity to work peacefully at a leased plant, to be protected from the oppressions of a local bureaucrat. Demobilized Red Army soldiers from Yekaterinoslavskaya Guberniya, whose letter is also included, wanted to organize their own kolkhoz. Not one, where Stalinist collectivizers would soon "make" the peasants

"happy," but really their own, where it would be possible to "be of use to our state, not hoping... for manna to rain down upon us." Unquestionably, a project suggested to the party leadership by S. Klimenko, an economic manager from Perm, will be of interest to the modern reader (this document was studied for the first time in the book "*Istoricheskiy Opyt i Perestroyka*" [Historical Experience and Perestroyka], Moscow, 1988. The ideas of decentralizing economic management and the searches for ways to turn workers into the real owners of enterprises are all, as our experience has shown, fundamental problems in the development of socialism.

Unfortunately, such projects were drowned in a sea of universal intolerance and simplistic administrative decisions. The supporters of expropriation, enjoying the majority, soon triumphed. However, no miracle occurred as a result of this action. Already by 1928, consumption had sharply decreased and repressions and arbitrariness had ruined the lives of thousands of people. These were the first fruits of the equalization-expropriation transformations. Private shops were boarded up, and this "boarding up" reflected the overall situation in the country. Then the people, who had recently demanded that the detested NEP men be dealt with, remembered them. "In connection with the shortfall in the delivery of cereal products," the Party Central Committee Information Department reported in 1928, "talk of transferring trade into private hands has become more frequent." In Tver, workers directly told the communists: "So, we have become owners, and we have done away with private owners, but we ourselves do not know how to trade." However, it was already too late.

Probably, many of those who called for introducing order with an iron hand in the early 1920s, who suggested that Stalin become a one-man leader, deal severely with the opposition, and solve all political problems with the help of the sadly infamous Article 58 of the Criminal Code, longed for the past more than once. There are many such letters in the archives. It was relatively easy to start the violence, but its halt was achieved too late.

Stalinism gained strength, more than a little due to the wave of intolerance and bitterness.

The letters presented to our readers are just a small segment of the documents, stored in the Central Party Archives of the CPSU Central Committee Institute for Marxism-Leninism. L. Koshelev and L. Rogovaya, scientific associates at the archives, and O. Khlevnyuk, candidate of historical sciences, prepared this publication.

#### Give Us Justice!

To the Leader of the VKP(b), Comrade I.V. Stalin,

Life now is nothing other than a disease. It is impossible to live long like this! I think that it is necessary to take certain steps in order to give the working people some possibilities for living...

We have grown up somewhat! Give us that which you promised us and have been promising for a long time.

The appetites of NEP men, party members and specialists, who have gone too far, must be cut back, since such injustice is intolerable in a proletarian state; this is the opinion of most workers, who did not stint with their own heads at a difficult time for the republic of the soviets.

Give us jobs! Give us bread! Give us justice!

L.K. Khachaturov, worker Armavir, Severo-Kavkazskaya Kray, Trotskiy Street, 82. December 1926

Comrade Stalin! Iosif Vissarionovich!

Please tell me how to understand and interpret the following questions: 1) Why in the party's existence so far there is a place in it for embezzlers, red-tape mongers and even bureaucrats, etc.? 2) Why is there such vast preference for party people; for instance, if there are two unemployed people, one a party member, the other a worker, the job is given to the party member? 3) Why is there protectionism in the soviet agencies and even in the party? 4) Do we now have free speech, freedom of the press, etc., and what are its limits? 5) Are we advancing toward socialism or standing in place? 6) Is the party afraid of criticism of itself? 7) Are the party and Komsomol needed now, when we have the soviet power of workers and peasants? 8) Why are many workers and peasants (not to mention kulaks, etc.) dissatisfied with present-day life, soviet power and the party?

All these questions are arising at workers' meetings and peasant assemblies, yes! Can one really write them all down? There are a great many of them, but they are similar in one thing: "Why has so much been promised and so little given?" We have to answer these questions from the booklets, but I feel that this is insufficient, since these questions hit painfully. True, maybe they are old problems, but they are becoming unsolvable here in the villages, and in fact, when...

With Komsomol greetings, to our senior comrade and leader,

S. Trofimov, Komsomol member Address: St. Shumakovo, Yu.zh.d., Solontsevskaya Volost, Kurskiy Uyezd. 12 September 1926.

Dear Comrade Stalin!

Finding ourselves in an extremely difficult position, we, demobilized Red Army soldiers, have decided to turn to You with a request and for advice. We ourselves are unskilled laborers at the Shepetovskiy Sugar Plant, where we worked for 5 and a half months during the demobilization. At the present time, we find ourselves without work, since there is no work here and a large number of unemployed people are registered at the labor exchange, and there is no hope whatsoever that it will be possible to find a job anywhere...

Comrade Stalin, we heard that in Moscow there are many plants and that it is possible to find jobs in them, but we do not know what is available where, or whom to turn to, which is why, brother Comrade Stalin, we decided to write to you, since we know no one in Moscow who could help us with this. We consulted with comrades and decided to write to you, since we heard that if you tried, you would be able to get us a job and since you have many friends there. Of course, we do not insist on going to Moscow: maybe you could advise us to go to some other city. We agree to go wherever you wish. We are devoted to Soviet Russia, we served in the Army and as volunteers, but now we have to suffer so...

Our address: Shepetovka-na-Volyni, Pochtovaya Street, Bldg No 3. Care of Kadav, for Kasperovich and Lysyuk. April 1926

Dear Comrade Molotov!

Maybe you personally remember me somewhat from Nizhniy. I was there in 1914 and headed the naval detachment that returned for the winter from Tsaritsyn. I was one of the first to receive the Order of the Red Banner. In the past, I was a lathe operator at Sormovskiy Plant. I am now 38 years old...

I again returned in 1923 to my machine tool, expecting to see happy faces standing by the machine tools at the plant, from whence I had been taken by the Imperialist War and, later, by the revolution; I did not see happy faces. There was a kind of strained waiting, and everyone said that we must be patient for now: this is a transition time. Things will be better later. They cheered up the faint-hearted, with all their "Philistine" petty bourgeois complaints that pay is being withheld, that there is nothing to buy, that all theatrical and other cultural entertainments are inaccessible to workers, and they had to be persuaded that all this is temporary, all this will pass, and a time will come when the worker will once again be shod and clothed...

However, the "transition" time has already turned into a lengthy period of construction, and this longevity has begun to oppress the workers. No campaigns whatsoever affect the matter. True, things look good in reports. In the figures, it is apparent to you that X was sown in 1923, and X in 1926, in province X. Yet, after all, for me as a worker, only one thing is obvious: the fact that I earn 280 kopeks a day, but our apartment costs 10 rubles a month, lighting is 3-5 rubles, boots at the cooperative are 25-20 rubles (and of poor quality), white bread costs 13-11 kopeks for 400 grams, paper is 20 kopeks a package, meat is 35-40 kopeks etc. You can read about the reduction in retail prices—there was such a campaign: butter decreased in price by 1.5 kopeks per kilo, but I need it in an amount of 100 grams. Of course, it is good that it has become cheaper, but this is only true not for my 100 grams, but for one who buys about 16 kilos worth. Well, set aside 1.5 kopeks for 10, and how much of a discount do I get? You say this is small change! Yes,

You are right, it is small change for You, but my entire life is made up of this small change!..

You say that this is Philistinism, pettiness, that there are more important things: like studying who more correctly understood the theses of Comrade Engels "On the Possibility of a Social Revolution in One of the Countries" or whether Lenin had Russia in mind in 1905, when he wrote his article on the same topic, or who interpreted it more correctly: Trotskiy or Kamenev, Zinovyev or You and Stalin. Indeed, maybe this is important, but for us our stomachs are important too and while You argue over there, my family may die of hunger. Indeed, I myself am bald and ill from overwork!!! Perhaps we should tell you: well, get out and do your job, stop rending the air, recalling who wrote what and how we must interpret this. You remind me of medieval debate tournaments on religious themes...

We do not understand this. We want to work and be well fed. So, Comrade Molotov, I am not a party member, and I directly and openly wrote all my observations for you in this letter. I am not afraid of any repressions whatsoever. Your GPU does not frighten me: I sat in prison in 1908 also, and I was not afraid!..

Let me tell you where and how I work at the present time. I will not keep secrets and I tell you openly that things are bad for us workers, regardless of your resolutions in the meetings. There we are commonplace, there resolutions are passed: we just raise our hands, as you please, and then we must manage to do something at home, help our wives, etc. Once again, I am not afraid of repressions (and, by the way, I am not one of the "rowdies." I am a disciplined worker at the plant, believe me).

That is all for now, with comradely greetings,

L.N. Kalinin Sunday, 14 November. Address: Water-Transport Workers' Club, Vladivostok, to Metal Worker Kalinin

A number of discussions are being held in the Central Committee concerning the discrepancies between poor peasants and peasants of average means. I, a poor peasant of average means, can inform you of the poor and the middling farm. I have a horse, a cow and three sheep, for which the poor call me bourgeois, but no one talks about how much a peasant of average means has to work, harder than a poor peasant. I do not have enough of my own fodder to maintain the livestock, so that I have to borrow from the poor peasants, which is why I am working the land for them. Yet, the poor peasant's work is napping a little longer... I myself note: go into a shop and look, poor people are there. He who has only a calf is called poor, yet another has no calf walks around well-dressed, with clean trousers, boots and a shirt in uniform and service-cap, from under which his hair sticks out neatly. Suddenly a peasant of average means is richer than me—boots in the dirt, boot-tops warped, sleeping outdoors, wearing a shirt without buttons, who probably washed his face last Sunday, to remind him of

his appearance, grabbing tobacco and kerosene and rushing home, to feed his horse. Poor peasants pay the shopkeeper 20 kopeks for a cigarette, then sit down and smoke. What a privilege it is, I thought, but later I changed my mind. True, there is no tax, he is not losing a horse, in short, he has no obligations whatsoever, what he earns is all for himself, and I am working the field for him, but it pains me that they still call me a bourgeois: you have a horse and cow, but I also think, although you have not become rich, everything was given to you by a landlord, the horses and cows were taken away from rich muzhiks and also given to you, in short, all their property was taken and you probably will have earned nothing.

A peasant of Kursk, Staryy Uyezd, Kochergin

P.S. Concerning the incorrect levy of a farm tax, why is it that, if someone manages, exerting all his energetic efforts to maintain an extra calf, but now they come to tax the farm from head to toe, while they are leading the calf from the yard... I sold it and will no longer try to raise them, so long as the farm tax is assessed.

December 1926

Dear Comrades! I am a poor peasant from the backwoods of the dark, kulak-downtrodden village of Skrylevshchino, and am turning to you with my letter, in which I describe the situation in which we live at present and how easily the working people live under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Possibly, my letter will somewhat anger my dear comrades, but I must describe the truth, and our dear comrades should hear it and pay attention to my letter. As a poor peasant, I struggled as a volunteer for 4 years against the world bourgeoisie on the fronts of the Civil War and spilled my blood for the bright future of the working people, for fraternity, equality. I consider it my duty to inform the 15th Conference of what kind of fraternity and equality exists in our country at the present time, and who has achieved the bright, good life on our backs. Dear comrades, our Red October has been shining for 9 years already...

Let me give you a small example of how easily the peasantry gets free land. My village is surrounded by kulaks, who pressure the poor peasants on all sides and want to suffocate them once and for all. On the one hand, there is the son of the landlord Ivan Snopkin, who has 91 desyatinas per 10 people, and on the other hand, the brothers Buyevich, who have 86 desyatinas of land for 19 people. They have forests of local importance, handed over for their use, and they dispose of them as they wish, sell to whomever they feel like, and give to whom they feel like as well. Martyn Buyevich's sons are communists and he works the land with the hands of others: he says that he knows how to work in a civilized manner, he is quite inaccessible to the poor peasant, a poor peasant could not approach him. If he catches a peasant in the forest, who had gathered twigs without his permission, he will start to shoot. There have often been cases of massacre by lynch mob, and he says he will shoot, that he has the right to shoot in the forest. So, these three live to this day

in a state of bliss; the revolution played no role whatsoever for them while our village, groaning under their yoke, has 56 desyatinas of its own land for 96 mouths, and although we plant our crop here, they tell us: "You loafers do not know how to work"...

Slavin Pavel Yevstigneyevich Skrylevshchino Village, Khokhlovskaya Volost, Smilenskiy Uyezd and Guberniya. November 1926

### 'How Do We Approach Socialism?'

Comrade Stalin,

Questions!!!

I know that a socialist society is a society where there are no classes, that it is a production-consumer fellowship of workers in industry and agriculture. I know that in order to build socialism in our country we must develop industry, so that it can meet the needs of our country, but I do not understand the path on which we should approach socialism? How are the classes being annihilated? When will the NEP man and the kulak disappear? Will there be money under socialism? Will there be division between peasants and workers? I do not understand: will a big merchant, with several large shops, give up this capital, or will they take it from him or, cutting him down gradually, will he be ruined...

Will there be ownership? If it is not going to exist, then how will labor and products be divided? Speaking in general, I would like answers that would indicate all the changes which are to occur on the path toward socialism (how will private capital convert to socialist). It would be interesting to get a picture of socialism...

Address: Voronezhskaya Gub., Bobrovskiy Uyezd, St. Talovaya, student, group III, Verkhne-Ozerskiya Agricultural School, Vasilii Pochinskiy. January 1926

To the VKP(b) Central Committee,

Often, the following thought suggests itself: How come at the present time the Communist Party is not directing attention, or rather, is not calling a halt to the growth of the ever growing NEP? After all... It has already played its intended role, and now it would be time to sing a farewell to it, precisely due to the consideration that cooperatives can fully replace the NEP. It seems to me, it would be time to devote maximum attention to this question, the question of eliminating the NEP, since it is offensive to see figures here in the Soviet state, who do not fit, but mainly, it is time to halt the unconscientious swindling and subsistence of people at the expense of the hard-earned money of workers and peasants...

It seems to me personally that no substantial good whatsoever... comes to us, as a Soviet state, from this NEP. True, there was a time when it was useful, but now it is harmful...

Address: GNS Naumovka, Koryukovskiy Rayon, Konotopskiy Okrug, Komsomol member Aleksey Efr. Zaporozhets. 30 August 1926

What do comrades Zinovyev, Kamenev, and others want?

The NEP frightens them with its duration, but it is plain to see that the NEP will exist for another 8-10 years here. When will there be jobs everywhere for everyone and, we assume, the NEP will end, and when will the mass of people, currently existing through trade, disappear? It is clear: there is unrest, robberies, murders of representatives of authority, etc. The NEP does not frighten us, the more so, when the existing bodies of power will better control speculation... Vigilantly following the breathing of the NEP, and our first army in the struggle against it, the cooperative, it is necessary to arrange things, so that cooperatives are equal to the private, not so that cooperatives are somewhat equivalent to speculation. I.e., cooperatives should take the nature of a struggle against the NEP. Drawing the masses into the cooperative, not undermining its authority, not pursuing big profits through circulation, but reducing prices for goods lower and lower as far as possible—in this situation, there will be more buyers and the private will be equal to the cooperative... Thus cutting down on the merchant's appetite, in the course of several years under happy, of course, conditions, with a high density of cooperative shops, factories and plants, we will easily send the NEP into poverty and force the white-collar worker to live through his own physical labor. The NEP itself presents no dangers, as Comrade Zinovyev said. Comrade Lenin, if he were alive, would have let it exist respectably, to the extent of necessity. On the one hand, fear and shame prevail. Comrades, those who struggled against them, were filled with hate for it and now, seeing their enemy, greedily tugging on its piece with evil delight, they cannot reconcile themselves to its appearance in their country. However, comrades, we must reconcile ourselves to this. For the revolutionary, who took up the burden of struggling for the oppressed of all countries, it is not enough to be a hard, proud fighter against enemies. He must also be tricky, two-faced and flexible in the face of his enemy, preparing the fatal blow. You win more and better with this method. Therefore, we must not scorn the NEP. Thanks to it, we have escaped a dangerous and difficult situation. Could the cooperative really have been created without the NEP? There would have been no more unemployed or there would have been fewer peasant uprisings caused by the farm tax. The NEP prevented all this, and only our unforgettable leader Vladimir Ilich managed to leave a way out for us—the NEP...

Long live the world revolution!

Long live the Comintern and VKP(b)—pioneer of world revolution!

Address: Crimea, Simferopol, der. Boiurcha. A.Ya. Kuzmin. November 1926

Now, one is often forced to encounter cases of abuse of the word "prosperous." For me this word is entirely incomprehensible. What kind of term should we apply it to, how should we define it...

I am defining it in a Leninist manner. "Kulak" means a kulak, his kulak farm and work force being exploited for the purpose of profit and money at percentages, etc. There can be no middle. If I am mistaken, then please explain to me...

I have been a party member since 1918. Maybe, due to my youth and inexperience, I cannot tell the end of the tail from the beast itself?

With communist greetings, Polyakov, cultural worker, membership card No 441783, S.-K. Kray, Arm. Okrug, St. Petropavlovskaya YePO. September 1926

In our practice, there are often cases in which an agricultural credit cooperative credits prosperous farms, even kulak farms, at 95 percent, motivated by the fact that the bank issues short-term credit, and in the practice of said cooperative's work some kind of collateral is established, which precisely presumes the above-indicated types of farms. Many comrades believe the such a policy meets the resolutions of the 14th Party Conference, which were approved by the last party congress<sup>1</sup>. ...It seems to me that this interpretation of the resolutions of the 14th Party Conference is wrong.

After all, an essentially correct credit policy, considered from the viewpoint of helping average and poor farms with credit, contributes to freeing them from economic dependency on prosperous and kulak farms. I consider any other interpretation a distortion of the party's policy in the countryside...

With communist greetings, Yermakovskiy, chief, Agitprop Department, Batayskiy VKP(b) Raykom, Don Organization 15 March 1926

Our economic situation, both in Moscow as well as throughout the USSR, is similar to a stretched string that is starting to fray slightly. Yet, instead of really trying to help set it on firm footing, we are doing experiments which, incidentally, are costing us a very, very great deal. Comrade Lenin in his day asked us to learn to trade, but for the time being we have not learned this. Our state enterprises are giving us nothing; rather, they take away the meager funds, which the state has at its disposal. Trade with abroad takes more away from us than it gives. Our entire crop, on which we have placed great hopes, depends, as the peasants say, on God. Along with these difficulties, the state agencies and cooperatives are rife with bureaucracy and paper-pushing...

However, it should be said that there is no situation that cannot be left honorably. However, henceforth we should not do experiments. Despite this impoverished situation, our country is the wealthiest in all respects. It has so many untold riches, which do not exist in any other country. In other words, we are sitting on gold, but

we do not know how to use it, hoping that someone from outside will come and take it.

In my opinion, in order to raise our economic position, we must temporarily eliminate assistance or, rather, stop hoping for help from outside and live by the following: "Our forest, and our hares." We must not only push them out of sight and simultaneously give them an opportunity to grow fat. I.e., we must give an opportunity to the private owner to show himself and reveal everything that he has. Yet, after all, there are people who have a great deal, and we must give them a guarantee of their viability of their property, imposing only a tax on them. This is on the one hand. On the other, instead of a monthly salary, we should give all our economic managers who have close ties to trade operations a monetary percentage of the incomes of the enterprise, so that a manager will be interested and will be like a welder for this work, then he will not go crazy. Through these measures, we will achieve real competition and revitalization in the market with private owners who, after rights are given to them, will start multiplying like parasites. This competition will boost our state agencies and cooperatives without compulsory measures. Commodities will appear in the market in abundance, gradually falling in price due to competition and, the more enterprises and organizations, as well as trade firms in the country, the more the state budget will grow. The leaders of state bodies will be interested in their work and, seeing the growth of private trade, will pull themselves together and then genuinely approach the great words of Comrade Lenin: "Learn to trade." On the other hand, it is necessary to decrease taxes on land, thus giving an opportunity to the peasantry to shake itself free of its own needs and plant a greater area, to have more wealth and to put more grain on the market. In my opinion, the monopoly on certain goods should remain in our hands: such as alcohol, petroleum, and others...

With comradely greetings, E.D. Agadzhyanov Moscow, Armyanskiy Per., Building 2, Apartment 16 June 1926

Respected Comrade Stalin!

I would like to an answer from you as to whether it is right or wrong if we lowly workers, paying attention to the truly serious conditions of our state budget, rely on private trade capital and transfer it from the pockets of merchants into the state bank by way of forced taxation. As a worker who pays these taxes (equalization and income), I would like to know what line to take finally. If we approach the definition of turnover precisely, not one of our merchants will withstand the taxes. Understandably, trade will shut down. It is also disadvantageous to permit a mass shut-down of trade enterprises. Work with the cooperative is not yet so well established, that it alone can meet the needs of consumers. There is this, firstly, and, secondly, the source for extraction of funds will be cut off. On the other hand, it is somehow bad, as though you feel guilty when you realize that you did not exact quite enough from someone...

With comradely greetings, Leninist Komsomol member.  
Address: St. Gryazi (Voronezhskiy) Yu.-V. zh.d.,  
Inspectorate for Direct Taxes, Kurashkin. November  
1926

Comrade Stalin!

In 1924, in the city of Krasnodar, Kubanskiy Okrug, the "Trud" Krasnodar Industrial-Cooperative Creamery Fellowship was organized, which consisted of demobilized sailors, Red Army soldiers and the worker labor element. Having leased a state creamery plant of a primitive type, processing 280-300 poods of oil seeds per day, in the city of Krasnodar, we began to work and thus managed to feed ourselves, not crowding the labor exchange, already full as it is, with our people. At first, it was hard for us to work due to the lack of sufficient material resources, but, having callused hands and a desire to work, we finished the first year with a profit of 8,000 rubles, although this figure was also obtained because during the operating year we received the most minimal salaries for our work, so that the cooperative could thus obtain more working capital. We must honestly say, we had the goal of joint work not for personal profit: we strived to achieve the necessary funds for existence, thus removing concern for ourselves from the state's responsibilities...

Now, in our second year of existence, our economic base in the form of the leased plant no longer meets our needs. Going into debt, we acquired our own creamery, which is already nothing other than socialist property, belonging to all of us together and no one in isolation...

Before the start of the season, i.e., this August, it was given the corresponding repairs and technical improvements, counting on starting work in autumn. Authority among the people was won immediately through the great output of butter during a stoppage of oil seeds... The supply was so big, that one had to wait in line 3-4 days. Our creamery is famous not only in Novo-Pokrovskiy, but far beyond the borders of Kubanskiy Okrug, Stavropolskaya Guberniya, and elsewhere. We must add to this that our fellowship, from the first day of its existence, has been a member of the Kubanskiy Okrug Union of Industrial Cooperatives, "Kubpromkreditsoyuz," and for its exemplary cooperative work, for understanding the principles of cooperative building was awarded the Red Banner by the "Kubpromkreditsoyuz" on the 9th anniversary of October as the best cooperative unit...

Yet, despite all this, in October of this year the plants both at Krasnodar and at the Novo-Pokrovskiy station were shut down by the labor protection agency, motivated by a horror of ludicrous shortcomings, such as, for example: lack of light in the butter department, where the tanks stand, and many other curious reasons, not even giving us time for re-equipment. Indeed, they do not want to talk much in general, but put a seal on the door of both plants, and that is enough, even though 25 people may die of hunger. The corn-growers are asking

us to open, since there was only one good creamery in the rayon, but no one pays attention to this. Comrade Stalin, here in the Kuban there is a district trade manager called Osipov; the way things are, if Comrade Osipov does not like our artel for some reason, he ups and closes it, masked by the labor protection agencies... We, the 25 people of the "Trud" fellowship, turn to You for help. We are ashamed to appeal to you, but necessity forces us to do this.

With cooperative greetings, the members of the "Trud" fellowship. (signatures) 15 December 1926 Krasnodar. Novo-Kuznechnaya, 92.

To the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (the Bolsheviks)

Since the worker is not the master in production, is not a master of his own labor, but only a hired participant in production, since the state industry enterprise, "the truly socialist enterprise" in the eyes of the workers is nothing other than a "barracks" enterprise, therefore the workers' attitude toward such an enterprise, along with their attitude toward production, is only a barracks attitude.

The procedure, now existing in building and managing the national economy, was introduced during the revolution and during the country's economic ruin. Now it has already been built; now we must cross over this in order to raise ourselves to the stage of building socialism. All enterprises of state industry (with the exception of military plants) are "truly socialist," and now it is time to make them really socialist, i.e., transfer them from the state to society. The property of enterprises should be part of the assets of a unified social cooperative-industrial bank and, at the same time, these enterprises, through the AUCCTU, should be entrusted via a special state act for production use to the collective of workers and employees, working directly at each enterprise, so that the workers and employees, employed at an enterprise become not the hired work force of a "barracks" enterprise, but the direct masters of production, participants in collective labor to fulfill state and social assignments. The collective of workers and employees, with the participation of the higher Union agency, will conclude a operational collective contract with the social cooperative-industrial bank, will receive materials and resources for production from the bank, and will hand its planned output over to the bank. Instead of the current economic, bureaucratic Tower of Babel, the enterprise will have to deal with just one bank. Within industry, the collective of producers will become the complete owner, a self-sufficient entity, and in its own reasonable production activity is accountable only to itself and to its higher Union agency...

For proper action and the expedient use of the equipment of enterprises, entrusted by the state to collectives of producers, the state will establish its own control in the form of industrial inspectors in a "worker-peasant

inspectorate" and will establish the institution of industrial courts—both over management of the bank, as well as over management of the plant collective. Therefore, the staff of responsible employees of the Worker-Peasant Inspectorate will have to organize the state. The party, for its part, should pay especially serious attention to the qualitative selection of the staff of responsible employees of the Worker-Peasant Inspectorate...

The state still has an important task—this is the upbringing of young, growing generations. Attention must be paid most of all to this matter. Along with the construction of new plants, it is necessary to retrain millions-strong cadres of highly skilled future workers with technical knowledge for socialist industry... Therefore, one of the primary tasks of the socialist state is to free itself from everything that can, without fear or doubt, be transferred to society, and the state should undertake as best possible the mass education of growing new generations and, in this matter, should plan to devote as much attention as possible to the peasantry...

With communist greetings, S. Klimenko (senior underground member, membership card No 179181). 30 August 1926, Perm

Most respected Comrade Stalin!

In this letter, I want to direct Your attention to certain questions, to a common thread running through the life of our country—these are protectionism, careerism and bureaucracy...

The introduction of the NEP, the tolerance of private capital, the employment of old specialists and their extensive rights, and the development of unrestricted commodity circulation between industry and consumers are providing conditions for the development of the above-indicated qualities...

In my opinion, the following may be a solution or practical suggestions: 1) Limit the rights of specialists; 2) Reduce earnings to a responsible, subsistence minimum; 3) Abolish 100-percent wage increases, overtime wages, and so forth, converting to a responsible individual rate; 4) Expand the rights of trade union organizations and organizations in general, and create examination boards for workers, so that the workers sent could be found suitable, and specialists could not send them back; 5) Strengthen the work of the RKI and 6) Mainly, carry out a universal purging of the party, primarily at the expense of responsible workers, since there is much that is unnecessary and harmful in the party; 7) Strengthen advancement owing to the lower classes and, conversely, strengthen the lower classes at the expense of the upper... 8) Mobilize the party, as in 1920, and send the best workers to the villages, for the countryside is in need.

Address: Ukraine, Donbass, Stalinskiy Okrug, Beshevskiy Rayon, Village of Vasilyevka, Z.K. Yefimov, KP(b)U member since 1920. July 1926

Comrade Stalin!

If we are communists, there should be no differences between us and we should be communists both in name, as well as in action. However, things are turning out differently. A communist, holding an official post or some other chair, receives 200 rubles, but another communist, roaming about without work, has no means of existence. What is the matter? Does this communist really have no stomach, like the other; does he really not wish to drive in an automobile, like the other, and this communist, who receives 250 rubles, will not give this unemployed communist even a pound of bread? What kind of fraternity is there among communists?..

Postal division Selidovka, Stalinskiy Okrug, Village of Galitsinovka. A.F. Pakhomenko 20 February 1927

To the Secretary of the All-Union Communist Party Central Committee (Bolsheviks)

There are a great many party members, who live together with their non-proletarian wives: he gets an excellent salary, and she lives like a baroness... This matter should be strictly discussed and such comrades should be assigned a definite salary, no more than 2 people need to exist. Otherwise these people will cause economic and political harm...

My address: Donbass, Yenakiyev, Plant imeni Comrade Rykov, membership card No 260801. Stefan Golikov April 1926

A Request:

To the Central All-Russian Committee: We, Red Army soldiers, are appealing to our higher proletarian power, and we precisely ask that you help us, poor people, acquire a tractor for our group (10 people). We, as poor people without property and no help whatsoever from anywhere, are asking the People's Commissariat to pay attention to us and not refuse our request for acquisition of a tractor, since we want to work and be of use to our state, and we do not hope that you will always help us several times, only that you will help us just this once. We do not hope for manna to rain down upon us...

We request an answer and explanation in the name of Adam Grigoryevich Zherokin. In the name of Red Army soldiers from Zeleniy Village, Lopatinskiy Rayon, Melitopolskiy Okrug, Yekaterinoslavskaya guberniya. 1 December 1926

'If Lenin Were Alive...'

Comrade Stalin!

The USSR, we say, is kept in the awareness of the broad masses, but the most of the mass is too mixed, vague, unconscious and indifferent. Our enemies use these qualities at almost every step. Our enemies in the guise of various specialists are sneaking into Soviet institutions and making their own shady deals. Agronomists in the sovkhozes, bookkeepers, accountants (former priests—the black spiders and various gangs from the tsarist government) in the cooperatives and economic

bodies are bringing the Soviet economy to ruin and annually cause shortages instead of socialist accumulations. Some enemies of ours have managed to attach themselves to our monolithic party VKP(b) and institutions and are undermining the authority of Soviet power. So that there be no place for crimes, a decisive struggle is necessary, since the court sentences of 3-5 years and conditional, early release only indulge and somewhat encourage deliberate criminals. It is necessary to put an end to deliberate criminals once and for all. In cases of deliberate embezzlement, we must organize an extraordinary troika made up to representatives of the prosecutor's office, the GPU, and the RKI and we should always shoot embezzlers and confiscate their property...

We must make a hard-working and cultured person out of the uncultured Russian loafer, as in Germany. The slogan of the day should be: "Soviets and appeals—for conscientious citizens, and punishment and compulsion—for loafers and criminals."

I. Orlov, member of the VKP(b) September 1926

The dictatorship of the proletariat, as a transitional stage in socialist teachings, should become a tradition in time; consequently, in its existence from year to year, so to speak, it is polished and takes ever milder and milder forms, in connection with which the corresponding changes should occur in social life of the state. In our Union, although these changes have occurred in part, a great deal remains the same. Much is being done in this respect with long delays and many mistakes. At present, it seems to me, changes are needed, which the state should implement in the near future: abolition of the monopoly of the press and abolition of the party monopoly, i.e., eliminating the illegality of all political parties, democracy and other things of this nature. Why should this not be put into practice? Some are saying that it is still too early to grant the right of legal existence and an open press for all democratic parties, and that it will harm the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the contrary, it is time. There is nothing dangerous about this; after all, the monarchistic and bourgeois parties will not be included on the list of legal parties, and democratic ones, if they take a course toward overthrowing the state, can be pressured, since it is possible to turn to the GPU for assistance. Previously, soviet power was unable to do this, but now this measure would be very useful, and would not harm our interests,...

Please, Comrade Stalin, reply: What is the obstacle?

N. Zharikov, Village of Neznamovo, Korablinskaya Volost, Ryazhskiy Uyezd, Ryazanskaya Guberniya. March 1926

A Question for Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin,

In the woods, near the city of Moscow, there was an illegal factional meeting, where Comrade Lashevich, deputy chairman of the republic's Revolutionary Military Council, gave a report and asked those gathered to

organize themselves for a struggle against the party and the Central Committee elected by it<sup>2</sup>...

It seems to me, it would not be bad to bring a suit against Comrade Lashevich according to Article 58 of the Criminal Code. Therefore, I ask you to tell me if his crime falls under Article 58 of the Criminal Code?

Citizen of N.-Tyrishkinskiy Village, Sychevskiy Rayon, Buyskiy Okrug, Sibirskiy Kray, Petr Ivanovich Yefremov. 29 July 1926

Concerning the opposition: It is clear that they spat in the party's eyes by their latest act. For that, we must give them a sound dressing down...

It is also clear that we must criticize the opposition's position, but not the way Molotov did so in his speech<sup>3</sup>. I can understand it when they criticize in terms of essence. However, it really is not fitting to rummage through someone else's dirty laundry. Saying that this is because they are the party intelligentsia means directly persecuting them. This is inappropriate. Really, is it possible to say that they are intelligentsia?

After all, they have a profession: they are revolutionaries.

From their youth, they went into the thick of the working class.

You know, Comrade Stalin, when I and my nonparty comrades read the speech by Molotov, everyone became indignant. It was shameful...

A person can be mistaken.

When he is mistaken—explain things to him; when he resists and interferes with work—call him to order, but do not persecute him. In the most difficult years, Trotsky, Zinovyev and others were good, but now it turns out they were no good, because they are the intelligentsia. Great days still await us. We will have to struggle yet again; there will be times, when the talents of Trotsky or others will be needed—yet we are smearing them with dirt. Comrade Stalin, you ought to realize this...

I repeat: I am saying and writing this, because the party is dear to me, like my own heart. I am pained by all the squabbling that is taking place, and I am not the only one. My hope is to live, if only for a month, under complete socialism in our country. I think that I can live long enough, if our party could just be united and strong, like steel...

Be of good health and work many long years for the benefit of the party.

B. Volnov, Komsomol member, Kiev, 8 October 1926

Comrade Stalin!

Lenin himself often warned us and said that mistakes are always possible, and that he who says that building a



socialist state without mistakes is possible is an outright fool. Therefore, I do not understand why individual quotations and excerpts of Vladimir Ilich's are treated as though they are irrefutable proofs, as though they are right, were right and will be right. After all, life goes on and changes. It seems to me, if Lenin were alive he would not have approved of such an attitude toward his views, this attitude of positive recognition of their truthfulness...

After all, even Ilich could be mistaken!

Working to build the first socialist state in practice, we may run into circumstances and conditions that Vladimir Ilich was unable to take into consideration.

Lenin was a genius, but not a prophet and not omniscient.

I beg you, Comrade Stalin, to send me an reply on the question touched on here.

My address: UkSSR, Lubvy Poltavskaya Guberniya, LKSM Okrug Committee, Komsomol member A. Kanevskiy. 5 January 1926

Dear Comrade Stalin!

The opposition says it is against the creation of a party leader, but I want to tell you that such a leader should exist. It is necessary to have one to compare to, since every party member or candidate, the more so a worker or peasant, will not remember all the names. One name is needed, one that will ring out loudly and convincingly, like the name "Lenin."

Meanwhile, "Stalin" is such a name. We should spread this name and say that Comrade Stalin said such and such or this and that. Comrade Stalin should not always say what the party says on the whole, i.e., Comrade Stalin should both lead and reflect the will of the party.

We in local areas will compare ranks to Comrade Stalin.

I do not wish entirely to reject our collective work, conversely, it is necessary to develop it, from collective minds, creatively, to take everything valuable and unite through the word "Stalin."

After all, when we say that Lenin said such and such or this and that, what we mean is that Lenin embodied the party, its will and creativity, and therefore, that which Comrade Lenin said was sacred and must be fulfilled.

We need discipline, iron discipline.

The opposition must be held accountable. The Central Committee and VKP(b) TsKK should resolve this question with complete firmness and decisiveness.

As there is no possibility of reconciliation whatsoever, let us put the matter directly: cauterize the infection with hot iron...

With communist greetings, T. Gubarev, VKP(b) member since 1918, card No 97887.

13 October 1926 Tetkino, Kursk, Selection Station.

#### Footnotes

1. The 14th VKP(b) Congress resolution "On the Central Committee Report" stated: "The congress on the whole and in full approves the resolutions of the 14th Party Conference concerning the peasant question (including the expansion of lease rights and rights to hire a work force, aid for handicraft industry, conversion from the system of administrative pressure to economic competition and economic struggle, reviving the soviets, etc.), aimed at the further improvement of the party's policy of strengthening the links between the working class and the peasantry. The congress ascertains that this shift in party policy alone, proceeding from changing attitudes among the classes, has radically improved the situation in the countryside, has elevated the authority of the proletariat and its party among the peasantry and has created a solid base for broad organizational work to involve the peasantry in socialist building."

2. A meeting of opposition supporters was held in early June 1926 in the woods near Moscow.

3. This refers to V.M. Molotov's speech at the opening of the fourth convocation of courses for uyezd party workers under the VKP(b) Central Committee on 2 October 1926, in which he argued that the leaders of the opposition, being the party intelligentsia, "did not soil their hands... with the dirty everyday work of building our party, in the difficult years of its illegal existence...," at a time when representatives of the majority in the Central Committee were practical workers for revolutionary struggle.

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#### A Dialogue That Did Not Take Place

905B0020J Moscow KOMMUNIST in Russian No 5, Mar 90 (signed to press 16 Mar 90) pp 89-101

[Article by M.Ya. Gefter, follow-up to an open letter from Georgian writer K. Gamsakhurdia to Ulyanov-Lenin]

[Text] "I, it seems, am strongly to blame before the working people of Russia for the fact that I did not interfere sufficiently energetically or sharply in the notorious problem of autonomization..." V.I. Lenin

The document being published appeared in the press in the Georgian language in the newspaper SOTSIALIST-FEDERALIST (Tiflis) on 8 May 1921. As far as we know, it is being reproduced in a Russian translation for the first time. We decided to acquaint our readers with a letter from the greatest Georgian writer of the 20th century, K. Gamsakhurdia (1893-1975), not only because of the unquestionable historical interest that it

holds. That which troubled the writer at the time also troubles many people in many places today, both in our Homeland and beyond it.

We also deem it appropriate to publish a response to and reflection on this letter, by historian M.Ya. Gefter, who has been studying Lenin's political and intellectual biography for a long time. The editors realize that the article has debatable points, but we assume that a diversity of views concerning the past will not interfere in understanding it, but, conversely, may activate the study of these times and events in our history, which for many years were either generally kept silent, or were illuminated in a canonical light. The text of the response article, which the author wrote in 1978, has been somewhat abbreviated and edited by him.

K. Gamsakhurdia's letter is part of history. This is its strength, as well as its weakness. The full exposure and confirmation of historical truth is possible only when familiar with all documents, without exception, from the corresponding epoch, as a result of their comparison and careful analysis, of consideration of the atmosphere itself, the spirit of the times and all the attendant circumstances in their historical context. To this day, we do not enjoy said opportunity. In practice, all documents shedding the light of truth on the events of that difficult period of history, of which it is a question here, remain out of reach for research. Therefore, only one episode out of the great number of them, left for us by history, is offered for the readers' attention.

Nearly 7 decades have passed since the time, of which it is a question in the document below. They are saturated to the utmost with the epochal importance of the events, upheavals and changes both in the life of Georgia, our country, and the whole world, as well as in the life of G. Gamsakhurdia himself. He had yet to head the Tbilisi literary group "Akademiya" in the year of his addressee's demise. Ahead were years of labor on the works that brought Gamsakhurdia his name and fame. The honors, high awards, an order, membership in the Georgian Academy of Sciences and many years of life in his Homeland, for which it lay in store to suffer so much and achieve so much, still awaited him. Nor did the Stalinist repressions pass by the writer.

Even now there is much that we do not know in our overall Soviet history. However, one thing is obvious: reality was far from as simple, as it is drawn in Gamsakhurdia's letter. A great deal remains blank. Most likely, there will be many discussions to come about the results of N. Zhordaniya's 3-year management of the government, about the possibility of coexistence of Soviet Russia and Menshevik Russia, about the nature of the Red Army's liberating mission in February 1921, about the degree of maturity of objective and subjective conditions for victory of a socialist revolution in Georgia. It has long been time and has become urgently necessary for a scientific discussion on all these and many other questions, and for the publication of all documents related to them.

However, there are also some fairly well-known facts which must not be ignored, if we truly aspire to confirm historical truth, and do not want to replace it with some kind of renovated half-truth. For instance, it is impossible to overlook the real fact that in May 1918 the fate of "independent" Georgia had been entrusted to Kaiser Germany by a special decision of the Georgian National Council, and after Germany's defeat in World War I it fell into the hands of the Entente. The facts show that until autumn 1919 (and until July 1920 in Batumi) English occupiers ruled in Georgia. The powerful influence of foreign powers, who pursued their own goals in the Transcaucasus, was felt even after withdrawal of British troops. An attempt to draw in rosy hues the socioeconomic and political course of the Menshevik government of Georgia, the results of its rule for the broad masses of working people, as well as denying the presence of discontent with this course among a definite part of the Georgian population, would be a self-deception intolerable for any serious discussion.

There is also another group of facts that should also be taken into account in an objective study of historical truth. One of these is the fact that the 2nd All-Russian Congress of Soviets, having declared the transfer of all power into the hands of the revolutionary people, in the appeal "For the Workers, Soldiers and Peasants!" written by Lenin, declared that Soviet power "will guarantee all nations, living in Russia, the genuine right to self-determination" (Lenin, "*Poln. Sobr. Soch.*" [Complete Collected Works], vol 35, p 11).

It is also a fact that only 1 week after the victory of October, on 2 November 1917, the Sovnarkom passed the "Declaration of Rights of Peoples of Russia," signed by Lenin, the central point of which was "the right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, up to separation and formation of an independent state" ("*Dekrety Sovetskoy Vlasti*" [Decrees of Soviet Power]. Moscow, 1957, vol I, p 40).

It is also a fact, of course, that precisely the "Georgian incident" in 1922 encouraged Lenin in the very days of creation of the USSR to dictate one of his most furious speeches against great power chauvinism, permeated with doubt in our readiness to create such a Union, his notes "On the Problem of Nationalities or 'Autonomization'." There, in particular, he stated: "The need for cohesiveness against the imperialists of the West, who defend the capitalist world, is one thing. There can be no doubts here, and I must say that I unquestionably approve these measures. It is another matter, when we ourselves fall, albeit even in petty things, into imperialist relations toward oppressed nationalities, thus completely undermining all our principle-minded sincerity, all our principle-minded defense of the struggle against imperialism" (Lenin, "*Poln. Sobr. Soch.*" [Complete Collected Works], vol 45, p 362).

Lenin's position at that time was based on the invariable, consistent defense of the principle of self-determination

of nations. He repeatedly entered into conflicts with his close associates on this burning issue.

Let us repeat: we really do not know much about that which occurred in the distant year of 1921, what was behind the events that occurred then. We have no ready-made answers to all the questions that K. Gamsakhurdia raises in his letter. That is why M. Gefter was forced to resort to the method, somewhat unusual in scientific journalism, of author's interpretation on the basis of available facts and documents. This method seemed fruitful to us and, at the very least, encourages thought.

#### An Open Letter to Ulyanov-Lenin

**"Geniuses are like meteors which, while burning, illuminate their time"—Napoleon Bonaparte at St. Helena.**

Above all, I would like this letter to reach You. A day before I wrote it, I met with the worker V.M. We remembered a time when we, emigrants from Russia and Georgia, had gathered in Geneva in a small cafe on Rue Carouge, where I saw You more than once. V.M. found your old address in his notebook. This detail reminded me that, although current political events have made you famous throughout the world, you are nonetheless an old revolutionary. I wanted to send this letter to the Geneva address. After all, Switzerland has an excellent postal service, and I thought: they will find the addressee.

I want to talk to You, and this, on my part, is not that desire which causes unknown people to turn to famous ones. Today is the 7th of May, the day of Georgian poetry and anniversary of the last Russian-Georgian Treaty. The Georgia writer in me speaks, and it speaks the pain of the Georgian people.

Even ideologically, it will not be hard for us to find a common language. Whereas your path to the principle of equal rights for people went through Hegel, Proudhon and Marx, mine went from St. Augustine through the mystic wedding of St. Francis to Mr. Poverty, which belongs to the same valuable documents of common human morality, of which the "*Communist Manifesto*" serves you. Politically, the distance between us is not too great, if it is true that You refute certain communist Russifiers who, in the name of communism, are carrying out the centralized policy of Great Russia.

It must be admitted that Russian-Georgian relations have never been as strained as today, regardless of the fact that your Red Army came to Georgia calling itself a liberator. However, 100 years ago Georgia saw the troops of Aleksander I in the role of liberator; at that time, the Russians helped the Georgians with their ages-old struggle. At that time, Russia was called on to perform a great cultural and historical mission in the East. The semi-European monarchy struggled against a tyrannical Persia and Turkey. Russia developed the offensive against the Moslem countries, which Byzantium bequeathed in the name of Western civilization to the Austrian Hapsburgs and Russian Romanovs. The

actions of Georgia and Russia came into contact on this point. It is now clear that the policy of Heraclius II was the only one possible at the time. However, the idea of Russia liberating small Christian nationalities turned the head of 18th-century Russophiles.

The Treaty of 1783 intended that Georgia be in the orbit of Great Russia, but matters were not limited to the indicated orbit. In the course of 100 years, the policy of Great Russia, along with abolition of Georgia's independence, brought so much evil, that even the venerable Georgian cosmopolitan, who during his 30 years of activity had spurned the national element, lost his patience in his old age and was forced to announce to the world that a European orientation is only possibility for Georgia. This old man is Noy Zhordaniya<sup>1</sup>, who as a political figure is the complete opposite of the other great Georgian politician, Heraclius II.

Through the mouth of the latter, feudal Georgia acknowledged the need for a Russian orientation. One hundred years later, Your former party colleague and aging revolutionary has rejected the orientation toward Russia in the name of democracy. Yet, Noy Zhordaniya is a historical leader of the same Russian tempering. After all, both menshevism and bolshevism are offshoots of Russian consciousness. Russian ideology is far and away the intellectual habitat of Zhordaniya. However, the evil spread by Russia in the course of 100 years in Georgia, the annihilation of the Georgian state apparatus, and the systematic persecution of the Georgian language forced Georgia to exclude itself from the sphere of Russian policy.

Old Russia did not want equal cooperation with small peoples. The basis of this cannibalistic policy is to eclipse all non-Russian nuances with the flower of great Russian culture. The ethnic and cultural flowers of Russia's small nationalities ought to have faded in face of the shining of the coming universal Slavic state of counts Bobrinskiy and Purishkevich. This policy, not timid, erected cathedrals in a Russian style and Russian schools, and deluged the outskirts with Russifiers-corrupters by the thousands, all in order that there be no place on the geographic map for non-Slavic features. This "third Roman" empire was the strongest of all the empires that the world remembers in general. However, it shattered like a clay idol. Poland, Finland, Georgia and all the non-Slavic units left the orbit of Russian policy: no one desired to cooperate with ungrateful Russia.

Whereas 100 years ago Russia liberated us from the violence of Turkey and Persia, today the troops of this same Russia, having changed their colors, "liberated" the Georgian people from counterrevolutionaries. Russian counterrevolutionaries and Dashnaks located in Tiflis used this slogan: they called the entire Georgian people counterrevolutionary. You realize that it is absurd to declare a people counterrevolutionary. This is a contradiction in terms.

The finest of Georgian youth has spilled its blood for the sake of overthrowing the Russian monarchy. These same young men carried the revolutionary flame to Persia. Finally, who can deny the results and significance of the struggle which Georgia waged against Your former enemies, against the black generals of Russia?!

After violating the Treaty of 1783, old Russia all the same left, for several decades yet, certain attributes of the Georgian state system untouched. Now not 2 months have passed, and the Red Army is destroying these basic attributes of our state system, such as the border and the railroad<sup>2</sup>, and everyone knows that today Georgian in practice is not the state language in Georgia. Today, our Caucasus "friends," hiding behind a communist mask, are trying to turn Tiflis into the residence of the Transcaucasus, and Tiflis University—into a Transcaucasian University.

One hundred years ago, the great-power Russia strove to use the Georgia people as allies to achieve the most difficult goals of their Eastern policy. However, it was capable of displaying sufficient political tact, so as not to turn its natural ally into an enemy. Now Russia is carrying out world policy on a broader scale. For its purposes, they want to set fairly complex responsibilities on Georgia: Georgia and Tiflis are called upon to become the base for operations which are required in order to communize the East. Everyone knows that in Georgia today there are more communists, than the registration list of the Georgian Communist Party contains. However, as Georgian patriots they will not cooperate with Red Russia so long as the sovereignty of Georgia remains only a declaration.

Last year in TAGEBLAT, a German writer published a small historical analogy: Lenin and Peter the Great. I object to this comparison. I think that, once You complete Your mission, the logic of history will compare You to Napoleon Bonaparte.

You say communism should have no borders.

Napoleon said: the empire will have borders where the sun rises and sets.

You both are absolute geniuses of great revolutions.

The world historical task of Napoleon lay in two main points: the overthrow of England's world domination and the creation of one great world-wide state—the Confederation of Europe. In this latter, Napoleon did not permit ethnic differences and nuances. General Bonaparte wanted to radicalize Europe. You want to radicalize Asia, as well as Europe. Unquestionably, you are both radicals.

**These goals make you similar to the Corsican Bonaparte, but the parallel nature of goals does not at all mean that you will both fall victim to one and the same fatal mistake.**

Really, is it not obvious to everyone today that ethnic nuances and colors should no longer be erased?

It is understandable that Clemenceau, Wilson and Lloyd George were unable to realize this. Therefore, the Peace of Versailles has so confused ethnic problems, that the European peoples will still spill their blood for decades, as long as true peace is not established in the world. The fate of Ireland, Scotland, Alsace, India, Arabia and the peoples of Asia remain unresolved. Therefore, in 20th century Ireland the unusual political martyrdom of MacSwiney was necessary<sup>3</sup>.

Since Russian communism opposed the political ideology of the Entente, leftist Russia should have realized that in the 20th century it would be impermissible to eradicate ethnic differences. Napoleon, the most tragic figure in world history, was a victim of this.

I am re-reading his diary, written on the island of St. Helena. Probably, there he realized his error.

Where was the central point of his mistakes?

The development of Western Europe, starting with the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire by the German nation, is characterized by the struggle for an ethnic state. The world empire of the Hapsburgs was a victim of the idea of the ethnic state. Napoleon was unable to see this. He was so attracted by the struggle against the sons of Albion that he set the goal of concentrating all Europe around the French Trefoil Banner and Paris.

Whereas there are genius people-meteors, who illuminate their age, let everyone realize the incitement of the demon of the age. Let everyone read the lines, written by Napoleon during his martyrdom on St. Helena: "Future generations will condemn us."

In Georgia, two generations have fallen victim to the idea of reviving the ethnic personality, oppressed by the heavy hand of old Russia, victim to the struggle for an ethnic state. No one can deny that today in Tiflis they want to repeat old mistakes: resorting to Your terminology, they want to use the "Russian pattern." If the Russia of the left is interested in Georgia staying within the orbit of Russia's policy, it will not achieve its goal in this manner.

As a Georgian patriot, that which is happening in Tiflis today does not frighten me at all.

I have never considered the impressionistically fabricated notes, which came to Tiflis from Paris and London during the democratic government of a Georgia, recognized "de facto and de jure," to be a guarantee of Georgia's independence. I also did not consider the pathetic speeches, that the diplomats of the Entente treated us to at banquets, such a guarantee.

The only guarantee for our independence was, is and will dwell in the minds of the Georgian people themselves, since the basis of any liberation lies in the realization of freedom itself. The Georgian people have this consciousness. Tell and write this to those politicians, who are being of poor service to communist Russia in Tiflis.

It is possible to take away everything from a personality or a nation, but it is impossible to take away the awareness of freedom. I assure you: maybe Georgia has not yet raised itself to such political and cultural development, as Ireland, but there will be no shortage of Casements and MacSwineys in Georgia, so long as its political independence is not ensured once and for all.

#### Footnotes

1. Noy Zhordaniya (1869-1953) was one of the founders of the Georgian social democrats and a Menshevik. In 1918-1921, he was head of the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. After 1921, he emigrated.

2. The question of unifying the Transcaucasian railroads into a united network was raised before the end of military operations by the XI Red Army to possess Georgia. It was initiated by Ordzhonikidze, who at the time headed the Caucasus Bureau of the RKP(b) Central Committee. In solving the problem, disagreements came to light. The revolutionary committees and central committees of the communist parties of Armenia and Georgia (and later also of Azerbaijan) were in favor of unification. The Georgian communist Sh. Eliava and A. Svanidze held an opposite position, having emphasized the political aspect of the problem, its connection to the problem of national independence. However, the supporters of unification prevailed. On 16 April 1921, an agreement was signed by representatives of the RSFSR and the transcaucasian republics to eliminate republic railroad networks and create the unified transcaucasian network under joint leadership. This unified network, in turn, became a component part of the overall network of the RSFSR, on to the model of which the structure and management of roads were established.

3. Mac the Swine, or MacSwiney, Tirens (1879-1920), was one of the leaders of the Irish national movement. Being arrested, he declared a hunger strike which lasted 74 days and ended with his death.

4. Roger David Casment, or Casement (1864-1916), was a famous leader of the freedom movement in Ireland. He was executed by the English.

#### So, a Dialogue That Did Not Take Place

**"Communism empirically is possible only as the action of the ruling peoples, done 'at once,' simultaneously..."—K. Marx and F. Engels**

**"I want the wind of culture of all countries to blow through my home as freely as possible. However, I do not want it to knock me off my feet. I do not want to live in the homes of people as an uninvited guest, as a beggar or slave..."—Gandhi**

Man addresses mankind for all to hear. Not with supplication, although he is feverish with the misfortune that has approached his land and threatens his people with nearly the worst, the loss of themselves, although as the voice of this people he is no more than one of the "little

sikhs" in the face of another man, in whose power, a special power, exceeding both law and bayonet, is already reaching millions, and tomorrow will reach billions of people (the writer believes: it will be so!). Nevertheless, it is not a supplication, not a genuflection, but a call for dialogue, for a meeting of thought and word. That is why side-by-side, together, there is a recollection of an emigrant's fleeting acquaintance, an address scribbled in a notebook, and all of world history, the most general thing in it—mistakes. The mistakes of great people and whole eras. Only they, these mistake-lessons, the mistake-memories know not the limitations of time or possession. Anyone can inherit them, if he knows how.

Which is it: belated naivete or premature wisdom? The beginning Georgia writer turns to the "absolute genius" of the revolution, in the assumption that he will not only be heard, but understood. Why would this not be true? Does not Ulyanov-Lenin have the goal of making all peoples independent, having destroyed all empires, beginning with the Russian?! Really, did not the time come to clothe the post-October decrees and improvisations, promising universal emancipation, with the solid forms of law and human habit?! Moreover, history had already experienced, and having experienced, corrected his (Lenin's) original unconditional plan. Having pushed aside the aggression of the Entente from the illness of Soviet Russia, at the same time it also "pushed away" the gains of the European councils, the statification of the leftist workers', and hope for the rapid and direct convergence of the centers of revolution into a united socialist contingent. In the name of this hope, a war was waged with Poland only yesterday, and the military failure there was the first break-down within, a break-down in the plan and a break-down in a man. Even if were only in the one man, to whom Konstantine Gamsakhurdia addresses himself, could this remain without consequences that affect everyone: both those who entered the revolution like their own home, as well as those who were dragged into it, forbidden to go back?!

Herbert Wells, having visited both capitals of Russia not long before the start of his Georgian odyssey, noted changes in people who had only recently set a precise date for the definitive triumph of communism (summer 1920!)<sup>1</sup>. "I clearly saw that many Bolsheviks... are beginning with terror to realize: that which in reality occurred, is in fact not at all the social revolution promised by Marx, and it is a question not so much of the fact that they have seized state power, as that they are on board a sinking ship." Wells finds this thought healthy and reassuring. However, here is a question: to where will those at the wheel direct this ship? Will they (or anyone in general) succeed in holding back elements that sweep aside any preset limit? The fate of the old British dominion did not alarm the "evolutionary collectivist" Herbert Wells. Renovated Russia itself, which the West's blockade and rejection might "drive" to Asiatic remoteness, frightens him. "Once again, like a thousand years ago...., the horseman will rob the peasant and the peasant

will lie in wait for the horseman. Cities will become heaps of ruins in an unpopulated desert, the railways will become rusted scrap, and steamships will disappear from rivers that have died away..."<sup>2</sup>.

Plainly, these phantoms visited the then 30-year old Konstantine Gamsakhurdia in the flesh. He had his own horsemen of the Apocalypse: along with the tsarist executioner who ruined his father, a member of a long-established family of noblemen who refused to betray his mutinous children, another brute who hunted for hated foreigners in 1914 on the streets of a German city. Who is fated to be the third "horseman" in this Apocalypse? An emigrant, student, and internee at Ismaning Castle (where marks left by Napoleon Bonaparte are preserved), draws close to comrades in misfortune—Sorbonne and Oxford professors. They have common spiritual needs, common idols: Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Bergson. Philosophical intoxication does not prevent growing used to the world of Tolstoy, Balzac and Thomas Mann. Thoughts and feelings raged in this retort, which were related to that European culture, which at the turn of the centuries and epochs doubted not only the all-mightiness of the West, but also its right to subjugate and drain the human universe. "One day, late at night, more than 100 Negroes arrived. They were clothed in rags and shivered from the cold. The French, English and Belgians refused to settle them near themselves. Only Professor Emery, Bagir, myself and the Poles agreed to shelter these unfortunates."

The brotherhood of the persecuted, from the inner rejection of ethnic and racial intolerance, is a step toward acknowledging a transformer more radical than the emperor of the French. After all, Lenin also was a European, having come to grips in his own way with Eurocentrism and, moreover, far from any violence, thus already differing from "his own," and not only from those who have "new hats on their brow, and the borders of old Russia in their hearts"<sup>3</sup>. Something distinguished him from those really close to him. Whether he had more faith in the likelihood of genuine equality of people, or more sobriety, a precise estimate: what to do at home and how, so that the vicious circle will collapse and the place of the silent people, for ages having served as a pedestal for despotism (two faces—the rebelling serf and the brute-oprichnik), will be filled by the same "lowest of the low," but now in a different, **world** quality: self-liberating from slavery, lifting themselves (by organization! power!) to the sovereignty of all? Or is it not his faith in itself that is strong and not even his sobriety in itself, but also his will, in order to overstep not only his own Russian obstacles, but also those which were raised by the entire new European civilization (at the origins of which there is not only a the self-interest and self-serving of the "chosen," but also that which is inseparable from **being the chosen** itself: a legacy, achieved after centuries of the cultural development of European man)?.. Thus, he, Lenin, surpassed his like-minded colleagues in this rigid faith, or sober fixation or, above all, also in the strength to come to a halt himself and hold back the

others on the threshold of the most universal... and irrevocable: breaks, squabbles, after which he will "be" the sole entire man in a united but depopulated earth?

How does one recognize, passing through history, a comparison, a yardstick? One compares him to Robespierre and 1793, 1794. Another sees Cromwell with his fate in his lifetime and after death. Gamsakhurdia has Napoleon as a touchstone: not the young, rising hero of Toulon and Arcola Bridge, not even the author of the code that pacified a "mindless" France and renewed almost all of continental Europe, but the tragic prisoner, who on the verge of death managed to see the value of the mistakes committed by him, and already irrevocable. Can a genius of the 20th century really not be able to excel both in this and by this: by the timely courage to warn against fatal world-wide mistakes!!!

No, all is not yet lost. Not all is lost for Russia and, consequently, for Georgia. True, once again the persecutors of the Georgian language and Georgian state system have come running. Already in the pages of the Tiflis communist semi-official press, the author of "Open Letter" is called guilty of all mortal sins, the least of which is equating Lenin to Napoleon and the Red Army to the troops of Aleksandr I. BATUMSKIYE IZVESTIYA is already attaching labels: "counterrevolutionary," "White Guard," "black magician," "mystic revolutionary." However, Gamsakhurdia does not surrender. He continues to call for equal discussion. He argues: liberation is falseness and deception, if the result is annihilation of even only the attributes of independence (without the attributes there is no independence!). In standing up for it, he makes no exceptions in this regard either for the sovereigns of the West, or for the overthrow of the "socialist" Kerenskiy (quotes are the author's): for many, hypocritical defenders are no better than open aggressors. He also appeals to higher feelings and common sense. "Georgia is a country where the worship and prayer are in the Georgian language," he uses words from an ancient biography as the epigraph to his "Answer" to an anonymous author in PRAVDA GRUZII. At the same time, he admonishes, speaking ironically: "They tell us that for the sake of economizing on time the administration of the Georgian railroad should be subordinate to Moscow. The inspectors of old Russia were of precisely the same opinion... I think we would be unable to instruct the Europeans how to save time. If this economy were a decisive factor, the Swiss would have linked their own railroad directly to Berlin and Paris. After all, a person traveling from Berlin to Paris has to transfer twice at the borders of Switzerland."

Here they are, his criteria for worldly matters and, in addition, their concealed essence: the imperishability of a nation, of its reality and its humanity. Are they compatible? Gamsakhurdia does not discuss this question, at least not with an opponent who "does not want to or cannot sign his own article." He fastidiously parries the charge of nationalistic cannibalism. They, the Georgians, (he notes) do not even have an equivalent word for "massacre" or "pogrom." "If I were to relate massacres

and pogroms to the proper means, I would not write a letter to Lenin, but would take the path that Purishkevich and his colleagues took in old Russia. Precisely they conceived of this word and spilled the blood of thousands of Jews in various corners of Russia." He cautions: "Georgia is a country of political radicalism, where even priests and their sons stand in the first revolutionary detachment."

He warns, but does not threaten. On the contrary, he regrets that the Georgians are split into hostile camps. He would have wanted to reconcile the Georgian bolsheviks with the Georgian mensheviks and again find an ally in Lenin: really, is it not he in his "historical telegram, full of nobility" who demanded that the Caucasus communist leaders, prepared for an invasion of Georgia, seek out and find a compromise with Noy Zhordaniya ("when the Red Army chased Vrangell out of the Crimea, Lenin did not tell him: stop, let us come to an agreement")<sup>4</sup>. Konstantine Gamsakhurdia gives the "venerable Georgian cosmopolitan" his due, incidentally, not concealing that much separates him from Zhordaniya, not so much in their outlook, as in that which is most serious and urgent: preserving the democratic independence of Georgia under conditions that exclude self-isolation or even neutrality. Two main arguments were made in favor of acceptance. The first is simple and definite: the form of a state is not as important, as the fact that it exists, in its own dimensions, designated by history. ("Only the universe and the heavens have no borders.") However, precisely in this universal expanse the writer stubbornly seeks a place for his sovereign homeland. "Only dilettantes think that Bonaparte was an adventurer, thirsting only for blood." Why does the parallel with Lenin so offend dilettantes? After all, it is to the glory... Even not to the glory of the person, but of the idea that communism should have no borders. Yes, Gamsakhurdia agrees, communism should not, but a nation unquestionably should. However, how does one coordinate the one with the other, so as not to harm one's small homeland and not obstruct the great calling of the new Russia? Well, if geography and politics sentence Georgia to serve as a support point for the "communization" of Asia, there is hardly any point in avoiding fate. Georgia's sovereignty is unattainable outside Russia, with a self-determining role in mankind, but in precisely the same way it is pointless for the world leader of Russia to count on a Georgia deprived of firm footing. Independence and "multiplicity of colors" are historical twins: if they are not viable, if they do not survive, one cannot avoid a Russian Ireland.

Is Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, who appeals to the advisers (the ghost of King Heraclius), being diplomatic? Or, conversely, his broad scope, his national gigantism—from the ephemeral hopes and intellectual games of prisoners of Ismaning Castle? In one thing, it seems, he is right: both this diplomacy, as well as this gigantism precisely could have made him a desirable interlocutor for Ulyanov-Lenin. His "Open Letter" was printed in Georgian on the very same day that Lenin's address "To

Comrade Communists of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Dagestan and the Gori Republic" was publicized. There is much that is similar and related in his text. Once again and even more sharply, than before: do not be hasty, do not copy. In general, there are no patterns whatsoever. Gradualness, mildness! Concessions, concessions—for the petty bourgeois, the intelligentsia, and especially for the peasants! In other words, different tactics. Yet maybe it is also more than tactics, more and further?

Behind this framework, there are events with a striking closeness (counted in months, weeks), different by origin and drawing, forming on the whole the nerve center of history—Russian and universal. One half of the divider: fall of 1920. Even closer: 14 August. The Reds are "almost" in Warsaw, "almost" at Germany's gate. The Versailles arrangement is "almost" at an end. Then, retreat. This is less than a catastrophe but more than the ghost of isolation. Will it be for long? Will it be forever? There is no ready answer. The question itself is in the future. "Bayonets would be suitable if they will help a specific revolution, but when it comes to sensing the situation in one country or another we have a different weapon—Marxism—and this does not require sending Red Army men," and behind closed doors, an excited Radek argued against Lenin without, naturally, questioning the principle itself: "A world revolution is precisely a world revolution, and not a basket with compartments, where the content of each compartment is known"). Radek to Bukharin: It is not true that every communist is clearly familiar with the admissibility, the need for a probing and shaping bayonet. There are those who say that we would be better off if in addition to Soviet Russia we had a Soviet Poland. This would allow us to stand up against all enemies. "This is a coarse argument stemming from communist ranks. It is totally worthless." Stalin says, supporting Bukharin: "...our Central Committee would not be a revolutionary Central Committee had it adopted a different policy." Was the modest chairman of the Kazan Guberniya Executive Committee noticed in this clash between Central Committee members: "I am quite amazed that here we discussed probing Poland, France and England, but not a word was said about probing Russia itself."<sup>5</sup>

Russia was soon sounded out by the universal peasant resistance to requisitioning of farm produce, supported by the workers of Piter and Moscow. The second half of the dividers: 28 February-18 March 1921. This is the Kronshtadt explosion, which had absorbed the tiredness and bitterness, the collapse along with the dream, the most urgent together with that which was still to ripen ("NEP Russia"!), and years later not to snap, not having ripened, not having built enough. Meanwhile... there was the suddenness of the event, the unreadiness for it. We leaf through the pages of PRAVDA, withered by time. Only on the 4th day is there a "government report" (signed by Lenin and Trotskiy): "a new White Guard conspiracy;" the "hand of France;" "known spies" were arrested; a "Black Hundred-SR resolution" was passed at the command of a mutinous battleship. Is this one-sided information? After a day or two, more of the same.

There was only a small dropped phrase: the “**Kronshtadt problem**.” But did it refer to the conquered or to the conquerors?

If it did, then the way out of the problem should also be known. Yet, is this really so? Not really for the co-authors of the legal market, not really for the champions of civil peace (without sections!), who did not accept before, who now extract “more communism”? The question is partly rhetorical. Everyone knows that not **everyone** agrees. They did not agree, precisely when there was not only a most acute need for this, but also a real possibility to do so according to all the indicators. What prevented this (the question of questions then, which has returned to us now)? The noncoincidence of social needs and long-term hopes? Yesterday’s feuds? Or even the prostration of thought, which was Germanized in its word-concepts for the uncustomary, the non-predetermined; already mutinous in its products—both excommunications, and sudden new reprisals...

The key editorial of PRAVDA (No 49, 5 March 1921) was: **Two Programs**. The title of the rejection of the primitive original version in favor of the otherwise pointed same. We read: “Their” (the Kronshtadt’s) program, “even if by a miracle it were implemented, would not last even a month, since it would immediately turn out that need and poverty have grown, and moreover enormous oppression would appear; workers’ clubs, rest homes (!—M.G.), and unions would be destroyed. A number of new uprisings would inevitably break out, and once again would have to take power, i.e., history would be remade from the start. All classes would be weakened... Russia would collapse... This would be the **end of Russia**.” The answer to “their” program is our own: “**We are for order**,” “we are for, in consolidating our strength, despite the machinations, perfidy and betrayal of the Paris constituents, obtaining from abroad plows, machines and scythes for the peasants, and urban industrial objects for all working people... We are for work.” “We are for Russia not being made up of pieces, being broken up, torn to bits... We are for a great country, which the working class rules.”

The lexicon is not Leninist, but what about the meaning? At the 10th RKP(b) Congress, in response to A.M. Kollontay’s rebuke that he “avoided Kronshtadt” in his political report, everyone attending “knows full well... that here in my report I tied everything to the lessons of Kronshtadt, everything from beginning to end; maybe, I rather deserve the rebuke that a large part of my report spoke of lessons for the future, proceeding from the Kronshtadt events, and the smaller part—about mistakes of the past...”<sup>6</sup>. Indeed: maybe Lenin deserves this reproach? Did not he himself a year earlier speak of a party that had become conceited, a “foolish, embarrassing and funny” position, but did not add: drawing blood. What would he add now?.. In hindsight, of course, it is easier to see the symptoms of coming tragedy. Easier to see, but to understand?

“We are for order.” “We are for work,” which includes things that are vitally necessary to the people. In the final account—right now and in the future—this is a “great country.” After all, you can hardly truly object. Yet, we know what “order” turned into and what price had to be paid for **greatness**. The 10th Congress gave us both a tax in kind, as well as a ban on factions: it considered this collusion first and foremost. However, we should not omit the third item: “We are for Russia not being made up of pieces.” Whose voice is louder here, Lenin’s or Stalin’s, or were they as yet indistinguishable? Vladimir Petrovich Zatonskiy, while chairman of the Ukrainian Union of Cooperative Workers, was a witness. In his speech at this congress there is an implied objection to Stalin: “The need for real centralism is being confused by certain comrades with the customary concept of ‘united and indivisible.’ A colossal confusion of concepts is occurring”<sup>7</sup>. Lenin warned against this (in 1919) but, “unfortunately, it is already too late.”

Was it in fact already too late? It was too late for those with power, including the one who warned us but did not anticipate... On the day that Kronshtadt fell, Soviet rule was definitively asserted in a country where “worship and prayer are held in the Georgian language.” What did Lenin feel on that day—relief, or alarm? Perhaps, precisely on that day he sensed the force, hidden in the **third** item, thought about the unexcluded Kronshtadt, and asked (himself!) the question: to this calamity, of which there is nothing more terrible, what is the alternative, not only Russian, but also world-wide, world-wide within Russia?

Here, it is one against the other, Konstantine Gamsakhurdia and his fleeting Geneva acquaintance. Does it occur to the former that his interlocutor is a “Kremlin dreamer?” Conversely, Lenin most likely considered Gamsakhurdia a utopist. Directly from ethnos to peace for mankind? Respected comrade, it will not turn out so. There are still, above all, classes and the class struggle, not just in the world arena (there is no particular argument here), but also in each nation (“...No matter how important ethnic peace may be among the workers and peasants of Caucasus nationalities, it is still incomparably more important to hold and develop Soviet power, as a conversion to socialism—the first on which Lenin insists in his letter addressed to the “comrade communists.” Yet, after all, Gamsakhurdia is not against this.) They got stuck with Russia, that same Russia, which is and will remain.

Lenin displayed Wells’ booklet, which he had obtained. They had worked together with the author on his nightmare. Not a Russia, leaving the East, but a Russia coming to the East, who said this of them (in answer to Wells)? Both were possible. However, what should the “common” Russia be, so that the desired one would come? Again, they agreed: it is not enough to abolish an empire, one must eliminate it. A voluntary combination, Lenin emphasized. Gamsakhurdia asks for elaborations. Willingness is good, but what serves as security? And can a people have any more reliable protection than the



creation of their own freedom? The awareness of this and the as yet unlimited (from without!) possibility of managing oneself both in the large and in the small—here it is, the security... Lenin's ironic smile. He asks his interlocutor to remember recent times in the Menshevik republic. Was this very awareness able to protect it from its own lack of freedom, from internal discord, from conflicts, from wars between nations? What a vicious circle, says Gamsakhurdia. Everything bad and everything good—in man. We will hope for the best and rely on it. However, after all, one must liberate the best (this is Lenin speaking). You do not drive people to heaven with a stick (this is the writer speaking). There is a pause after the first retort: and from hell, is a cudgel worthwhile?

However, here Gamsakhurdia touches on the sorest point: Russia, coming to the East—a common goal, what will it arrive as and has it already arrived before? As a liberator without ulterior motives, or as a new colonizer, unifier, aggressor? Lenin grows gloomy. He demands proof (names, facts). The writer displays a Batum newspaper. The title of the editorial on his "Open Letter" was: "Wild Cry of Chauvinism." He talks about what he has seen and heard: the invasion of the Moscow departments, the dictator-mentors, who do not speak Georgian, and the Caucasus governor-generals who would like to and are counting off the weeks until they abolish a nation. Yes, Lenin admits, Makharadze reported something similar. The Sovnarkom chairman is not timid in his expressions, aimed at turncoats. Gamsakhurdia wonders: What if Ordzhonikidze really is one of them, and is not genuine? In reply, a strict: no, he is not a Georgian. He is not the first of the quasi-ours, for whom Georgia is small change, nothing more than a career... As the answer to the answer, a still stricter: oh, if he is not yours, who is—the fugitive rulers, the retired lovers of the Entente?! So, why not send for a liberal lord to become the leader, and then what will you become: a tiny India at the beck and call of other great ones?

Silence. A detente. Sorting out (to oneself) the points of agreement. The writer counts them almost on his fingers: the universal scope (the revolution's—such as it is) and he, Ulyanov-Lenin, its embodiment, he and its soldiers, with whom he spoke on the streets of Tiflis, how each of them is proud of his acquired dignity ("I am a man"). No, the main chance, all the same, is not lost... The interlocutor, having quickly thought by association of Switzerland, which once sheltered Russian emigrants, that same Switzerland, peaceful, balanced. Will proud, uncompromising Georgia fit in it? And another association, 19th-century Russia, and Poland in it. Not simply a civilized colony, but also a constant challenge, a pang of conscience, a reminder that the Russians will not be free as long as it, Poland, is not free, and as long as darkness and brutality feed on its lack of freedom: the hate of everyone for everything... Is this not the same challenge, the same condemnation, although for a different subject, for Georgia?

Aloud (Lenin): why not come to an agreement with us? And, without any irony: a treaty is not always a compromise, and if it is fair, then from two sides. You are a bit of independence, and not simply a concession, but what we need, what is profitable, is the economic unification of the Transcaucasus which would mean, after all, both a regular exchange (oil for you urgently), as well as peaceful economic access—for yourself, for us (as a foreign trade screen), and above all, the fact that Georgia is a bridge, a reliable bridge to Asia; you yourselves consider that nothing could be more desirable. Well, "governor-generals," as you call them, could be more flexible, more refined. At this point we approach unity. From the unity of the Caucasus to the unity of Russia, and through its unity—to the unity of everyone on earth. Well, how? Bit by little bit?

Aloud (the writer): it is tempting, but there is doubt. A Transcaucasian unification, a Trans-Caucasus university, a Trans-Caucasus bridge... And the language too? A Trans-Caucasus language? Will people command in it, think in it, and sing lullabies in it?! After centuries, does this language not matter? An ethnos without language is like person outside his culture. Language-less means faceless, and faceless means capable of any... There may be more unity, but this unity will not last a day without an arbiter. And who will be this arbiter if not Russia, the great Russia?!

Again aloud—Lenin (but his interlocutor does not remain silent, suppressing retorts): it so happens, as regards language, I agree with You entirely. Yet not everything is like that, in the main, in the decisive aspect not like that. The path to mankind is two-way. Not only from the "part" to the "whole," but also the opposite. This is very important—the opposite! Besides desire, there is also need. Ours, ours and yours, Russia's. The Land of the Beginning. It is not the whole world, but meanwhile... a world! (For long?) I do know. I do not believe in permanent pioneering, and I myself predicted: as the workers' West conquers, we will again become backwards, socialistically backwards! (And today again "all over again?") No, that change would have been on the direct path: from us to another. As you see, there is no direct path. And probably there will not be. Everything is no longer the circle that it was in 1917, 1918 and 1919. Now about another question: about the delay, stretching to an entire epoch. (Could it be that it did not go according to Marx?) No, it did! In the final account, it will be according to Marx! Everything that we do, if we deviate, is nothing more than a detail. Our descendants will say that: details. (And the NEP?) The NEP too!.. However, for now they are deciding the details. They are deciding, do we stand firm or not. (With Russia? "United, indivisible"?) Yes, with Russia. It is only about two heads: the Russian Russia, and the worldwide Russia. (A two-faced Janus? Thus, one recalls, on Rue Carouge You always related this to the peasant, from this, like starting from the beginning...) Both heads are muzhik-like. The worldwide Russia is really not the Eastern muzhik, whom one must still stir up and move

into action (**And that is why the caution?**) Of course. Otherwise how to break the mistrust of the "natives" in any white—whether person, or words. Caution and boldness. We must not make bugbears out of backwardness, out of immaturity. (**And inside? Really, is not worldwide backwardness a sign of great-power?**) Of course, there is nothing worse among all legacies. However, we will cope. We will cope... if with a Russian Russia—real, strong, but truly strong! If we support the worldwide Russia with it. (**Weltpolitik, as the Germans said? A term, you will agree, that has a foul odor...**) If you are afraid of wolves, stay out of the woods. Our **Weltpolitik** is new, not yet broken in. That which is beginning at home is also returning home. It is beginning by necessity, but returning as a virtue—with the possibility of resisting with communism! And that is why: through renewed inequality—to equality! (**While the NEP becomes engaged to the Asiatic, universal mistress Poverty?**) It sounds archaic, but it is close to the idea. It is possible thus, only not forgetting about Russia. Yet—this "NEP" Russia—will also rescue the fragile, vanishing world revolution... (**In one country??**) We stand for it, and hence the utmost strictness: ideologues who sow doubt—get out of Russia! Those who shake unity—get out of the party! Hence, there is no third revolution whatsoever within, neither right, nor left, nor "genuinely communist"!! (**So, forgive me, after all, this is Kronshtadt inside out.**) I will not argue. There is no rebellious Kronshtadt, but the lesson is alive. Anti-Kronshtadt? I agree. I even agree on the proper, proletarian Thermidor...

Once again the writer, aloud, with the most extreme, dangerous doubt (and already he, who behind the table retorts): I am afraid, I will not hide it. I have been afraid of everything two-headed since childhood. A two-headed Russia—old, new. I am afraid of Your two-headed utopia. Which of its beaks will be sharper—the Russian, or the worldwide? And do they not peck separately, and then also together, the living, vital nation? Incidentally, it stands up for itself, it goes through everything, but at what price? (**Are you assuming that an ethnos is an "imperishable" vegetarian? In snow-white chasubles? It does not thirst for blood?**) This argument would take a century. But I will argue! I will argue! You want something unquestioned, an unquestioned Russia, an unquestioned Transcaucasus, an unquestioned mankind. (**Oh no, respected Gamsakhurdia, let us argue. In Geneva as well, You recall, we also only argued and so did we later, to this day, is it not enough? Are we not losing in arguments that which we acquired, the more so since other things are also unquestioned!**) Indeed, only one—Your—thought is capable of disputing this, even if it "won" the right to think for everyone? If it is one, one for a long time, then there is no salvation for it—the most literal salvation: in man, in the personality, and really not in that type of ascent of culture—the height to which the entire road is strewn with human bones? (**Well, why such fears, wait a little, and let us return to the heights, in the most absolute way and soon, but right now the rudiments, even yesterday inaccessible to the human crowd—here is what is necessary, here without which we**

**will fail and, by the way, along with the very awakened, the ethnos, the nation without rudiments.**) I will not be so bold as to dispute this. As a writer, I need a reader. I agree. Transitions, stages... However, it must not get stuck. It would not get stuck and would not perish—in a united Russia: united by power, united by newly-fledged adherents to unity in the name, in the name of... Did they not give You nightmares? A nightmare of Place de la Concorde? After all, the guillotine knew no rest either before Thermidor, or after. Or are You counting on freedom in proscriptions, blood without banks, Terror as an epoch with severances and ostracisms?!

Whether the discussion stopped short at this, I cannot judge, since it did not happen. It did not happen, but it could have, and not simply a conversation but a dialogue? If not immediately after the "Open Letter," then months later or even years, if not in 1921, then at the fateful turn of 1922 and 1923 (and words of the meeting that was not held)?

The calendar difference is not too great, but the historical one is tremendous. The movement of Time is sorted out by the fates of people. Writers, the "black magicians," await Solovki, and the "absolute genius of revolution" even earlier will go into nonexistence, into mute helplessness and life-long solitude. "With all my heart I follow your work," were the last lines dictated by Lenin and addressed to the Georgian communist leaders who spoke a language consonant with Konstantine Gamsakhurdia<sup>9</sup>. Georgia is the nearest field of battle. Lenin was prepared for this battle. The last page of the biography of his thought, of this final movement—from itself and once again to itself—has not yet been read to the end. Behind the "Georgian matter" they see the contours of a problem, the name of which is the future of Soviet Eurasia, of the union of independent peoples-states. The problems, in the light of which the fate of a small, ancient country to him represented a projection of the future one world.

A historian is bound by the limited nature of his sources. True, a great deal of that which has been hidden in safes for decades has become accessible to the researcher. A great deal, but not everything. However, there are also problems with interpretation and gaps in the concepts, patterns and rhythms, a shortage of facts. Is the language of a people, for whom the phrases "world revolution" or "socialism in one country" were synonymous with life and death, meaningful for us? Can we understand the torments of a person, having discovered a key to the secret of **multi-structural Russia in a world not identical to it**, if we decline in advance, as alien or not quite necessary for us, this secret or these torments?.. Besides the maxims of ordinary morals, there is also the morality of "gray matter." Forgoing it, we may unexpectedly become empty-headed precisely when the disasters and problems that have surrounded us on all sides demand of us to recognize their novelty, their unprecedented nature even in cases, when the revived past, ancient prejudice with "kalashnikovs" in our hands, hits us in the eyes.

Probably, it is worthwhile again and again to remind ourselves: history does not teach, but explains, through those who are no longer, to those who are alive. From this position, which I see as both a limitation, as well as an obligation, Konstantine Gamsakhurdia and Ulyanov-Lenin seem equally close to me. For me, their unheld meeting is both a sign of trouble, and an appeal, sent to us from the start of the 20th century: do not miss that which the people were unable to accomplish at that time.

#### Footnotes

1. "...With certainty, we are saying that we will overcome the difficulties, that this July will be the last difficult July, and the next July we will see the triumph of the international Soviet republic—this triumph will be complete and inalienable" (from Lenin's report to the Moscow Conference of the RKP(b) on 12 July 1919. "*Poln. Sobr. Soch.*" [Complete Collected Works]. Vol 39, p 89).

2. Herbert Wells, "*Rossiya vo Mgle*" [Russia in the Mist]. Moscow, 1958, pp 44, 48.

3. From K. Gamsakhurdia's article "Who is the Chauvinist?" (SOTSIALIST-FEDERALIST, No 72, 28 May 1921). Like the article preceding it, "Response" (ibid., No 62, 15 May 1921), it was the author's defense against attacks by the communist press (PRAVDA GRUZII and BATUMSKIYE IZVESTIYA) after publication of his letter to Lenin. Later quotations are from this source.

4. I refer to Lenin's 2 March 1921 letter to G.K. Ordzhonikidze. In particular, it stated: "...It is tremendously important to seek an compromise acceptable for the bloc with Zhordaniya or with Georgian mensheviks like him, who even before the uprising were not absolutely hostile to the thought of a Soviet order in Georgia under certain conditions" ("*Poln. Sobr. Soch.*," vol 42, p 367). Right now it is hard to ascertain what considerations guided Lenin in giving this instruction at a time, when the capital of Georgia had already been occupied by the Red Army and the menshevik government had moved to Kutaisi. The facts, directly relating to this moment, should be put in a broader context, taking for a starting point the treaty between the RSFSR and the Georgian Republic, concluded on 7 May 1920. Literally on the eve of the Caucasus front, hurry to expand the success—the establishment of Soviet power in Azerbaijan (28 April), it was prepared for the jump into Georgia. From Moscow, a categorical ban (on 6 May the Poles took Kiev, and England threatened direct action). According to the 7 May 1920 Treaty, the RSFSR unconditionally acknowledged the independence of the Georgian republic, rejecting any interference in its internal affairs. Georgia was obligated to intern military units hostile to the RSFSR, and to grant amnesty to people for acts, committed in favor of the RSFSR or the Communist Party. Diplomatic relations were established. However, subsequent events upset this peace. Besides strictly Caucasus events, external events also played a large role—above all, the RSFSR's persistent aspiration to put

an end to the blockade and make peace with England. Talks which took place with varied success were held on 22 December for agreement on the most debatable point—about determining the boundaries of Soviet influence in Asia (insisting on mentioning Asia Minor, Persia, Afghanistan and India, Lloyd George also agreed to avoid mentioning the Caucasus). We must assume that from this border any collision might have wrecked the outcome. Pressure on the part of the Caucasus Bureau (a decisive memorandum to the Central Committee on January 1921) was openly supported by Stalin, and Trotskiy, who was pushed aside from decision of the question, disputed the radical formulation, believing that victory over Vrangal and peace with Poland would make it possible to implement the gradual Sovietization of Georgia. Lenin, apparently, hesitated. On 26 January, the Central Committee Plenum passed a resolution proposed by him which obligated the NKID [People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs] "to drag out the break with Georgia," along this line, "inquired" about the military readiness of the Caucasus Front "in case of an immediate or forthcoming war with Georgia." Disagreements and vacillations continued even after the XI Army launched its offensive. "...We are doing all we can to put out the fire that has flared up in the Caucasus," said Lenin at the Moscow Soviet Plenum on 28 February, having called the event a "terrible uprising." It is unknown precisely what directives he gave A. Yenukidze, sent in order to hold talks with Zhordaniya, and to what degree these directives coincided with the 28 February appeal by the Revolutionary Committee of Georgia to the former government ("Consider your case lost... Subordinate yourselves to the Soviet government of Georgia which, having entered Georgia, will forgive all past crimes by its enemies and which is prepared to enter in such a manner into relations with you"). Although the Revolutionary Committee in the persons of M. Orakhelashvili and Sh. Eliavy, as well as Ordzhonikidze, cabled Lenin on 8 March (the date was published in PRAVDA GRUZII): "We will strive for an agreement with Zhordaniya and other menshevik groups," this declaration, even be it entirely sincere, was no longer able to have political results. V.I. Lenin, "*Poln. Sobr. Soch.*," vol 54, p 437; vol 42, p 357; "*Borba za Pobedu Sovetskoy Vlasti v Gruzii. Dokumenty i Materialy (1917-1921 gg.)*" [The Struggle for Victory of Soviet Power in Georgia. Documents and Materials (1917-1921)], Tbilisi, 1958; "*Revolutsionnyye Komitety Gruzii v Borbe za Ustanovleniye i Uprocheniye Sovetskoy Vlasti (Fevral 1921 g.-Mart 1922 g.)*" [Revolutionary Committees of Georgia in the Struggle to Establish and Consolidate Soviet Power (February 1921-March 1922)], Sukhumi, 1963; S.V. Kharmandaryan, "*Lenin i Stanovleniye Zakavkazskoy Federatsii 1921-1923*" [Lenin and the Establishment of the Transcaucasian Federation of 1921-1923]. Yerevan, 1969.

5. "*Devyataya Konferentsiya RKP(b) Sentyabr 1920 Goda. Protokoly*" [Ninth RKP(b) Conference, September 1920. Proceedings]. Moscow, 1932, p 37, 36, 57, 61, 55.

6. "Desyatyy Syezd RKP(b). Mart 1921 Goda" [Tenth RKP(b) Congress, March 1921]. Moscow, 1963, p 112.

7. Ibid., p 203.

8. From a letter by F. Makharadze, chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Georgia, sent to Lenin on 1 March 1921: "There is still one circumstance, to which I must direct your attention. We, the Georgian communists, were and remain the most consistent centralists, compared to communists from other border nationalities. Furthermore, we well understand and realize that without Soviet Russia at this moment not one of the small or even large Soviet republics would exist. Here is why I say this. I already see that, from the various 'centers' and 'main administrations' innumerable 'chief' and 'specially authorized' representatives are already flying to us with stunning mandates. To say nothing of the fact that we will relate to them very critically" (From the book: "Revolutsionnyye Komitety Gruzii...", p 33).

9. V.I. Lenin, "Poln. Sobr. Soch..." Vol 54, p 330.

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### Concept of Socialism and Historical Experience

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[Article by Z. Mlynarz, professor, Innsbruck University, Austria]

[Text] ...Taking into consideration the objective content of the historical process at a given specific time... "V.I. Lenin.

The very concept "socialism" as it has been traditionally interpreted by the communist movement, is discredited today. The main reason for this is, unquestionably, the practices of Stalinism and its system of totalitarian political dictatorship. But let this not lead us into an error: It was not Stalinism alone, as such, that discredited this concept in both East and West. I see as a fundamental problem the fact that to this day the view of socialism, as accepted in official communist ideology, has been, for a number of decades, in a clear state of contradiction with the practical experience of the people both in the countries of "real socialism" and in the West.

From the ideological viewpoint, socialism is the type of society which can ensure the development of production forces, science, and technology, their practical utilization, the satisfaction of the material and spiritual needs of the people, and the exercise of their civil and political rights and freedoms better and faster than capitalism. The personal experience of the people again and again convinces them rather of the opposite: Political and economic systems which proclaimed themselves to be "real socialism" are falling in all these areas behind systems described as capitalist. All previous attempts to subject to an essential review dogmas and "lessons" which are inconsistent with realities were again and

again coercively suppressed and their bearers were expelled from the communist movement in the same way that the Church behaved toward heretics in the Middle Ages.

As a result of all this, the overwhelming majority of people no longer expect anything positive, in terms of their practical lives, from communist theory and ideology. Furthermore, this theory is increasingly being perceived as the origin and reason of all failures and errors committed in practical life, including the horrors and crimes committed by Stalinism. Generally speaking, is it possible, considering this situation, to surmount the crisis in the present theory of socialism?

I have no simple answer to this question. I deem possible and, from the theoretical and practical-political viewpoint necessary, comprehensively to discuss the contemporary view of socialism, as it has developed of late in the USSR.

The development of circumstances, helped me to acquire some theoretical knowledge and practical experience concerning systems of the Soviet type and of a Western developed industrial society. I believe that that is precisely why my contribution to this discussion could be useful, were I to discuss problems which, it seems to me, are key factors in achieving a change "in our entire viewpoint on socialism." I quote these Leninist words, which are frequently cited without, naturally, believing that nearly 70 years ago Lenin provided answers to all of today's problems and practical matters. However, in surmounting the old dogmas communist theoreticians should emulate Lenin's type of courage.

### Socialism Is Not an Autonomous 'Socioeconomic System'

Within the framework of this article it would be impossible to provide a critical analysis of the very concept of "socioeconomic system" in the sense in which it has been traditionally used in official communist ideology. Let me merely point out that, in my view, a concept of the history of mankind as being a process of inevitable replacement of one such "system" with another as a result of the determining influence of production forces is simply a vulgarized version of the Marxist understanding of history.

As far as capitalism and socialism are concerned, viewing them as autonomous "systems" leads to the concept that socialism, after its "victory over capitalism" will be essentially a closed system of economic, social, political, and cultural relations, the main "features" of which will be the opposite of capitalism. It will be a system the essential characteristics of which will actually be its anticapitalist content.

The main guarantee for such an anticapitalist content should be found in economic as well as political relations. In the economic area, it is a question above all of the nature of ownership: Private ownership of means of production is virtually excluded; the only one allowed is

the so-called public but, essentially, state, ownership. In the political area, the anticapitalist content is determined above all by the fact that the political system (the proclaimed "dictatorship of the proletariat" or, subsequently, the rule "by the whole people") directly blends with economic power and through its directives (the state plan) controls all economic processes. A search for an answer to the question of who distributes any material wealth, and how, for what purpose and in what way does not take place on the market where supply and demand come together. The answer is provided by politics, by the system of government directives. Correspondingly, in the noneconomic area as well the answer to the question of what conflicts with or is in the interest of society as a whole is not derived from the "spontaneous" clash among different private social interests. The decision here is made by the political system. The entire so-called superstructure—law, ideology, and culture—is merely a set of instruments which the political powers purposefully apply and use for the purpose of attaining their objectives.

The economic and sociopolitical system which displays said features has been presented as socialism for many decades. The proof of its socialist nature is, in the final account, merely that it is anticapitalist. Socialism, defined on the basis of its opposite, constitutes, in the Hegelian meaning, a certain "incorrect negation," a primitive rejection of capitalism. In this case there is no new positive content the development of which demands the complex process of "negating negation."

Obviously, such a concept of socialism is closer to the way of thinking which gave origin to utopian concepts of socialism prior to Marx than to the Marxian critical analysis of capitalism. I believe that Marxist theory should initiate a "revision of our entire viewpoint on socialism" precisely by abandoning the view of socialism as an autonomous anticapitalist "system." Today this is possible and necessary in the political sense as well, for the historical political factors which led to such an interpretation have either already disappeared or are disappearing.

Said understanding of socialism became rooted once and for all within the entire communist movement following the victory of the Stalinist concept of the possibility of "building socialism in a single separate country." The moment the concept that socialism could replace capitalism only in the course of global changes (in the terminology of the times, as a result of a "world revolution") was rejected, socialism was bound to be identified with a closed-type system, for nothing other could be "built" in an isolated country.

It seems to me that within the Bolshevik Party itself it was impossible, using even the most convincing arguments in the course of theoretical debates, to block the victory of the concept of the possible building of socialism in a single country. The acceptance of this concept was based on pragmatic political considerations. It would be difficult to demand of the people great

sacrifices for the sake of an objective they could not reach through their own efforts. The theory which met this political demand inevitably became the servant of politics and, as subsequent experience indicated, lasted several decades.

The development of socialism as a historical universal process began to be perceived not as an objective internal development of an industrial (capitalist) society on a global scale but as a process which, in practical terms, each time begins in a separate country only and only when in that country a monopolistic political system is taken over by the working class, i.e., by the communist party which represents it. It is only in that case that a new "system" can be established. Without it, any processes developing within an industrialized society cannot signify the development of socialism, for capitalism has been preserved as "system," and, at best, there could be a question only of "retouching it" with a view to concealing "its true nature." Any changes in the processes of regulating the market and changes in distribution in favor of hired labor, and the social guarantees achieved in the West through the reformist socialist movement were not considered a development of socialism. Conversely, the rule by the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party in Mongolia proved that one could begin to "build socialism," in general, without capitalism. The new method of organizing a society of nomads indicated the appearance of a socialist "system."

Since the October Revolution in Russia was not supported by similar revolutions in the West, contrary to what the Bolsheviks initially assumed, the West, in their, ideology was considered, a priori, a place in which the development of socialism was excluded. The dominant "system" there was capitalism, conceived as a system alien to socialism. Capitalism and socialism operated (in terms of "systems") as mutually exclusive concepts, as the absolute opposite poles without the slightest possibility of coming together, as "two separate worlds" which, in the final account, could interact with each other only in terms of "who whom."

After World War II when, similar to the USSR, socio-economic coups d'état occurred in a number of countries, this concept did not undergo any essential changes. Instead of a "single country," the area for the development of socialism as a "system" expanded to include an entire group of countries, from Czechoslovakia to China. A "socialist camp" and a "global socialist system" were established as the complete opposite of the "imperialist camp" and the "world imperialist system." The global nature of socialism was conceived entirely superficially and formally, merely as the extension of the "system," which so far had existed in a single country, to several other. In reality, conversely, it was the isolation of the thus conceived socialism from the processes occurring in the rest of the world that took place: In fact, the so-called "world socialist market" meant the separation of a group of countries from the global market (since it was "capitalist"). These countries maintained economic contacts

virtually only among themselves, naturally, on the level consistent with the economic backwardness of most of them.

Such an interpretation of socialism, presented as "the only scientific" and "Marxist-Leninist" one, contradicted the objective scientific view of the contemporary world, and could be based only on a few exaggerated ideas of Marx and, particularly, Lenin, taken out of context. Marx had remained totally under the influence of the French Revolution and its significance in terms of a new, an industrial civilization, for which reason he partially supported the view that such a type of revolution will also play an essential role in the development of socialism. As a whole, Lenin developed and strengthened this view quite one-sidedly (in his work "*The State and Revolution*"). (Based on the theory of socialism, this was insufficient; from the viewpoint of the victory of the bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution, this was an advantage.)

The experience of the 20th century indicated that socialist revolutions of the Russian (as well as Chinese) type are the exception, rather than the rule, in the development of an industrial civilization. They take place only in a society in which ossified (semi-feudal) social structures, combined with the power of political absolutism, prevent the main social forces of an industrial society otherwise to acquire a hegemony. The fact that it was possible, by using some quotations borrowed from Marx or Lenin, to illustrate the idea that they considered the classical social revolution either the rule or an inevitable necessity, only meant that in this matter they were wrong. We cannot build our contemporary understanding of socialism, consistent with the realities of our time, on this error.

Unquestionably, the October Revolution was a breach of the universal domination of capital and was a major social challenge to the West at that time. Also unquestionably, it influenced it in terms of changes which could be characterized as the development of socialism, although by no means in the sense of the "revolutionary victory of the new socioeconomic system," i.e., that which subsequently, for decades, was (and, to this day, partially still is) the essence of the conflict between the "two different socioeconomic systems" (East-West conflict), and the foundation for political and military rivalry. The main danger from this was the risk of war and no prospects existed here for a social revolution in the West. Although "real socialism" is a noncapitalist system, has a number of socialist features, and provides certain social guarantees to toiling strata which, under capitalism, lived in a state of greater social insecurity, its impact on the workers and other working people, as a possible better alternative, does not cause today any problems whatsoever to the Western ruling circles. Conversely, it is precisely the formulation of such an alternative—Western status quo or "real socialism"—that was welcomed by all Western conservative forces, for to this day this still acts as a frightening scarecrow for a significant percentage of the population.

The speed and ease with which the "real socialist" systems collapsed in Poland, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and other countries, is another clear indication of the size of the gap between reality and its ideological simulation in countries where "socialism is being built" as a "system." Therefore today not only from the theoretical viewpoint but also from the practical-political one we must abandon the previous identification of the concept of socialism with a real system, the initial model of which developed in the USSR in Stalin's time and has been retained to this day, with various modifications, in a number of other countries.

If we follow this logic to the end, in my view we must abandon the interpretation of socialism as an autonomous "socioeconomic system" which totally excludes capitalism. Is this admissible if, at the same time, we want to develop a new concept of socialism while remaining on the positions of Marxist theory?

#### **Capitalism and Socialism As Two Trends Within the Framework of an Industrial Civilization**

It seems to me that in the Marxist understanding of history mankind is not linked to the conflicts among the different social "systems" which change as a result of the defeat of some and the victory of other. Marxism sees in history a change of means of production, which are the foundation of various types of civilization. With all due respect for the frequently determining role of production forces and production relations, Marx never identified the full type of civilization, with its complex internal dynamics, with the only, albeit dominating, trend in the economic base of a given civilization. This is absolutely clearly revealed in his strongly differentiated approach to the history of mankind in antiquity and in the Middle Ages: The complex problem of the appearance, internal dynamics, and decline of the Eastern types of civilization in China or India, ancient Egyptian or Greco-Roman ancient civilization, and medieval Christian civilization in Europe: Marx never allowed all of them to be reduced to the problem of replacing the slave-owning and the feudal "systems."

No single historical civilization with which we are familiar has ever been predetermined merely by a development possibility. It always contained several possible variants, i.e., certain development trends with their quite distinct social bearers. Clashes and conflicts or, conversely, compromises and interaction among them always created an entirely specific internal dynamics of a given type of civilization. Naturally, this applied not only to economics but also to social relations and to the political-ideological, cultural, and moral areas of social life. The development of means of production and types of civilization preceding the advent of modern times took place in the course of long time intervals lasting several centuries, while static types of civilization took millennia.

The production method which developed in Europe historically stemming from feudalism is usually defined,

and not only by Marxists, as capitalism. This was based on the fact that the main trend of this means of production, in the initial phases of its development, was the actually totally unrestricted trend of reproduction of private capital. The pursuit of profit and capital reproduction, as the obvious main objective of the production process itself, were and are a capitalist trend of the production method, based on the development of industrial production (ranging from the initial manufacturing and large-scale machine industry to the present automated industrial technologies).

Marx's "*Das Kapital*" provides a qualitatively scientific analysis of the historical reasons which led to the appearance of this production method and, as a whole, an accurate study of the functioning of its main economic (and social) mechanisms at the stage of development which it had reached by the end of the 19th century. The fact that Marx allowed certain erroneous concepts and projections concerning the growth and possible consequences of certain contradictions triggered by capitalism does not change anything in this sense.

What was consistent with the realities of that time was that the development of the industrial production method is defined by a one-sided prevalent capitalist trend without possibility of efficient control on the part of society. Marx deserves credit for the fact that already then he was able systematically to prove that capitalism inevitably also triggers the opposition of the people to the capitalist trend. At that time there were no facts which would lead theory to the conclusion that at one point such a trend could, in practical terms, assume a scale which would make it possible substantially to restrict and control the capitalist trend itself without leading to direct conflict in the guise of a classical social revolution.

Today, more than a century after Marx's death, as we analyze historical experience, we can briefly say the following: The production method which initially matured under the exclusive influence of capitalism as a development trend turned out to be the beginning of a new civilization type of development: a contemporary industrial civilization. This civilization made it possible for another trend to strengthen within it, a trend which corrected, which restricted capitalism and, to a certain extent, acted directly against it: the trend of the defense and consideration of human needs and interests which capitalism suppresses and ignores. This trend, although it cannot be totally identified with socialism, could be strongly characterized as socialist. In the sociopolitical sense, its bearers were, above all, the labor movements which, in the industrially developed countries, adopted as their program a primarily reformist rather than radical-revolutionary orientation.

This yielded impressive results only in the second half of our century and only in some parts of the world. Taking this temporal and geographic limitation into consideration, we can say that at the present stage industrial civilization is by no means the same as capitalism but is

the product of a constant internal clash and interaction between the two trends: capitalist and socialist (or, more accurately, noncapitalist and primarily socialist). Both trends have their social bearers and aspire, within the framework of a single type of civilization, to prevail in the various areas of social life (economics, politics, and ideology), as well as in the given type of civilization as a whole.

Naturally, it would be impossible, considering the limitations of an article, to describe in detail the nature of the changes introduced with the socialist trend. Generally speaking, compared to the initial phases in the development of an industrial society, one could speak above all of the essential possibilities of controlling the production process and the market mechanism which prevent or, at least, regulate crisis upheavals, and ensure the social protection of hired labor in situations in which, from the viewpoint of the capitalist trend, they become "unnecessary," and provide a satisfactory living standard for the broad strata of hired labor. In other words, it is a question of the realities of contemporary developed Western industrial countries, particularly if they have a successful "social state" and a "social market economy."

I believe that the contemporary view of socialism cannot ignore these circumstances. Unquestionably, we must not proceed merely from the content of self-proclaimed systems of "real socialism." We must proceed from the realities of the entire contemporary industrial civilization. Naturally, this calls for viewing socialism not as an autonomous production method but as one of the trends within the framework of a contemporary industrial civilization. Thus understood, socialism means not the elimination of capitalism but a trend acting against it and with it, within the limits of an industrial production system.

Neither capitalism nor socialism, therefore, indicate a specific social status, a closed system or "formation." They are a process, a trend of development within an industrial civilization. Industrial civilization is not the final stage of human development providing, naturally, that mankind is not destroyed in a nuclear war or ecological catastrophe. The type of civilization which will replace the present one will resemble neither capitalism nor socialism (in principle, the officially proclaimed concept that it is only the "higher stage of communism" that will develop an essentially new, a post-capitalist society, is accurate. However, one cannot believe that the reality of the future will be consistent with the simplistic ideas of communist propaganda concerning this "higher phase").

The study of the suggested concept of socialism leads to the conclusion that it cannot resolve a number of basic contradictions triggered by capitalism and reach its objective, which is to ensure a better development of production forces and satisfaction of the needs of the people compared with the capitalist trend within an industrial society. I accept this objection: Yes, in my opinion, this is true. In developing a contemporary

concept of socialism, this negative fact should be taken into consideration instead of ignored.

This unpleasant fact is due to a variety of reasons in the two different "worlds" influenced, so far, by ideology. In the world of "real socialism" what happened was that as a result of the simple suppression of the capitalist trend the dynamics of first economic (and, in the final account, social) development, a trend which is secured in an industrial civilization, vanished. The inability to convert from extensive to intensive economic growth, and the tremendous lag in scientific and technical progress and in the application of its achievements in production are the clearest proof of this. The mass dissatisfaction of society with the economic and political totalitarian system confirms this in the course of daily practical experience.

Conversely, in Western industrial society, and under the strong influence of the socialist trend, the capitalist trend remained prevalent (particularly in economics). For that reason, not only some of its typical contradictions were not resolved but, conversely, became even aggravated: the social consequences of technical progress (the so-called structural unemployment), contradictions between developed and backward areas in the global development of industrial civilization (i.e., the problem of third world development, the so-called North-South conflict), etc.

In both West and East industrial civilization remains, so far, almost helpless in the face of ecological devastation and its consequences. The conflict between the two "systems" furthermore created a threat to the very existence of mankind resulting from a nuclear war.

Could the new understanding of socialism contribute to the development of a new approach to all of these problems? What role could a socialist trend play in their solution, and what are the prospects of socialism within the framework of a future predictable development of industrial civilization?

#### **Objectives and Prospects of Socialism in Today's World**

Unlike many other anticapitalist trends and theories, socialism does not aspire to a precapitalist system. It stands entirely on the grounds of an industrial civilization and tries to develop it without, however, some of its undesirable consequences. Socialism, Marxist socialism in particular, directly continues the enlightening tradition in understanding progress and history. It shares a belief in the determining positive role of rationalism and science. It considers the development of production forces and the growth of labor productivity a prerequisite for progress.

According to Marxism, the liberation of man is also conceived in the spirit of the fundamental ideas which accompany the birth and development of an industrial civilization. The free man as an individual is the highest value. According to socialism, this can be achieved only in a free society. This society must be free from the

domination of material conditions (applicable to capital but not to nature); it must have an efficiently regulated behavior, i.e., its own history. The essence of the Marxist criticism of capitalism can be summed up within a single question: Can man be freed within the framework of a production method the objective of which is not the satisfaction of human needs but the reproduction of capital? Marx's answer to this was negative. All of his subsequent more specific conclusions such as, for example, replacing private with public ownership, eliminating the alienation of the producer in the process of hired labor, eliminating "commodity fetishes," replacing governmental with social self-management, and others, were subordinated to achieving the main objective: surmounting a condition in which capital rules the people and not vice-versa.

According to Marx, in themselves political and civil freedoms do not constitute in themselves the true liberation of man, for they do not eliminate the enslavement of man in economic and social interrelationships. The true liberation of man will require, in the final account, also the elimination of the division of labor which ties man for life to a certain one-sided activity and restrains his creative possibilities and forces. Naturally, these Marxian demands go beyond not only capitalism but also industrial civilization as a whole. Communism in Marx's understanding was, actually, the subsequent, the new type of civilization.

What remains unanswered is the following question: Generally speaking, will there ever occur in history the liberation of man in that sense? Although we can see in an industrial civilization some trends which create the hope that some of its concepts will be implemented, that same civilization also creates a larger number and stronger trends which doom such concepts to the role of utopias.

The real labor movement to which Marx directly and simplistically linked the prospect of achieving his objectives did not become a social force in historical practices, which could ensure the liberation of all mankind in the sense of his theory. It was satisfied with achieving a compromise within the framework of the industrial civilization, with which it blended totally. Marx's concept that the proletariat has nothing to lose but its chains has long lost its relevance.

I believe that all of this confirms the basic idea expressed in this article: The contemporary understanding of socialism means that it must be conceived as one of the trends of development of industrial civilization and not as its elimination. Generally speaking, this is true. The specific "political tasks" of socialism in the present world are distinct in the different levels of development and different models of this civilization: the system of "real socialism," the Western developed industrial society, and the so-called third world.

Within the system of "real socialism" it is by no means a question of seeking a new "model of socialism" but of



providing an opportunity for the development of an industrial civilization as the foundation of contemporary socialism and surmounting the isolation from the rest of the world, in which this civilization exists. Since in this case the capitalist trend was simply rejected, today one of the main tasks (including also in terms of the development of socialism) is to find a place for this trend in social life, for without this it would be impossible to surmount the isolation from the world market and its necessary influence on the economy and technology, or else to surmount backwardness and ensure the satisfaction of the basic needs of the people.

From the viewpoint of the theory and practice of socialism, the task is not only not to push into the background but, conversely, fully to develop the socialist trend in the development of an industrial civilization. The main ideological, political, and sociopsychological problem is the fact that the very concept of socialism in this case has become totally discredited. The people identify socialism with the administrative-command system, with Stalinist totalitarian dictatorship. The demand of ensuring the prevalence of socialism, therefore, is inevitably understood, not only by the stratum of the ruling bureaucracy and the professional ideologues, but also by the majority of the people, as the aspiration to preserve as much as possible the aspects of the old system.

Neither the ruling circles nor the "lower strata" were able to establish through personal experience the way the simultaneous action of a capitalist and a socialist trend operates in the developed industrial Western societies. For that reason, they tend to expect of the "admission" of the capitalist trend in the life of their own society strictly positive results, as though this in itself would ensure the necessary standard and way of life which took decades to develop in the Western "social states."

In this connection, it is very important to realize that noncapitalist (anticapitalist) relations within the system of "real socialism" should not be automatically classified as socialist. Rather, in some areas they coincide with precapitalist relations; in the final account, this is also consistent with the fact that in 1917 Russia was at the very beginning of the capitalist way.

Therefore, private capitalist relations were replaced not by socialist socialization but, in the final account, simply by statification. The political system became a participant in production relations: The state owned the people not only as its citizens but also as its "workers." Economic and political power was concentrated in a single pair of hands, and it was that same subject who acquired the possibility of applying economic and noneconomic coercion (manipulation), as the center of political power. Figuratively speaking, in the period of collectivization and industrialization, Stalin ruled the manpower, the "collective worker" of the then extant Soviet society, with the help of methods which resembled more the rule of Egyptian pharaohs over their slaves, who were

building pyramids, rather than the power which capital had over the workers during the period of initial accumulations in the West.

Typical of the entire system of administrative-command management is the fact that all of its subordinate social subjects, from large groups such as classes and nations and labor collectives, down to the individual—were deprived of the ability to act autonomously. This ability implies not only the organizational-legal possibility of making independent decisions but also the actual ability to engage in autonomous behavior, i.e., the possibility of choosing among several behavioral options, availability of adequate information about oneself and one's social environment, so that the subject could choose any of the alternatives which suit his interests, etc. Limiting and, in some cases, even total depriving social subjects of the possibility of acting autonomously is the common denominator of phenomena, such as the lack of independence of enterprises, the reduced number of organizations based on interest, bureaucratization of all social life, suppression of creative thinking, and violation of the civil rights and freedoms of the individual. Although this element of the management system is noncapitalist, it is nonetheless, obviously, nonsocialist as well. The prevalence of the socialist trend can be achieved only after it has been totally eliminated and not by retaining as many of its vestiges as possible.

The strengthening of the socialist trend, with a qualitative change in the society of "real socialism" can be secured by simply borrowing the forms created by a different social differentiation and the historical roots which stem from them in the Western countries. In this case capitalist ownership and management could assume essentially new, collective forms. A condition may develop within the entire political system in which a socially defined individual or, more precisely, various social groups and strata can influence the process of decision making not exclusively through political parties. The socialist trend can be particularly strengthened by forms of self-management not only in places of residence but in labor collectives as well. The status of labor collectives can be institutionally strengthened better than through Western practices: such collectives become specific social subjects which, combined with collective ownership, could play a significant role in favor of the socialist development trend.

In the West, socialism faces different problems. Classical social contradictions, which stem from mass poverty and social insecurity, were resolved by the reformist socialist movement in the most developed industrial societies in a way such as not to trigger dangerous social explosions. A number of problems, however, remain, such as the growing polarization between poverty and wealth, the problem of the "one-third of society" the living standard of which is not rising and, in frequent cases, is declining while some two-thirds are prospering, thus leading to unequal opportunities for social self-realization of people, etc.

The main problem is that in the process of development of an industrial civilization on a global scale, the classical social contradictions triggered by the capitalist trend are, in a certain sense, "exported" to the third world countries. There the capitalist trend led to a destruction of the traditional precapitalist types of civilization, without replacing them with a developed industrial civilization.

All of this creates a global so-called "North-South" conflict, the approaches to the solution of which Western socialism is seeking quite slowly and, frequently, helplessly. It was only by the turn of the 1980s, for example, that the Socialist International began to develop its own concept about solving the third world problem.

Another major problem facing Western socialism is that of the social consequences of scientific and technical industrial development. The microelectronic revolution alone threatens to undermine the present role of hired labor and, in a certain sense, human labor in general in social life. According to specialists, in a period of 20 years it is expected that 25 to 50 percent of jobs today related to physical or elementary mental (office) work will be replaced by machines and computers. This will lead to unpredictable social consequences: The present large-scale industrial output will be eliminated in the same way that it itself at one point eliminated small-scale production and artisan and custom work.

Throughout the society, changes will take place in terms of working and leisure time, as well as quality changes in the means of distribution of the social wealth. Neither capital ownership nor invested labor could be the main criteria in the social distribution process. This will substantially affect the interests of all class and strata in the industrial society.

Naturally, such a major change in the significance of labor in social life creates problems which go beyond the limits of an industrial civilization. In that case, socialism will have to look for answers outside the classical range of problems of a revolutionary or reform-oriented socialist movement.

This also affects another essential problem which is relevant both to the West and to "real socialism:" the danger of an ecological catastrophe, as an undesirable consequence of the development of industrial civilization. Ecological problems are still viewed essentially as technical problems: how to ensure the protection of the environment from the harmful influence of industry. This is only one and less essential aspect of the matter, acknowledged as a capitalist trend in an industrial society.

The socialist trend, conversely, should single out (and resolve) a deeper problem: how to preserve the internal dynamics of industrial civilization, based on the main feature of the production process, the reproduction of capital and, at the same time, proceed from the fact that the main criterion today should actually be different: the prevention of an ecological catastrophe.

The extent to which this is an essential problem is indicated, for example, by the problems related to developing or, conversely, terminating the production of nuclear energy. A technology which, in an accidental breakdown of the human factor, which cannot be totally excluded, could lead to irreparable catastrophe (radioactive contamination of entire continents) should be prohibited even if it is necessary and efficient from the economic viewpoint. An absolute ban, which clashes with the interests of the capitalist trend in an industrial society and which directly affects the development of the economy, is the nature of the new question which faces the industrial civilization. This aspect as well must be considered part of the new understanding of socialism.

The last yet one of the most important questions in terms of its significance to industrial civilization and to socialism within it is the following: Is it possible, in general, to spread industrial civilization as a way of life for all mankind. Could billions of people in third world countries ever live the way the people in the most developed industrial countries live today? Would this be possible, from the viewpoint of economics, ecology, and demographic growth? For the time being, such questions remain equally unanswered by contemporary socialism. Ignoring them today or adopting a cheap propaganda pseudo-resolution (such as claiming that after the "victory over capitalism" overpopulation would be no problem) cannot withstand criticism.

Practical experience indicates that in third world countries development is following a variety of ways. In many countries opposition is growing to efforts to introduce an industrial civilization in those areas. Islamic fundamentalism in Iran, on the one hand, and the former Chinese concept of "cultural revolution," on the other, are only the clearest examples of this. At the same time, it turns out, to borrow again from China's experience, that had such a decision been made democratically, an increasing segment of society would have favored a way of life consistent with industrial civilization. In this sense, the Chinese look at Japan as their idol. Other third world countries have been able practically to combine industrial production and the most advanced technologies with local ways of life: With Japan's help, this is taking place in the development of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, etc.

How, under today's entirely unpredictable conditions, could a socialist trend of development be achieved? The answer to this question must be found both in the theory and the practices of contemporary socialism.

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#### **Evidence From Opponents: Memoirs About V.I. Lenin**

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[Article prepared by V. Bushuyev from the memoirs of A.N. Potresov and N. Valentinov]

[Text] "Life is the best teacher, and it will show who is right..." V.I. Lenin

For the readers' attention, we offer excerpts from memoirs about Lenin, which to this day have remained unknown in our country (only a small fragment of N. Valentinov's memoirs, a few paragraphs in all, had been included in a number of Soviet publications).

These memoirs, relating to Lenin's early period of revolutionary work (turn of the 19th-20th centuries), of course, are far from equivalent. However, taken together, they add new strokes to the political portrait of Vladimir Ilich, help us see him more completely and fully, and help us better understand the conditions and factors that contributed to shaping Lenin's views.

Unquestionably, memoirs are always subjective. They are a view of the world not only on the basis of certain definite convictions, but also through the prism of one's own fate, far from always happy or successful. This prism unavoidably to one degree or another distorts the true picture. Rare is the memorialist who does not yield to the temptation to refute some of his past deeds, to justify one or another view, and to present his former opponents in an unfavorable light. All this can also be seen in the memoirs being published here and, unquestionably, the readers will notice this.

One should keep in mind that the texts given below were published in years when their authors, who were at one stage Lenin's like-minded colleagues, had switched to the camp of his convinced political opponents, which cannot help but be reflected in their reminiscences.

In this regard, the admission made by one the leaders of Menshevism, A. Potresov, given in the same posthumous Paris publication of his works from which the memoir about Lenin was taken and published, is typical. On 3 August 1917, he wrote in the Petrograd newspaper DEN: "We live in an age of revolution, the age of the greatest upheavals and greatest actions. Therefore, woe to that party which ends up outside the revolutionary action, in the back seat of history. It will cross itself off the list of the living for a long time." Presentiment did not deceive Potresov. Only 4 months later, on 7 December 1917, recognizing the collapse of his own party, he comments in the newspaper GRYADUSH-CHIY DEN: "...Right now, the party is not in the footlights of history. It has been destroyed as a political entity. It has nonetheless been reduced to naught..."

Clearly, the assessments and views reflected in the memoirs of the opponents who lost, despite all desire to be objective, cannot be distinguished by impartiality. However, the specific nature of the memoir excerpts being published lies in the fact that, no matter how their authors wanted to prove the reverse, they are in no condition to refute the fact that Lenin in fact was an outstanding organizer, thinker, a recognized leader of the masses, and the dominant influence on their thought. Regardless of the subjectivity and bias of the memorialists, the image arising from their pens is by no means that of a "villain" or "sectarian," but of a serious, strong, comprehensively developed individual and politician,

who had harmoniously combined in himself both purely Russian, as well as European traits.

Among the divergent anti-Leninist attacks of the time, the reader without particular difficulty will also find those which the present-day critics of Lenin and his legacy take to arms. The continuity of this anti-Lenin tradition is noteworthy in itself. Familiarization with it is useful, not only to satisfy historical interest, but also for a more profound ideological or even psychological assessment of some contemporary interpreters of Lenin's ideas and views.

Today, it is ever more obvious: Lenin was incomparably deeper, more multidimensional and, if one can put it thus, "more dialectical," than this seemed to many of his followers and, alas, than some of our conservatively-minded contemporaries imagine, who often still mandatorily require support for any serious present-day political action with quotations from 70-80 year-old Leninist works.

In the reminiscences of Potresov, who considered himself an orthodox Marxist, the word "dogma" slips in, by which he means the teachings of Marx. However, the essence of the matter is this: for Lenin, doctrine in itself was never the beginning and end of everything. Being a highly educated Marxist, he always proceeded from life, from practice, not from that which seemed like unquestionable dogma to the various dogmatists, not from schemes or speculative concepts. As the subsequent course of history revealed, Lenin had an inherent ability, making him a truly great scientist and politician, which (a tragedy for our country) many of his followers and successors lacked. This was his ability for constant development, improvement on a mastered theory, bold, courageous rejection of positions and views that cannot withstand the tests of time, seeking out new, sometimes quite unexpected approaches to an ever-changing reality. This ability of Lenin's often confounded many of the people who surrounded him at various stages of his life, who did not have the breadth and emancipated nature of Lenin's vision of the world, who had not fully mastered the main thing in Marxism—its creative nature.

Of course, we are all children of our time, and we inevitably carry its stamps. Naturally, no natural gift whatsoever, no abilities whatsoever can guarantee against mistakes. In this respect, Lenin was no exception. However, the most important thing is that he never regarded the level of knowledge achieved at a certain stage or his own theoretical conclusions and programs to be the indisputable last word in truth. On the contrary, Lenin was open to free, broad discussion and was ready to listen to any reasonable argument. Self-satisfaction and the absence of the slightest doubts in the perfection of one's own thoughts and actions were all entirely incompatible with the realism that literally permeated all aspects of Vladimir Ilich's activities.

Being a kind of embodiment of vital, ever-searching Marxist thought, Lenin displayed in the course of his life

a striking ability to learn and re-learn, including from his own mistakes, to start over again dozens of times, to seek the best, shortest path to the future and in no case to be content with ideas that met yesterday's requirements. At the 9th Party Congress in the spring of 1922, refuting the arguments of the keepers of the "purity of Marxism," who did not want to give up firmly mastered principles that were already rapidly growing obsolete, lagging behind life, Lenin the Marxist said something that directly applies to problems arising in our current activity: "Things turned out differently today, and no Marx, nor any Marxist whomsoever could have foreseen this. We need not look back," (V.I. Lenin, "*Poln. Sobr. Soch.*" [Complete Collected Works], vol 45, p 117).

In those days, it was a question of the NEP. To an equal extent and without especially stretching the interpretation, these words also relate to other stages of our society's development, including perestroika. Neither Marx, nor Lenin could have, or even intended to foresee everything in the future. It is unproductive to search through their works for specific answers to that which we must do today. However, the revolutionary spirit of their teachings and the scientific forecasts, theoretical conclusions and dialectical methodology left to us as a legacy are important and remain topical.

#### A.N. Potresov: Posthumous Collected Works

Paris, 1937

(1895-1903)

The real Lenin? This is not real, it is inopportune! Passions still rage too much, and the fondness of the excessively, gigantically grandiose, in the positive or negative sense, still stretches too far, to be able to observe it in assessments of the extent of things. The more so, for it to be possible to spread, without exaggeration, the light and dark in the nature of a person who is the chief culprit of a cataclysm, unequalled in history in terms of the scope of its destruction.

However, weighing all the difficulties, I nonetheless wish to try, in terms of certain features that have imprinted themselves on my mind, to reproduce for the reader an image of Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov-Lenin, free of the outer layer of social hypnosis, shrunk down to a natural size, humanized. I happened to know him over the course of a number of years, when we gradually approached each other and later worked jointly to create ISKRA and ZARYA, in order to split in the end toward different sides, having broken any tie of comradeship and any thread of familiarity...

I will thus use my impressions of 8 years, from 1895 to 1903, as the basis for my description: 8 years of meetings and times, for example, my nearly joint life with the young, beginning Lenin in Munich...

I wrote "young" and hesitated. Yes, of course, Lenin was just over 25 years of age when I first saw him, during Christmas vacation of 1894-1895, at a meeting in one of

the suburbs of Peterburg, in Okhta. However, he was young only according to his passport. To look at him, he was by no means less than 35-40 years old. He had a withered face, a bald patch on his head, leaving only a scant growth on his temples, a thin, reddish beard, eyes that look at you cunningly and somewhat distrustfully, and a old, husky voice... He looked like a real, typical merchant of the Middle Ages from some northern, Yaroslav province, or in any case, nothing like a "radical" of the intelligentsia, but like someone who had strived a great deal in those years in the workers' environment, which at that time had begun to stir...

Incidentally, let me add: there was also nothing of the noble family from which he came and with which he continued to maintain, as far as I know, the most "familiar" relations.

The young Lenin, in my memory, was not young. This was noted not only by me, but also by others who knew him at the time. It is not for nothing that they called him "old man" in the Peterburg "Alliance for the Struggle," the primary cell of the future party. We often joked that even as a child, Lenin was probably just as bald and "old" as he seemed to us in 1895...

At the meeting in question, Lenin gave a synopsis of the literary and political innovations of the day, the first publications legally printed in Russia itself and which had become accessible to all. Several months earlier, a book by P. Struve, "*Kriticheskiye Zametki. K Voprosu of Ekonomicheskoy Razvitiy Rossii*" [Critical Comments On the Problem of Russia's Economic Development], had come out and drawn universal attention to itself and its author. Just a few days before this meeting of ours, I managed to publish a book by Plekhanov, under the pseudonym Beltov, "*K Voprosu o Razvitiy Monisticheskogo Vzglyada na Istoriyu*" [On Developing a Monistic View of History], a book that gave a tremendous, decisive impetus to the spirit of Marxism in Russia.

Lenin, having responded extraordinarily favorably to the Plekhanov-Beltov book, directed his criticism against Struve with all his great energy and all his inherent talent...

Lenin was both right and wrong in his criticism, aimed at Struve, then a Marxist, now a master of reactionary matters. Struve's Marxism at that time was unquestionably biased toward bourgeois reformism, and Lenin managed as best possible to reveal this reformism. However, the more convincingly he exposed his opponent's reformism, the more clearly his own bias, a bias in the opposite direction, showed itself.

The traditional concept of a developing capitalist society in the form of an all-round reactionary mass, which was the typical basis for all revolutionary and utopian trends, pushed its way through the Marxist terminology...

My convergence toward Lenin takes its start from that very day, first expressed in the fact that after lengthy

discussions in a narrow circle, in which Struve also participated with Lenin at the same time, the above-mentioned synopsis appeared in a changed and edited form under the pseudonym of Tulin, in a collection published by me (and burned by the government), along with articles by Plekhanov, Struve, and other authors, including the one writing these lines... It sufficed to compare the original content of Lenin's synopsis to the text of the published article, to be convinced of the significance of the shift that had occurred. We believed in Lenin's ability for further evolution away from his original, distortedly sectarian Marxism toward genuine Marxism, the Marxism of international social democracy.

Not only I and my closest like-minded colleagues in Peterburg believed this, but so did representatives of the old generation of Russian Marxists—Plekhanov and Akselrod.

Precisely in 1895, right after the publication and confiscation of our collections, Lenin made his first trip abroad. I happened to see Lenin under the direct influence of his first meeting with Plekhanov, and Plekhanov, after having examined Lenin closely. Plekhanov shared his observations with me on the subject of Lenin. Having gone to Geneva in early summer, we all went to the mountains together and stayed in the fairly remote village of Ormony, spending time in walks and endless conversations.

In this idyllic situation, it was hard to foresee the storms that later scattered us to different sides...

However, at that time, in 1895 in Ormony, no evil premonitions whatsoever disturbed the harmony of our peaceful talks in the foothills of the Alps. Whereas in those days Lenin listened with delight to Plekhanov's masterful stories about the revolutionary 1870s and, strange though it may seem now, was timid in the face of the theoretical loftiness of the founder of Russian Marxism when he touched on corresponding themes in conversation, Plekhanov, for his part, looked sympathetically at the capable practical revolutionary, who reminded him, in terms of his proprietorial concern for organization, of an old friend from his youth, the famous Narodnaya Volya member Aleksandr Mikhaylov.

However, while devoting, in his expectations, a prominent role in the upcoming development of social democracy to Lenin as a practical worker, Plekhanov was as reserved as possible concerning Lenin's literary talents.

It was not well written, as the French say. This is not a literary work, it is unlike anything, Plekhanov said. He was organically in no condition to bear Lenin's article in the collection, which, regardless of the alterations, preserved the original formlessness of its structure and despite all its agitative efficacy, it seemed, attested to the fact that its author was not a natural writer, but a practical worker who had picked up a pen only by way of an exception, necessitated by the unusual nature of the subject.

However, precisely such an approach to this new personage in Russian social democracy prevented Plekhanov from treating Lenin's views and way of thinking with proper attention and criticism... He did not see Lenin as a potential dominant influence on a whole generation of people and, oblivious, overlooked certain features of his spiritual personality, that would otherwise have forced him to be on guard and sound the alarm. Meanwhile, Plekhanov, who was, in general, so strict and intolerant with regard to any deviations from the ideas of orthodox Marxism, in this case displayed an indulgence that was not inherent in him, precisely because he saw the significance of this new person not at all in his ideas, but in his initiative and talent as a party organizer. For the sake of this, he was also prepared to peek through his fingers at the mischief of Lenin's pen, at his awkward excursion into, as it seemed to Plekhanov, an area so unsuited to him...

At that time already, in an alpine idyll, I formed a vague and, for the time being, still unrecognized feeling that these two Marxist social democrats, so dissimilar in spite of, it would seem, their common dogma, do not share a common language with each other and somehow are looking differently at different aspects.

It goes without saying, in those "prehistoric" days, I had not yet recognized the profound reasons for their mutual misunderstanding. However, in any case, the contrast between the two natures was already plain to see at that time.

Whereas from Plekhanov, like from an inexhaustible mine of wisdom, it was possible to extract thoughts and information on the most diverse fields of human knowledge, to converse with him, with enlightenment for oneself, not only on politics, but also art, literature, the theater, philosophy... with Lenin, despite all his knowledge of Russian economic literature and familiarity with the works of Marx and Engels, one could speak only of problems of the movement. He, either little or not at all interested in anything else, having touched on the native soil of the movement, was immediately transformed, like the mythical Antaeus, becoming strong, scintillating, and one could see the thorough consideration in each of his thoughts, the tracks of a life experience which, regardless of its brevity and relative simplicity, managed to shape him into a genuine specialist in revolutionary work and to reveal his innate giftedness.

Whether this revolutionary work, which for the time being still was not so much practiced, as shaped in the head of its future organizer, really was work that answered the goals and methods of international social democracy, it was still hard to judge in Russia of the 1890s. One must recall that the Russian workers' movement at the time had hardly taken its first steps, and the task of the social democratic groups, of these "alliances for the struggle," also debutantes, was reduced to leadership of strikes and to efforts to direct the attention of the proletariat in its struggle not only toward its own

direct enemy, the entrepreneurs, but also toward their friend and protector, the tsarist autocratic government.

Lenin performed this elementary, by current standards, agitation and propaganda function with extraordinary art. As a monument to his feverish work at the time, besides underground proclamations, several popular brochures remain, in which individual problems of the workers' movement (for example, the question of fines) were treated in a form uncommonly accessible even in the most unconscious proletarian environment. It goes without saying, for those of us who had worked in the same groups and had one way or another come into contact with his activity, the sectarian features, perceptible in the synopsis mentioned by me, would have been set aside somewhere in the background and would have seemed somewhat unimportant compared to the burning needs of the movement, so brilliantly satisfied by Lenin.

Moreover, soon, when Lenin, I, and many of our comrades found ourselves scattered in prisons and exiles, Russian Marxism in all its then nuances was gathered and united in a Marxist monthly, *NOVOYE SLOVO*, openly published in Russian. The legalization of a Marxist periodical organ in tsarist Russia seemed like such an enormous gain for society that it disposed even the previously sectarian-minded Lenin to a less sectarian style. It seemed, Lenin, who corresponded with me in 1898 and 1899 from his own Siberian point to the point where, by order of the police, I had my own mandatory residence, was definitely emancipated by this from his previously inherent viewpoint, that of a narrow underground group, through the simplifying prism of which he was accustomed to examining the whole complex perspective of Russia's social development.

Unfortunately, this only seemed so. My agreement with Lenin and that of many other social-democratic Marxists was a deceptive mirage, the appearance of which we attributed to the primitive nature not only of the workers' movement in the 1890s, which I already mentioned, but also of the entire Russian sociopolitical life of that time on the whole, which had not yet formed organized parties and was unfamiliar with systematic or somewhat developed political struggle. After all, whereas social democracy, as an all-Russian party, was formed, nominally at that, in 1898, and in fact only in 1903, the appearance of other, both socialist as well as bourgeois parties, related to still later days.

Martov and I had to pay dearly for this misunderstanding, when at the end of our exiles we concluded, in Lenin's terms, our "triple union" (Lenin, Martov and I), having set our goal of creating an illegal literary center: the newspaper *ISKRA* and the magazine *ZARYA*, and to make them a tool for building a truly all-Russian united and organized party. All three of us supposedly had a common ideological platform—the struggle for an orthodox Marxist orientation in the party, against tendencies in the movement that had begun to be noted toward, on the one hand, unprincipled practiciness, and on the other, toward so-called "revisionism," inspired by

Bernstein's example in Germany and which had gained broad popularity in circles of the Marxist intelligentsia. Through revisionism, Marxism gradually deviated from social democracy.

To the extent that social depression in Russia was replaced by the growing upsurge and that the social movement, aimed against the tsarist autocracy, became ever more differentiated, this ideological commonality with Lenin became ever more illusory, just as though there were words, as though there were identical concepts which had an entirely dissimilar, radically different meaning.

Of course, that which is now clear after all that has occurred only slowly became clear in those 3 years of joint work with Lenin on *ISKRA* when, arguing on individual, separate subjects, we still were unable to grasp the overall meaning of the dissent, which formed the basis of all these arguments...

However, the Lenin of the *ISKRA* period was no longer the Lenin whom we knew in the years of prehistoric Marxism... That which slipped by relatively unnoticed in the underground group of the Peterburg "Alliance for the Struggle," given the simplicity of the tasks then requiring resolution, had now, behind the editorial desk, under the circumstance of a political struggle that grew more heated with every day, become an extraordinarily unpleasant complication in our common work.

Yet, after all, it must be said that all of us who were closest to the matter—Martov, Vera Zasulich and I—valued Lenin not only for his knowledge, his mind and his ability, but also for his exceptional devotion, his daily readiness to give himself entirely, burdening himself beyond measure with the most thankless functions and invariably performing them conscientiously.

At first, or rather, until the very break with him at the 1903 Congress, we did not notice the most, perhaps, significant stage in the development of his social outlook. We had overlooked how, in the views of this subjectively most devoted adept of Marx's teachings, a concept took shape by degrees about the party and its role in the workers' movement, which was directly contrary to the entire Marxist social concept and contradicted the whole spirit of international social democracy.

Meanwhile, through his printed works of the time, devoted to the problems of organizing a party, especially his famous "*What to Do?*," and through his ever more frequent practical dealings with leaders of the movement, Lenin systematically and intentionally, step by step, built his own organization of "professional revolutionaries."

No one knew, like he did, how to infect people with his plans that way, how to impose his will, how to subjugate his own personality, like this seemingly so unprepossessing and rather coarse person, apparently having no gifts whatsoever to be charming...

Neither Plekhanov, nor Martov, nor anyone else possessed the secret of his directly hypnotic influence on people, I would say, the mastery over them, radiated by Lenin. Plekhanov they read, Martov they loved, but only Lenin they followed unquestioningly, as the sole, indisputable leader. For only Lenin was, especially in Russia, the rare phenomenon of a man of iron will, indomitable energy, pouring fanatical faith into the movement, into his work, and not the least into himself. Whereas the French King Ludwig XVI was once able to say, "I am the state," Lenin without exaggeration felt that he is the party, that he is the will of the movement concentrated into one person. And he acted according to this...

1903 was the end of my personal interaction with Lenin. I split with him together with my other comrades on the editorial board and in the party at a time, when Lenin's views on Russia's social development and on the revolution facing it still seemed fairly similar to the views shared by us all. After all, Lenin's specific ideas were defined later: the first step in his evolution dates only roughly since 1905, after which the second and decisive step already relates to the epoch of world war and Russia's subsequent catastrophe...

**Footnote:** A.N. Potresov (Starover) (1869-1934) was one of the leaders of Menshevism and led its right wing. In 1917, he was one of the editors of the Menshevik newspaper DEN. After the October Revolution, he emigrated abroad. His reminiscences about Lenin were written in 1927.

#### N. Valentinov: Meetings with Lenin

New York, 1953

(1904)

It is known that in the Russian workers', peasants' and petty bourgeois environment, the patronymic—"Petrovich," "Ivanovich," "Ilich," etc.—was (I do not know if this custom exists now) used as a nickname. It was usually applied either to respected elderly people or to persons with specific features—grey hair, a long beard—which give them an elderly appearance. An element of familiarity, almost as a rule, accompanied this nickname. Lenin, when I became acquainted with him, was 34 years old. Regardless of his baldness, I saw nothing in his appearance that would have made him look old. He was solidly put together, very agile, with a lively face and young eyes. Nonetheless, the Bolshevik circle (with the exception of A.A. Bogdanov and me) in personal interaction and behind his back called him "Ilich." Both his coevals, as well as those who were somewhat older than he, for instance, Olminskiy, who looked old with his grey hair and beard, called him this. However, in calling Lenin "Ilich" the familiarity was absent. Not one of his retinue would be so bold as to joke with him or clap him on the shoulder in a friendly manner. There was some kind of invisible barrier, a line separating Lenin from other members of the party, and I not once saw anyone cross it.

Lenin was not only called "Ilich." I did not immediately understand who it was a question of, when I for the first time heard from Gusev: "We are going to see the old man." Speaking in general, it was not hard to be considered an "old man" in Russia. One needed only slightly surpass the average life span, which was low... However, Lenin was not called "old man" in this sense. Regardless of his advertised internationalism, even cosmopolitanism, the environment that Lenin "commanded" was very Russian. Russian does not always mean "born of a Russian father and Russian mother." It is usually an unconscious permeation with the "Russian spirit," the way of life, tastes, habits, concepts and views, and it was impossible to separate a great deal in the genesis of these from Russian orthodoxy—the historical religious foundation of Russian culture. Having received this from the East, the Russian church bowed in deference to the image of the monk—old, holy, and at the same time wise, having grasped the highest command of God, acting "in patience, love and prayer"... "Old man" is not an age-related definition, but a spiritual and qualitative one. Precisely in this sense, Chernyshevskiy called R. Owen a "holy old man." When they called Lenin "old man," this was essentially an acknowledgment of him as an "elder," i.e., as wise, and a certain insuperable desire to obey Lenin was combined with respect for his wisdom...

It is not enough to say that I liked Lenin. It would be somewhat funny to say that I "fell in love" with him. However, this verb, perhaps, is more accurate than the other and defines my attitude toward him over the course of many months...

Not only the harmony of his words and actions attracted me to Lenin... A somewhat different and complex impression was produced and, most likely, this is the enigmatic force and charm of which Potresov spoke. It seemed to me that there was something extremely important about him, unknown to me. What? I could not answer this clearly. I only know that something drew me to Lenin. Yet, it was not easy to get to know him. Frankness was alien to him. He was very reticent...

Discussions of literature turned out to be a good way for me to discover a bit more about Lenin. What kind of works does he love, what kind of people interest him, what about them does he like or dislike?..

How was I to set about this? After all, it would have been funny to ask: Vladimir Ilich, whose essays do you like most of all, and why? That which I was able to obtain in this area could only be random, from casually arising conversations. Thus, I happened to discover that Lenin loves Tolstoy's "War and Peace," but considers the moral and philosophical thoughts contained in the novel foolish...

There was a fleeting discussion of the novels of Goncharov. Lenin did not at all value "Precipice." He considered the main hero of Rayskiy's novel an "insignificant gossip" and another unprintable word, and

viewed Mark Volokhov, who was under surveillance, as a "foul caricature of revolutionaries." His attitude toward Goncharov's *Oblomov* was different and highly original.

"I would take not one, but even a number of our party comrades, put them under lock and key in a room, and force them to read *Oblomov*. Did you read it? Now then, read it again! And when they beg, when they say, we cannot read it any more, then one should start the interrogation: Did you understand the essence of Oblomovism? Did you feel that it sits within you? Have you firmly resolved to rid yourself of this disease?"

I happened to learn that in grammar school Lenin wrote an essay on the theme of Pushkin's *The Prophet*, but this discussion was interrupted and did not come up again. Only later did I discover that at Simbirskiy Grammar School, where Lenin studied, F.M. Kerenskiy, the father of Aleksandr Fedorovich Kerenskiy, taught literature. This man inspired many of his pupils, including Lenin, with a great respect and love for Pushkin. Mercilessly scolding Kerenskiy's son and referring very favorably to Kerenskiy the father, Lenin spoke of this to P.A. Krasikov, and a discussion of this arose on the following subject. In 1921 (or 1920, I cannot say exactly), Lenin visited Vkhutemas—the Higher Artistic School in Moscow. If I am not mistaken, there is also something about this in some note of Krupskaya's. To Lenin's question of what young people are reading now, for instance, whether they love Pushkin, the students of Vkhutemas almost unanimously answered that Pushkin had "grown outdated," they do not recognize him, he is "bourgeois," a representative of "parasitic feudalism," and now no one can be fond of him, they all like Mayakovskiy—he is a revolutionary, and somewhat higher than Pushkin as a poet. Lenin listened to this, shrugging his shoulders. He could not stand Mayakovskiy's poetry. After visiting Vkhutemas, talking to Krasikov, Lenin said:

"I completely fail to understand this fondness for Mayakovskiy. All his writings are jokes, gibberish to which the word 'revolution' is glued. In my conviction, revolutions do not need buffoons like Mayakovskiy who play with revolution. However, if they decide that they need him, then let it be so. Only let people know the standards and not get into mischief, not place buffoons, even if they are sworn to the revolution, higher than the 'bourgeois' Pushkin; we should not let them convince us that Mayakovskiy is three heads above Beranger..."

My discussion with Lenin about Nekrasov was more thorough. Lenin knew him well and, of course, loved him. There is nothing surprising about this. Nekrasov invariably and rightfully held the place of the favorite icon in the iconostases of several revolutionary generations. If anything seemed strange to me, it was Lenin's almost tender sympathy for the peasant-loving passages in Nekrasov's poems, especially in "Who Lives Well in Rus?" To my eyes, this was weakly tied to Lenin's

Marxist love for the proletariat—after all, people usually thought of him as the antipode of the peasantry...

To my great surprise and particular satisfaction (I am quite fond of Turgenev), I found out that Lenin is very familiar with Turgenev, somewhat more so than I. He remembered his main novels, his stories, and even tiny little things that Turgenev called "Poems in Prose." Incidentally, he read Turgenev rather frequently and diligently, and several of Turgenev's phrases and expressions, for instance, from *Nov* [Virgin Soil], *Rudin* and *Dym* [Smoke], had entered Lenin's lexicon...

He often used the image of Voroshilov, whom he detested, from Turgenev's novel *Dym*. Lenin's concept of him was usually accompanied by a layer of burning scorn. He considered it one of the strongest insults to call somebody from among the writing brotherhood a Voroshilov, and from Lenin's works we know that he abused this epithet mercilessly...

At one time, Lenin displayed great goodwill toward the young Trotsky, who returned from exile in 1902. However, after the congress, when Trotsky ended up in the ranks of the Mensheviks, Lenin no longer called him anything other than a Voroshilov, and to increase the stigma, he attached the epithet "Balalaykin" (Shchedrin) to Voroshilov. I remember on 1 May 1904 in Geneva, Trotsky gave an excessively flowery, yet nonetheless effective speech at a meeting of emigrants. When I gave Lenin my impression of this speech, a sarcastic fire ran through his eyes: "I regret to ascertain that you like the speeches of Voroshilov-Balaykins."

"However, you cannot deny that Trotsky is an excellent orator?"

"All Voroshilov-Balaykins are orators. This category includes under-educated phrase-mongering seminarists, privat-docents who gossip about Marxism and filthy barristers. Trotsky has elements of all these categories..."

At the end of January 1904 in Geneva, I was sitting in a small cafe on one of the streets, adjoining Plaine de Plainpalais Square, with Lenin, Vorovskiy and Gusev. Arriving after the others, I do not know what started the discussions between Vorovskiy and Gusev. I only heard that Vorovskiy was listing literary works that had never enjoyed great success, and several that had faded so much in even a short time that they no longer encountered anything except boredom and indifference. I remember, among such things he indicated Goethe's *Werter*, several things by George Sand, and our Karamzin's *Bednaya Liza* [Poor Lisa], as well as other works, including Mardovtsev's *Znameniye Vremeni* [Sign of the Times]. I interrupted the discussion and said that, since he is including Mardovtsev, why not mention Chernyshevskiy's *Chto Delat?* [What to Do?]

"It is amazing," I said, "how can people get carried away and praise such a thing? It is hard to imagine anything



more untalented, primitive and, at the same time, pre-  
tentious. Most pages of this celebrated novel are written  
in such language that it is impossible to read them.  
Nonetheless, to a comment on his lack of artistic talent,  
Chernyshevskiy arrogantly remarked: 'I am no worse  
than narrators, who consider themselves great.'

Until then, Lenin had been looking distractedly some-  
where to the side, not participating at all in the conver-  
sation. Having heard what I said, he leapt up with such  
haste that the stool beneath him squeaked. His face  
seemed petrified and his cheeks had reddened—he was  
always like this when he was upset.

"Do you realize what you are saying?" he threw at me.  
"How can you get the amazing, foolish idea in your head  
of calling the work of Chernyshevskiy, the greatest and  
most talented representative of socialism until Marx,  
primitive and untalented! Marx himself called him a  
great Russian writer."

"He did not call him that for '*What to Do?*' Marx  
probably never read the thing," I said.

"How do you know that Marx did not read it? I declare:  
it is intolerable to call '*What to Do?*' primitive and  
untalented. Under its influence, hundreds of people have  
become revolutionaries. Could this be so, if Cherny-  
shevskiy had written without talent and primitively? For  
instance, he attracted my brother, and he also attracted  
me. **He influenced me most deeply of all.** When did you  
read '*What to Do?*' It is useless if the milk is still wet on  
your lips. Chernyshevskiy's novel is too complex, too full  
of thoughts, in order to understand and evaluate it an  
early age. I myself tried to read it, I believe, at age 14. It  
was an unprofitable and superficial reading. Yet, after  
the execution of my brother, knowing that Cherny-  
shevskiy's novel was one of his favorite works, I under-  
took a real reading and sat down with it not for several  
days, but a week. Only then did I understand it pro-  
foundly. It is a thing which can give impetus to a whole  
life. Untalented works do not have such an influence.

"Then," Gusev asked, "it is no accident that you titled  
your 1903 booklet '*What to Do?*'?"

"Really," Lenin answered, "do you even have to guess?"

Of the three of us, I least of all gave significance to  
Lenin's words. On the contrary, it sparked great interest  
on Vorovskiy's part. He began to ask when, besides  
"*What to Do?*," Lenin had familiarized himself with  
other works by Chernyshevskiy and, in general, what  
kind of authors had especially great significance for him  
in the period, preceding his familiarity with Marxism.  
Lenin was unaccustomed to talking about himself. In  
this alone, he already differed from the overwhelming  
majority of people. This time, changing his own rule, he  
answered Vorovskiy's question in great detail. As a  
result, not a written, but a spoken page of his autobiog-  
raphy of obtained. In 1919, V.V. Vorovskiy, who was  
briefly chairman of Gosizdat, considered it necessary to  
restore to memory and record the story that he had

heard. I do not know whether he wanted to put it in the  
publication of Lenin's works, which had begun at that  
time, or whether he wanted to write an article about  
Lenin. Aspiring to give the record the greatest accuracy,  
he turned for help to the memories of people who had  
been present at the discussion with Lenin, i.e., to Gusev  
and to me. Turning to Lenin himself would have been  
the best way to establish the correctness of the story.  
Vorovskiy did this too, but received an angry answer:  
"There is no time at all to work on trifles now." At the  
time, Lenin was very upset with Vorovskiy for the poor  
fulfillment of party instructions by Gosizdat. Gusev,  
who found himself at the front of the civil war, was of  
minimal assistance to Vorovskiy. He returned the note-  
book, but left the broad margins in it for comments and  
additions to Vorovskiy's records almost without com-  
ments, mentioning that he does not remember much. As  
opposed to him, I made some additions to the records  
and added several of Lenin's expressions, which had  
been strongly retained in my memory. Incidentally, my  
additions were very small. Vorovskiy's record was so  
well and completely made that there was no need for  
them. Afterwards, I never saw Vorovskiy again. He was  
soon appointed ambassador to Italy and was killed in  
Lozanne in 1923.

Vorovskiy's record, reviving Lenin's story, throws new  
light on the history of his spiritual and political forma-  
tion. It should be understood that I only realized this  
much later. It was necessary to assume that in the USSR,  
where even the most insignificant bunches of papers  
having to do with Lenin are being collected, Vorovskiy's  
record would be printed. However, search for it though I  
might in the Soviet literature accessible to me, I found it  
nowhere. There was not even the slightest mention of it.  
How can this be explained? Vorovskiy's record estab-  
lishes, in the words of Lenin himself, that he had become  
a revolutionary even before familiarity with Marxism,  
that Chernyshevskiy "inspired" him toward revolution  
and that is why, not giving in to the stubbornly sup-  
ported delusion, it is impossible to claim that only Marx  
and Marxism alone "molded" Lenin. Under the influ-  
ence of Chernyshevskiy's works, it turned out that when  
Lenin encountered Marxism he was already heavily  
armed with several revolutionary ideas, which made up  
specific features of his political physiognomy precisely as  
Lenin. All this is extremely important and lies in sharp  
contradiction to the party canons and ordinary biogra-  
phies of Lenin. It is highly possible that Vorovskiy's  
record was not published for precisely for this reason. If  
this assumption is wrong, one must draw another con-  
clusion: it has not been found in Vorovskiy's papers, or  
in the part of them that made it into the party archives,  
and should be considered lost. In this case, the excerpts  
that I made from it when it was in my hands for several  
days, acquire importance. I greatly regret that, not  
granting it due significance at the time, I was too lazy to  
copy it entirely. Here is what Lenin said:

"It seems, I never read so much before in my life, even in  
prison in Peterburg or in Siberia, as I did in the year after

my exile to the countryside from Kazan (Lenin was sent to Kokushkino, the estate of his mother and aunt, 40 versts from Kazan. The exile lasted from the beginning of December 1887 to November 1888. He read *'What to Do?'* in Kokushkino in the summer of 1887 (author's note)). I read like an addict from early morning until late in the day. I read university courses, assuming that they would soon let me return to the university. I read various belles lettres and was fond of Nekrasov: my sister and I (his sister, Anna Ilinichna, was sent from Peterburg in May 1887 after the execution of Aleksandr Ulyanov (author's note)) competed to see who could learn more of his poems faster. However, most of all I read articles, printed in their day in the journals SOVREMMENIK, OTECHESTVENNYE ZAPISKI and VESTNIK YEVROPY. They contained the most interesting and best things that had been printed on social and political issues in previous decades. Chernyshevskiy was my favorite writer. I read everything printed in SOVREMMENIK up to the very last line and more than once. Thanks to Chernyshevskiy, I had my first acquaintance with philosophical materialism. He was the first to show me Hegel's role in the development of philosophical thought and the concept of dialectical method came from him, after which it was much easier to master Marx's dialectics. From cover to cover, I read Chernyshevskiy's wonderful essays on aesthetics, art and literature, and the revolutionary figure of Belinskiy became clear. I read all of Chernyshevskiy's articles on the peasant problem, his comments on the translation of Mills' political economy. It is precisely Chernyshevskiy who lashed bourgeois economic science: this turned out to be a good preparation for switching to Marx later. With special interest and use, I read the reviews of foreign life, remarkable in terms of thought, written by Chernyshevskiy. I read Chernyshevskiy with "a pencil in my hands," making many notes and abstracts from that which I read. The encyclopedic nature of Chernyshevskiy's knowledge, the brilliance of his revolutionary views, and his merciless polemic talent won me over. Having learned his address, I even wrote him a letter and was very bitter about not receiving an answer. The news of his death, which arrived after a year, was very sad for me (author's note: Chernyshevskiy died in 1889 in Saratov). Chernyshevskiy, suppressed by the censors, was unable to write freely. It was necessary to guess on many of his views, but if I read his articles closely for a long time, as I did, an unmistakable key was obtained for completely deciphering his political views, even those expressed allegorically, in half-hints (his sister Anna may also have helped "decipher" Chernyshevskiy's political views. She was 6 years older than Lenin, returned to Peterburg in an environment of opposition-minded students and until 1893 shared populist views (author's note)). Musicians exist who are said to have perfect pitch, and other people exist, of whom it can be said that they have perfect revolutionary sensitivity. Marx was such, and so was Chernyshevskiy. To this day, it is impossible to indicate a single Russian revolutionary who with such substantiation, penetration and force, as

Chernyshevskiy, understood and condemned the cowardly, false and traitorous nature of all liberalism. In the journals that I had in my hands, possibly, there were also articles on Marxism, for instance, articles by Mikhaylovskiy or Zhukovskiy. Right now, I cannot firmly say whether or not I read them. One thing is unquestionable: they did not attract my attention before familiarity with Marx's *'Das Kapital'* and Plekhanov's book *'(Nashi Raznoglasiya) [Our Disagreements]*, although thanks to Chernyshevskiy's articles I became interested in economic problems, in the specifics of how the Russian countryside lives. The essays of V.V. (Vorontsov), Gleb Uspenskiy, Engelhardt and Skaldin touched on this. Before familiarity with the works of Marx, Engels and Plekhanov, only Chernyshevskiy had the main, predominant influence on me, and it began with *'What to Do?'* Chernyshevskiy's greatest service lies in the fact that he not only showed that any right-minded and truly decent person ought to be a revolutionary, but also something else, even more important: what a revolutionary should be like, what his rules should be, how he should approach his goal, and through what methods and means he should achieve its implementation? All his mistakes, of which not so much he is guilty, so much as the undeveloped nature of social relations of his day, fade before this service.

"Speaking of Chernyshevskiy's influence on me, mainly, I cannot help but mention an additional influence, experienced at that time from Dobrolyubov—a friend and satellite of Chernyshevskiy's. I also got seriously down to reading his articles in the same SOVREMMENIK. Two of his articles—one about Goncharov's novel *'Oblomov,'* the other about Turgenev's novel *'Nakanune'* [On the Eve]—hit me like lightning. Of course, I had read *'On the Eve'* previously, but read it too early and related to it like a child. Dobrolyubov beat such an approach out of me. I read this work again, like *'Oblomov,'* with Dobrolyubov's footnotes. In the dismantling of *'Oblomov,'* he made a call, an appeal for will, activeness and revolutionary struggle, and from analysis of *'On the Day Eve'* he made a genuine revolutionary proclamation, written so that it has not been forgotten to this day. That is how one should write! When ZARYA was organized, I always told Starover (Potresov) and Zasluch: 'We need literary reviews like that. We have no Dobrolyubov, whom Engels called a socialist Lessing...'

Chernyshevskiy was, of course, a most extreme revolutionary. Already at age 20 (see his diary), he was a decisive montagnard, a "partisan for socialists and communists," a supporter of "dictatorship," and felt "an insuperable expectation of the coming revolution and hunger for it," he dreamed of a "secret printing press" and of "writing" calls for an uprising. He was the same decades later. Arrested in July 1862, having spent 2 years in Petropavlovskaya Fortress (there he wrote his *'What to Do?'*), he was convicted and sent to Siberia. In the dismantling of his work in the investigative commission and the Senate that had convicted, two records were received with references on the literary activity of Chernyshevskiy, compiled on order of the III Department (the Okhranka). One of them, written by poet and

translator V.D. Komarov, who betrayed Chernyshevskiy, it is proven in great detail that the underground proclamations being issued to a tremendous extent were inspired by Chernyshevskiy in his articles in the legal journal SOVREMENNİK...

It is hopeless and impossible to refute this. It is the essential truth, and one of the models (very brilliant) for the translation of Chernyshevskiy's articles and ideas into the language of underground works, unquestionably, was a proclamation titled "*Molodaya Rossiya*" [Young Russia], which appeared in Moscow in May 1862. It expressed Chernyshevskiy's entire sociopolitical program, true, with contradictions and great "over-indulgences." For example, it demands the "elimination of marriage, as a phenomenon immoral to the highest degree," and of the "family," as an institution that obstructs "human development." Dissatisfied with these "exaggerations," Chernyshevskiy sent Sleptsov, a prominent member of "Land and Will," to Moscow to persuade the compilers of the proclamation to somehow smooth over the unfavorable impression created by it. The proclamation's compilers later explained that their excessiveness arose from a desire "to become nauseating to all liberal and reactionary devils." The proclamation was published in the name of the "Central Revolutionary Committee" (the entire staff of this committee of students at the time was under the arrest of the Moscow police unit, but the student P.G. Zaychnevskiy, an ardent support of Chernyshevskiy's, wrote it...

An admirer of Chernyshevskiy, the French Jacobins and Blanqui (all this ties together greatly), Zaychnevskiy later became a guard of the party of "Russian Jacobin-Blanquists"... Zaychnevskiy never had a shortage of supporters, including many women, for instance, Oshanina, who became a prominent member of the "Narodnaya Volya" Executive Committee; Ye. Olovennikova, who participated in the 1 March attempt; N.I. Yasneva, who later married Golubev; and others. Yasneva, Zaychnevskiy's most faithful political follower from 1882 to the day of his death, was a person of character, but not a brilliant figure. It is important to remember her for the following reason. When Zaychnevskiy was sent to Siberia, Yasneva, who had been involved in his work, was sent to Samara in 1891 under open surveillance by the police, where she became acquainted with Lenin and often visited the Ulyanov family. In the Bolshevik literature, there is an indication that in Samara Lenin had a strong influence on the formation of her world outlook and political views. This is untrue. In her meetings with Lenin, Yasneva, 9 years older than he (she was born in 1861), already had a revolutionary past. Her world outlook had been shaped under the influence of Chernyshevskiy and Zaychnevskiy. "Zaychnevskiy," she told Mitskevich (see his article in PROLETARSKAYA REVOLYUTSIYA), "made us read Chernyshevskiy's 'Comments on Mill.'" Lenin also was influenced by Chernyshevskiy and, only recently having become a Marxist, was 21 years old. He did not open up new prospects for Yasneva, but one would think that she did for him, and to a far greater extent. At this time, Lenin was especially interested in the history of the Russian revolutionary movement, seeking

personal acquaintance with its participants. He was also very interested in Zaychnevskiy's party of "Jacobin-Blanquists," and Yasneva told him about its program and history, beginning with "*Molodaya Rossiya*." Something on this can be found in her article "The Last Guard," printed in Book II in the "*O Lenine*" [On Lenin] collections...

"In conversations with me," she wrote, "Vladimir Ilich often wrote on the question of the seizure of power—one of the points of our Jacobin program. He did not dispute either the possibility or desirability of seizing power, but could in no way understand on precisely what 'people' we think to rely. Now, even more than before, I conclude that at that time he had already thought of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is possible to find a number of claims that the idea of seizure of power and dictatorship really took shape in Lenin's head at that time, regardless of the fact that it ran counter to criticism of the idea of seizing power in Plekhanov's work "Our Disagreements," with the mastery of which in 1889 Lenin began his Marxist upbringing. Unquestionably, the talks with Yasneva about "*Molodaya Rossiya*," Zaychnevskiy, and the "Jacobin-Blanquist" party settled into Lenin's memory. The following fact indicates this. In autumn 1904, after 12 years of complete unawareness of Yasneva and the absence of any correspondence whatsoever between them, Lenin suddenly remembered her, writes a letter to her from Geneva to Saratov, was "extremely glad" to know that she is "alive," and "very much wanted to renew friendship" with her. What happened, that prompted him to remember her? It is easy to answer this: having written "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," Lenin at that time came to the firm conviction that an orthodox Marxist social democrat should be a Jacobin, that Jacobinism requires a dictatorship, that "it is impossible to carry out a revolution without a Jacobin purge," and "without the Jacobin violence of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the word is emasculated of any meaning." However, after all, following Chernyshevskiy's appeal, "*Molodaya Rossiya*" axed him, and is very close to that which the "Jacobin-Blanquist" program, set forth by Yasneva, developed. How could he not remember her! The more so, since Lenin discovered that Yasneva had joined the Bolshevik course and "holds solid positions with us" (the letter to Yasneva is published in Lenin's collected works). It seemed to me, it is appropriate to give this story, virtually unknown, about "*Molodaya Rossiya*," the "Jacobin-Blanquist" party, and Lenin's talks with Yasneva...

Let me add a few lines. Zaychnevskiy, head of the "Russian Jacobin-Blanquists," died in 1896, arguing on his death bed with Lavrov and proving that "the time is not far, when mankind will step into the reign of socialism." With his death, Mitskevich, one of Zaychnevskiy's most prominent followers, wrote in 1925: "Russian Jacobinism has died, in order to be resurrected in a new form in Russian Marxism—the revolutionary reign of Russian social democracy—in Bolshevism." Not only Yasneva, but "all the participants in Zaychnevskiy's group"—the same Mitskevich, A. Romanova, L. Romanova, Artsybashev, Orlov, and others—later

joined Lenin and became Bolsheviks. "Obviously, Jacobinism was predisposed to Bolshevism," and something else is also obvious: Bolshevism was predisposed to Jacobinism. In recalling the starting political document of Russian Jacobinism—the "*Molodaya Rossiya*" proclamation—but setting aside the fact that it sent Chernyshevskiy to the axe, Mitskevich indicated that this "noteworthy" work contains many slogans, put into practice by the October Revolution.

"Here are the predictions that it will fall first to Russia to implement the great work of socialism, here are the predictions that all opposition parties will unite against social revolution; here is the requirement of organizing social factories, social trade, nationalization of land, confiscation of church wealth, recognition of the need for a strictly centralized party for accomplishing revolution, which after the overthrow in the 'shortest possible time' will lay the foundations for a new economic and social way of life with the help of a dictatorship, regulating elections to national assemblies, such that supporters of the old order do not become members of it. All that is lacking in all these ideas about the October Revolution is the proletariat.

**Footnote:** N.V. Valentinov (Volskiy) (1879-1964) participated in the revolutionary movement from 1898, and led work in Kiev. In 1903 he was arrested and was released from prison after a lengthy hunger strike, still under special police surveillance. He soon fled abroad. After the 2nd RSDRP Congress, he joined the Bolsheviks. At the end of 1904, he switched to the Menshevik positions; he edited the Menshevik MOSKOVSKAYA GAZETA, and cooperated in a number of other Menshevik and bourgeois publications. In the years of reaction, he was a liquidationist. Having broken with Marxism, he began a revision of Marxist philosophy, which he aspired to "supplement" with the subjective and idealistic views of Mach and Avenarius. Lenin sharply criticized Valentinov's idealistic views in the article "Materialism and Empiriocriticism." After the October Revolution, he worked as deputy editor of TORGOVO-PROMYSHLENNAYA GAZETA, and participated in the USSR trade delegation in Paris. In 1930, he emigrated abroad. His reminiscences about Lenin were written in the early 1950s.

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### The Hard Fate of Memoirs

905B0020M Moscow KOMMUNIST in Russian No 5, Mar 90 (signed to press 16 Mar 90) pp 125-128

[Interview by V. Arkhipenko with Mikhail Petrovich Mchedlov, deputy director of the Institute for Marxism-Leninism]

[Text] The CPSU Central Committee Institute for Marxism-Leninism [IML] has begun to publish the books of a new 10-volume set of memoirs about V.I. Lenin. Readers have already received the first three volumes, two more are

on the way, and the rest will soon be submitted to the publishing house. Our correspondent, V. Arkhipenko, asked Mikhail Petrovich Mchedlov, deputy director of the IML, to talk about the new edition and how it differs from previous ones.

[Arkhipenko] The first question suggests itself...

[Mchedlov] I understand: you are curious as to why it is necessary to publish precisely this series of books. In brief, above all because to this day no complete collection of reminiscences about Lenin has been achieved. At first glance, the previous five-volume editions, prepared by the institute's employees, seemed solid and could claim sufficient soundness in terms of number of printers' sheets. However, glaring omissions are obvious to any reader, even slightly familiar with history: the books lacked the memoirs of people who lived near Lenin for years, who worked with him, who shared his grief and happiness. The ban on the names of the greatest party and state leaders, repressed in the 1930s, did not permit even raising the question of a possibility of publishing their memoirs. Moreover, all mention of their names was erased from the reminiscences.

I would like to relate one of the most typical examples. In 1922, Yemelyanov, a worker from Sestroretsk, told readers for the first time about a visit by Lenin and Zinovyev to Razliv. Later, his recollections were reprinted almost annually on Lenin's usual anniversary in various journals and collections. Time after time, they were supplemented with individual, basically unessential details. However, 1934 was the last time that readers were told in a publication that Zinovyev was with Lenin as well. Afterwards, Grigoriy Yevseyevich also disappeared from Yemelyanov's recollections, and several years later the author of the memoirs himself, sent to the camps, also disappeared. After his rehabilitation in the mid-1950s, the publications began again. However, since Zinovyev had not been rehabilitated at that time, Lenin continued to visit Razliv alone.

Only historians allowed into the special archives knew what kind of preparation the memoirs, popularized in the first years of Soviet power, had been subjected to. Not only names were scoffed, but also facts. There has been nothing new since the mid-1930s: some memorialists began to put facts that simply never occurred into their reminiscences. As you understand, it was a question of the fact that Stalin ought to have been with Lenin at one or another important moment.

All the erasures, suppressions and outright distortions that accumulated over the years were clearly expressed in the 5-volume set published in 1984. Recently, however, after the rehabilitation of thousands and thousands of illegally repressed people, an opportunity has opened up to return the names of Lenin's closest associates to history and acquaint a great many readers with their evidence. Let me elaborate: the circulation of each volume is 175,000 copies.

[Arkhipenko] But, after all, that really is not so many by the current concept of circulation...

[Mchedlov] In principle, it is already the capacity of the publishing house. However, I also know Politizdat's position: if the books "sell," there could be an additional printing.

[Arkhipenko] Well, could you elaborate on what specifically distinguishes the new publication from previous ones?

[Mchedlov] I already mentioned the appearance of names banned until recently. I would like to add just a few: Zinovyev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov, Tomskiy, Smilga, Radek... Many other revolutionary leaders are given their say in the new edition. Their reminiscences, devoted to various periods in Lenin's life, will help the modern reader better understand Lenin's views and the motivations for his decisions, clarify his role in the most important historical events and the specifics of his interrelations with colleagues and opponents, and more clearly show his inherent character traits. The images of the authors of the reminiscences themselves are revealed in a new way: they were exceptional people, unquestionably gifted with literary talent, who knew how to write brilliantly, graphically and intelligibly.

Take a historical figure, like Trotsky: even until recently, in publications prepared by our institute his name could appear only in the context of derogatory and degrading epithets, and his participation in the most important political, state and military events was hushed up or depicted in a distorted form. Without argument, Trotsky is a complex figure, contradictory, and not simple. Many of his concepts evoked the objections of his contemporaries, and time itself has confirmed their erroneousness. To this day, debates rage on the subject of his views and actions. However, Trotsky knew Lenin since 1902, met with him at party congresses and international socialist conferences, and Lenin worked together with him in the most important, one could say, key state posts from 1917 until the end of his life. His memories of Vladimir Ilich are extraordinarily valuable, and now they are included in the new 10-volume edition.

There is yet another detail. In past decades, only the memoirs of Lenin's supporters were printed. There was no place for the evidence of people who differed with him in views, who argued or were even at odds with him. Now, they have been given a say in this publication. For example, in the recently released third volume, the reader will find excerpts from the reminiscences of prominent Mensheviks: Martov, Maslov and Valentinov. Kautskiy's memoirs will also be printed. This is just the first step toward the fuller opening of memoir literature.

[Arkhipenko] The preface to the first volume (which is the same for the whole publication) somewhat vaguely states that the compilers were unable to include all reminiscences in it. It is entirely understandable that it would be impossible to publish all the evidence of

eyewitnesses, due to sheer volume. However, what were the criteria for selecting material...

[Mchedlov] This is not an easy question. Really, many memoirs remain out of the picture. If the task were to use everything known, we would then have to publish not 10, but dozens of volumes. For example, consider the reminiscences of Finnish comrades who met with Lenin during the first Russian Revolution and in 1917, during his last underground work. An entire collection of such eyewitness accounts has been published. However, only one of these accounts was used in the fourth volume—that of the Finnish actor Koosela, who was instructed to ensure Lenin's illegal trip into Finland. In the 9th and 10th volumes, a few other reminiscences by the Finns will be published. However, not everything will be published due to the lack of space. There is a mass of thematic collections, prepared along the principle of workers on Lenin, or peasants, or soldiers on Lenin. Many accounts are redundant, while others are simply uninteresting. Speaking of the basic principle for selecting material, we tried to take the most interesting works, ones revealing various facets of Lenin's thought, nature, methods of work, and so forth, from the sea of things that have been written.

[Arkhipenko] We have deviated slightly from the question of the specific features of this new edition.

[Mchedlov] Perhaps... I think that the 10-volume work is noteworthy not only because it offers names previously prohibited here. It also offers famous reminiscences to the contemporary reader in a new way. To be precise, one must say that they will appear exactly in their old, so to speak, first-edition form. Let me add that the compilers of each volume had to do a colossal amount of work to discover the first publications. This had to be done in order to determine whether or not they had been subjected to preparation later. It turned out that most of the reminiscences in the first and second 5-volume sets were published in abbreviated form. Many valuable fragments had been removed from earlier editions. However, we are giving preference precisely to these earliest versions, above all because the reminiscences were written while still "fresh," when events were still well-kept in memory. Moreover, they were printed during Lenin's life, when he himself could be the judge of what was printed about him. Unquestionably, this sharply raised the author's responsibility for every line and ruled out the possibility of willful or unwitting distortion of the facts.

In 1921, the journal PROLETARSKAYA REVOLYUTSIYA began to come out in Moscow, and a year later KRASNAYA LETOPIS appeared in Leningrad, then still Petrograd. Right now, both these publications, kept only in large libraries, are in practice inaccessible to the mass reader. However, the majority of reminiscences about Lenin were printed precisely in them in the 1920s. Our associates, who prepared the 10-volume work, also examined dozens of other journals, both "mass" journals like OGONOK or

PROZHEKTOR, as well as obscure, departmental journals, and studied the files of central and local newspapers.

[Arkhipenko] However, apparently, your institute's unique bibliographic card-index on V.I. Lenin's works served as a good compass in this sea of newspapers and magazines? After all, it has been augmented over the course of decades.

[Mchedlov] Most regrettably, it is far from complete, although it contains thousands of titles of books and articles. In the late 1930s, an enormous number of cards were removed from it. Gaps were also made in the institute's unique bibliographic service, which is of significant scientific value. A bibliography with omissions is, essentially, nonsense. Right now, much has to be restored anew, which requires tremendous effort and, of course, time. This work has already yielded considerable results. We managed to find reminiscences that had been published in local or departmental press organs in the early 1920s and were never reprinted even once since then. Most likely, there no longer even remain any living people who once read them. Today's generation does not even know the titles of those newspapers and journals... For example, who today knows that KOMMUNIST once existed in Nizhniy Novgorod. However, precisely in it, in one of the 1924 issues, we found some interesting reminiscences by Uglanov on Lenin's trip to Petrograd in July 1920. In the newspaper SIBIRSKIYE OGNI for 1927, we discovered material by Lomov-Opokov about the first days of Lenin's visit to Smolny. Through the medical journal NASHA ISKRA, published in Leningrad in 1925, notes were discovered by doctor and speech therapist Dobrogayev, who helped restore Lenin's speech after his stroke. Curious finds were made in the rarest, from the contemporary viewpoint, publications of 1919. These include the reminiscences of Nevskiy in KRASNOARMEYETS and of Kamenev in NARODNIY KALENDAR KOMMUN SEVERNOY OBLASTI. All these articles will soon be the property of a broad circle of readers. In the third volume, which has already come out, among other memoirs, they can also read the reminiscences of Tomskiy, discovered in a transcript of the 2 March 1926 Comintern Plenum.

[Arkhipenko] Did you find accounts never before published in general, for the new publication?

[Mchedlov] Such finds in our day can be considered exceptional. Nonetheless, they do happen. So, manuscripts, found in the archives, written by Oglanov, Yaroslavskiy and Mariya Ilinichna Ulyanova were published for the first time in IZVESTIYA TsK KPSS, and have also been included in the 10-volume set. These are extraordinarily interesting accounts of Lenin's interrelations with Stalin during the period when Vladimir Ilich was forced to abandon his work due to illness.

[Arkhipenko] Incidentally, is Stalin present as a memoirist in the 10-volume work?

[Mchedlov] He is. Stalin's notes on "Comrade Lenin at Rest" were included in the 7th volume. They were first published in PRAVDA in 1922, and later the author himself included them in a collection of his essays. Today, in the light of information popularized in recent years about the general secretary's true attitude toward the ill Lenin, this material seems very curious.

[Arkhipenko] You spoke of the great and fruitful search by the compilers of the new publication, but, as far as I understand, they searched among materials published only in our country. Yet, after all, many reminiscences about Lenin which were published abroad. The IML bibliographic card-index, which I happen to be familiar with, in general has no section on foreign publications...

[Mchedlov] Sad though it may be, I must admit that this deficiency does exist. It happened due to commonly known circumstances, but that does not make things easier for anyone. Unquestionably, there should be such a section in the card-index. Just as unquestionably, many memoirs, published abroad, should be reprinted here. The first step, although I think it is still small, has been made. I already mentioned certain memoirs that went into the 10-volume edition. These include excerpts from Trotsky's memoirs, "*Moya Zhizn*" [My Life], published in Berlin in 1930, and from Valentinov's book "*Novaya Ekonomicheskaya Politika i Krizis Partii Posle Smerti Lenina*" [New Economic Policy and the Party Crisis After Lenin's Death, published in Stamford in 1971. I think that a search for memoirs printed abroad will now be carried out actively. I do not at all rule out the possibility that an additional volume or a separate collection may appear as a result of this work.

[Arkhipenko] Yet another question. For many years, a number of historical works and memoirs published here came out without references, which are necessary both for the researcher and, of course, for the mass reader. Footnotes are also absent in the new issue of reminiscences about Lenin. For example, Parvus is mentioned three times in the 3rd volume. It goes without saying, a researcher who has studied the history of Russia's social movements is quite familiar with this name. However, it means precisely nothing to the overwhelming majority of readers. Or the following example: in the same volume, Voronskiy claims that, having learned of the Prague Conference of Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks maliciously responded to it in the central organ. A historian would know which central organ it is a question of. However, other readers are ignorant of this.

[Mchedlov] References really are necessary. To a certain extent, they are nonetheless present in the new publication. In each volume has bibliographic references to all authors of reminiscences, and there is an index of names, by which it is easy to find the page on which one or another name is mentioned. Finally, there are footnotes which indicate that in a certain case an author inaccurately sets forth an event, confuses a date, or gives the incorrect name of an organization, newspaper or institution. There really are no footnotes as such in the new

edition. By way of self-criticism, it should be noted that excessive haste, our old disease of timing a certain work to coincide with an anniversary date, was telling here. Of course, we strived to make the new edition for Lenin's 120th birthday, and in this regard we have set a good pace. The first volume was signed to press in May 1989, and the third, already received by the readers—5 months later. At such a pace, we were forced to reject references, which require time-consuming and labor-intensive work. Sometimes weeks can be spent to compile a brief bibliographic reference, or the date of death of one or another author can be successfully determined only after long searches through various archives. However, I say this not as justification, but in order to clarify the situation that has taken shape. Perhaps, during work on the next volumes we will succeed in increasing the number of footnotes, which could not only indicate the author's mistakes, but would also be explanatory. Nonetheless, much work has been done, as a result of which hundreds of thousands of readers will be able to learn a great deal about one of the most outstanding leaders in the history of mankind.

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#### From the Editors

905B0020N Moscow *KOMMUNIST* in Russian No 5, Mar 90 (signed to press 16 Mar 90) p 128

[Text] This issue of *KOMMUNIST*, devoted to the 120th anniversary of V.I. Lenin's birthday, was published in a new format, developed by artist V. Pan-teleyev. The cover of the journal is a facsimile (enlarged) reproduction of a fragment of one of Vladimir Ilich's manuscripts. We wanted to thus emphasize our attitude

toward the legacy of the founder of the Soviet state, toward the Marxist legacy on the whole, on the basis of which the journal carries out its theoretical and political work today.

What is Your opinion of publishing subsequent issues of *KOMMUNIST* in this new format?

The Editors

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