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THE TROTSKY REVIVAL -- II

Appendices:

- I. Chapter X: "What is the Permanent Revolution? Fundamental Theses" from
The Permanent Revolution
(By Leon Trotsky
Translated by Max Shachtman
New York, 1931) p. 1
- II. Excerpt from Stalin
(By Isaac Deutscher
Oxford University Press, London, 1949) p. 6

In attempting to explain why Trotsky is very much in the news at the present time, Mao's use of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and Khrushchev's objection to Mao's policies is of primary importance. There are, however, at least three other general reasons for the Trotsky revival. The first of these is traceable to the whole Soviet process of de-stalinization. As successive prohibitions have been removed from the examination of Soviet Party history, and as many of

things is against the internationalistic traditions of our party, against our most profound convictions, the solid points which have always been present in the history of the Italian Communist Party, its development, its struggle for democracy and socialism.

"Therefore, during this meeting many comrades have justly rejected certain urges toward a sort of historical re-evaluation of Trotskyism, certainly not denying the right that the books on Trotskyism be read -- this is not the custom of our party -- but re-confirming with energy the validity of the building of socialism in the USSR and at the same time the consciousness that the victorious fight against leftwingism, Trotskyism, was an essential phase in the history of our party and its struggle. To forget this would be to invest with a mistaken retrospective criticism our entire past...."²

This passage is good evidence that at least some members of the Italian Communist Party are curious about the past.

The reference in the Party's "Document" to the magazine of the Italian Communist youth organization, The New Generation, is especially significant. This magazine was criticized by the French Communist leader Thorez (November 26) for speaking of "restoring Trotsky to his place." On December 15, The New Generation replied in an article entitled "Why We Are Not Trotskyites," which excellently illustrates the desire of young Italian communists to get at the truth about Trotsky:

"We are not Trotskyites and have no sympathy whatever for Trotskyism. We are profoundly convinced that Trotsky was defeated in 1925 not because he was weaker (than Stalin) or for other reasons, but because he was wrong, and because his policy was mere adventurism. After that, too, he continued to follow a wrong line. However, we are mature enough not to be afraid to mention Trotsky's name, to say that he was the first commander of the Red Army, as Zinoviev was the first chairman of the Third International... Thus, we are not afraid to read the judgment which Lenin gave on Trotsky in his testament and to read Trotsky's own writings, without on that account changing our attitude to his policies...."³

An unsigned editorial in the same edition of The New Generation, acknowledged that it had stirred up a wasp's nest, with a "phrase." This phrase was actually a statement that "the re-evaluation of the revolutionary past would involve the problem of a new, scientific definition of Trotskyism and the part played by Trotsky." The editorial continued:

² L'Unita, December 8, 1961.

³ Nuova Generazione, December 15, 1961. (I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Kevan Devlin of the Free World Unit (CNR) for his translation of this and the following quoted passages.)

"Never was error -- if error it was -- committed with less malice. It appeared obvious to us -- and still does -- that an historical analysis of the Bolshevik experiment...would necessarily involve, among other things, the subject of Trotsky -- central for a whole period of Soviet history, and still treated today in terms that one could hardly call critical and scientific."

The article, which attempted to explain why its followers are interested in Trotsky, argued for "a critical study which will establish...the truth about facts and ideological positions." It justifies this objective in the following manner:

"If we get rid of the conception of Trotsky as a spy and anti-Marxist adventurer, it becomes clear that he, much more than other members of the opposition, was the real antagonist of Stalin's policy and of international communism.... Only by putting this polemic in its historical setting can we evaluate fully the correct and positive choice which Stalin made in 1924 understand

"This, then, is the actual political value of the Trotsky problem. Today, we can reject and defeat Trotskyism in a way that was never possible in the past. But it is also possible, even necessary, to grasp its positive side, that which affirms the irreplaceable value, the qualitative contribution of the Western revolution, as opposed either to an ever-possible tendency to the self-sufficiency and productivity of Soviet society, or -- and above all -- to an Afro-Asian deformation of Marxism as a revolutionary doctrine for backward countries."

II

While Italy's young communists are wondering what the truth about Trotsky is, and beginning to adapt his theories to their own needs, other groups around the world, calling themselves Trotskyites or supporting the Mao-Hoxha theories without being directly involved, already know their faith. These Trotskyites form a third reason, why Leon Trotsky is in the news, for these groups have been quick to take advantage of the shock of the Twenty-Second Congress' destalinization to press their own views, or to put themselves in the news.

Such are the members of a variety of branches of the Trotsky "Fourth International" founded in 1938. A small Trotskyite group in Denmark, for example, has sent a declaration to the Central Committee of the CPSU. This declaration, according to report, insists that Trotsky was right in 1937 when he said: "The time will come when the originators of the purges and the cruel Moscow trials will be unmasked and when the Soviet people will erect a memorial to their victims."⁴ It goes further to demand that an international commission be established to investigate Stalin's crimes.

Within the American Communist Party, a small group has declared that "the Communist Party U.S.A., is thoroughly revisionist, as is the leadership of the whole international Marxist movement, except Albania." By implication this passage reads -- "and except China" In this case ardent leftists appear to be siding with Mao, with Stalin, and with Trotsky. This group was branded as "Neo-Marxist" by its party, and has been expelled.⁵

III

The fourth reason is primarily one of sentiment, although undoubtedly other interests are prepared to exploit this sentiment for their own interests. Trotsky's widow would like to clear her husband's name, and she took the opportunity which the events of the Twenty-Second Congress presented to

⁴ RFE Special (Purre) Stockholm, 30 December 1961.

⁵ Daily Worker, January 7, 1962.

demand that the Soviet Party take steps to rehabilitate Leon Trotsky's name.

It may be expected that she will renew her plea at every opportunity.

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LEON TROTSKY, THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

Chapter X: "What is the Permanent Revolution? Fundamental Theses." pp. 151-157.

I hope that the reader will not object if, to end up this book, I attempt, without fear of repetition, to formulate briefly the most fundamental conclusions.

1. The theory of the permanent revolution now demands the greatest attention of every Marxist, for the course of the ideological and class struggle has finally and conclusively raised this question from the realm of reminiscences over the old differences of opinion among Russian Marxists and converted it into a question of the character, the inner coherence and the methods of the international revolution in general.

2. With regard to the countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks, democratic and national emancipation, is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses.

3. Not only the agrarian, but also the national question, assigns to the peasantry, the overwhelming majority of the population of the backward countries, an important place in the democratic revolution. Without an alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry, the tasks of the democratic revolution cannot be solved, nor even seriously posed. But the alliance of these two classes can be realized in no other way than through an intransigent struggle against the influence of the national liberal bourgeoisie.

4. No matter how the first episodic stages of the revolution may be in the individual countries, the realization of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political direction of the proletarian vanguard, organized in the Communist party. This in turn means that the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and first solves the problems of the democratic revolution.

5. The old slogan of Bolshevism - "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" expresses precisely the above characterized relationship of the proletariat,

the peasantry and the liberal bourgeoisie. This has been confirmed by the experience of October. But the old formula of Lenin does not settle in advance the problem of what the mutual relations between the proletariat and the peasantry inside of the revolutionary bloc will be. In other words, the formula has unknown algebraic quantities which have to make way for precise arithmetical quantities in the process of historical experience. The latter showed, and under circumstances that exclude every other interpretation, that no matter how great the revolutionary role of the peasantry may be, it can nevertheless not be an independent role and even less a leading one. The peasant follows either the worker or the bourgeois. This means that the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" is only conceivable as a dictatorship of the proletariat that leads the peasant masses behind it.

6. A democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, as a régime that is distinguished from the dictatorship of the proletariat by its class content, might be realized only in case an independent revolutionary party could be constituted which expresses the interests of the peasants and in general of petty-bourgeois democracy - a party that is capable of conquering power with this or that aid of the proletariat and of determining its revolutionary program. As modern history teaches - especially the history of Russia in the last twenty-five years - an insurmountable obstacle on the road to the creation of a peasants' party is the economic and political dependence of the petty bourgeoisie and its deep internal differentiation, thanks to which the upper sections of the petty bourgeoisie (the peasantry) go with the big bourgeoisie in all decisive cases, especially in war and in revolution, and the lower sections - with the proletariat, while the intermediate section has the choice between the two extreme poles. Between the Kerenskiad and the Bolshevik power, between the Kuo Min Tang and the dictatorship of the proletariat there cannot and does not lie any intermediate stage, that is, no democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants.

7. The endeavor of the Comintern to foist upon the Eastern countries the slogan of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, finally and long ago exhausted by history, can have only a reactionary effect. In so far as this slogan is counterposed to the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it contributes to the dissolution of the proletariat into the petty bourgeois masses and in this manner creates better conditions for the hegemony of the national bourgeoisie and consequently for the collapse of the democratic revolution. The introduction of this slogan into the program of the Comintern is a direct betrayal of Marxism and of the October traditions of Bolshevism.

8. The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly placed before tasks that are bound up with deep

inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over immediately into the socialist, and thereby becomes a permanent revolution.

9. The conquest of power by the proletariat does not terminate the revolution, but only opens it. Socialist construction is conceivable only on the foundation of the class struggle, on a national and international scale. This struggle, under the conditions of an overwhelming predominance of capitalist relationships on the world arena, will inevitably lead to explosions, that is, internally to civil wars, and externally to revolutionary wars. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution as such, regardless of whether it is a backward country that is involved, which only yesterday accomplished its democratic revolution, or an old capitalist country, which already has behind it a long epoch of democracy and parliamentarism.

10. The completion of the socialist revolution within national limits is unthinkable. One of the basic reasons for the crisis in bourgeois society is the fact that the productive forces created by it conflict with the framework of the national state. From this follow, on the one hand, imperialist wars, and on the other, the utopia of the bourgeois United States of Europe. The socialist revolution commences on the national arena, is developed further on the inter-state and finally on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word; it attains completion only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet.

11. The above outlined schema of the development of the world revolution eliminates the question of the countries that are "mature" or "immature" for socialism in the spirit of that pedantic,

12. The theory of socialism in one country which rose on the yeast of the reaction against October is the only theory that consistently, and to the very end, opposes the theory of the permanent revolution.

The attempt of the epigones, under the blows of our criticism, to confine the application of the theory of socialism in one country exclusively to Russia, because of its specific characteristics (its extensiveness and its natural resources) does not improve matters but only makes them worse. The break with the international position always leads to a national messianism, that is, to attribute special prerogatives and peculiarities to one's own country, which would permit it to play a role that other countries cannot attain.

The world division of labor, the dependence of Soviet industry upon foreign technique, the dependence of the productive forces of the advanced countries of Europe upon Asiatic raw materials, etc., etc., make the construction of a socialist society in any single country impossible.

13. The theory of Stalin-Bucharin not only contrasts the democratic revolution quite mechanically to the socialist revolution, but also tears the national revolution from the international path.

This theory sets the revolution in the backward countries the task of establishing an unrealizable regime of the democratic dictatorship, it contrasts this regime to the dictatorship of the proletariat, thus introducing illusion and fiction into politics, paralyzing the struggle for power of the proletariat in the East, and hampering the victory of the colonial revolution.

The very seizure of power by the proletariat signifies, from the standpoint of the theory of the epigones, the completion of the revolution (to "ninetenths", according to Stalin's formula) and the opening of the epoch of national reform. The theory of the kulak growing into socialism and the theory of the "neutralization" of the world bourgeoisie are consequently inseparable from the theory of socialism in one country. They stand and fall together.

By the theory of national socialism, the Communist International is degraded to a weapon useful only for the struggle against military intervention. The present policy of the Comintern, its regime, and the selection of its leading personnel, correspond entirely to debasement of the Communist International to an auxiliary corps which is not destined to solve independent tasks.

14. The program of the Comintern created by Bucharin is thoroughly eclectic. It makes the hopeless attempt to reconcile the theory of socialism in one country with Marxian internationalism, which is, however inseparable from the permanent character of the world revolution. The struggle of the Communist Left Opposition for a correct policy and a healthy régime in the Communist International is inseparably combined with a struggle for a Marxian program. The question of the program in turn is inseparable from the question of the two mutually exclusive theories: the theory of permanent revolution and the theory of socialism in one country. The problem of the permanent revolution has long ago outgrown the episodic differences of opinion between Lenin and Trotsky, which were completely exhausted by history. The struggle is between the basic ideas of Marx and Lenin on the one side and the eclecticism of the Centrists on the other.

EXCERPT FROM "STALIN"

By Isaac Deutsch
Oxford University Press*
London 1949

Stalin first formulated his ideas on socialism in one country in the autumn of 1924. Belief in socialism in one country was soon to become the supreme test of loyalty to party and state. In the next ten or fifteen years nobody who failed that test was to escape condemnation and punishment. Yet, if one studies the "prolegomena" to this article of Stalinist faith, one is struck by the fact that it was first put forward by Stalin almost casually, like a mere debating point, in the "literary discussion." For many months, until the summer of the next year, none of Stalin's rivals, neither the other triumvirs nor Trotsky, thought the point worth arguing. Nor was Stalin's own mind fixed. In his pamphlet The Foundations of Leninism, published early in 1924, he stated with great emphasis that, though the proletariat of one country could seize power, it could not establish a Socialist economy in one country.

But the overthrow [these are Stalin's words] of the power of the bourgeoisie and establishment of the power of the proletariat in one country does not yet mean that the complete victory of socialism has been ensured. The principle task of socialism -- the organization of socialist production -- has still to be fulfilled. Can this task be fulfilled, can the final victory of socialism be achieved in one country, without the joint efforts of the proletarians in several advanced countries? No, it cannot. To overthrow the bourgeoisie the efforts of one country are sufficient; this is proved by the history of our revolution. For the final victory of socialism, for the organization of Socialist production, the efforts of one country, particularly of a peasant country like Russia, are insufficient; for that, the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries are required.¹

In his Problems of Leninism, however, which he wrote later in the same year, Stalin corrected himself and asserted the opposite. He withdrew the first edition of his Foundations of Leninism from circulation and renounced it as apocryphal. He was at first hardly aware of the weight that circumstances were soon to give to his "socialism in one country." He reached his formula gropingly, discovering, as it were, a new continent, while he believed himself to be sailing for quite a different place.

His immediate purpose was to discredit Trotsky and to prove for the nth time that Trotsky was no Leninist. Searching in Trotsky's past, the triumvirs came across the theory

¹ This quotation is taken from the English edition of J. Stalin, Problems of Leninism (p. 157), published in Moscow in 1945.

of "permanent revolution," which he had formulated in 1905. They started a polemic against it; and it was in the course of that polemic that Stalin arrived at his formula. Since his "socialism in one country" thus originated as a counter to Trotsky's "permanent revolution," it is proper to sum up and analyze the two formulas in their bearing upon each other.

Trotsky had borrowed his theory from Marx and applied it to the Russian revolution.¹ He spoke of the "permanency" of the revolution in a double sense: the revolution, he foresaw, would be driven by circumstances to pass from its anti-feudal (bourgeois) to its anti-capitalist (Socialist) phase. Contrary to the then accepted Marxist view, not the advanced western European countries but backward Russia would be the first to set out along the road to socialism. But Russia alone would not be able to advance far upon that road. The revolution could not stop at her national frontiers. It would have to pass from its national to its international phase -- this was to be the second aspect of its "permanency." Under the impact of Russia western Europe, too, would become revolutionized. Only then could socialism be established on a broad international basis. The progress of mankind, so Trotsky argued, was now hampered not only by the capitalist mode of production but also by the existence of nation-states. The final outcome of the revolutionary transformation could only be One World, one Socialist world. There was, however, a disquieting question mark in this prognostication. What will happen -- Trotsky asked in 1906 -- if the revolution fails to spread from Russia to western Europe? His grim answer was that it would then either succumb to a conservative Europe or become corroded in its economically and culturally primitive Russian environment.

Until 1917, it will be remembered, this theory was Trotsky's personal contribution to Marxist thought, rejected by Bolsheviks as well as by Mensheviks. On one or two occasions Lenin vaguely sketched a not dissimilar view of the future; but, on the whole, his policy was firmly based on the premise that the Russian revolution would confine itself to its anti-feudal objectives. It was on this point that he denied its "permanency." Nevertheless he, too, did believe that the bourgeois revolution in Russia would stimulate a Socialist revolution in western Europe; and that then, but only then, might Russia also, with the help of the "advanced countries," move forward towards socialism.² What Lenin denied was not the international character of the revolution but Russia's intrinsic capacity to embark upon socialism before western Europe. He

¹ Trotsky first developed his theory in his famous pamphlet: Itogi i Perspektivy Ruskoi Revolyutsii, published in 1906. He gave the most complete exposition of his theory in Permanennaya Revolyutsya, written in 1928, after his deportation to Alma Ata, and published abroad in 1930.

² Lenin, Sochineniya, vol. ix, pp. 64-5 and passim.

reproached Trotsky with "overlooking" the peasantry, because only if one ignored the peasantry's attachment to individual property could one assume that a peasant country like Russia would by itself pass from the bourgeois to the Socialist revolution.

In 1917, it will be remembered, Lenin changed his mind. In all essentials the thesis of the permanent revolution (though not, of course, its somewhat bookish nomenclature) was adopted by his party. The revolution did in fact pass from the anti-feudal to the anti-capitalist phase. To the very last Lenin and his followers expected it also to spread beyond Russia. Meanwhile they looked upon their own country as upon a besieged fortress, spacious and powerful enough to hold out. They believed that an important advance could be made in organizing the internal life of that fortress on Socialist lines. Spurring on his followers to the job, Lenin (and Trotsky) emphatically pointed to the possibilities of Socialist experiment opening before them. But essentially Lenin thought of Socialist society in international terms. We have seen that early in 1924 Stalin, too, was still arguing that "for the final victory of socialism, for the organization of Socialist production, the efforts of one country, particularly of a peasant country like Russia, are insufficient." He now stated that the efforts of Russia alone would suffice for the complete organization of a Socialist economy. A Socialist economy -- this had so far been taken for granted -- was conceivable only as an economy of plenty. This presupposed a highly developed industry capable of ensuring a high standard of living for the whole people. How then, the question arose, could a country like Russia, whose meager industry had been reduced to rack and ruin, achieve socialism? Stalin pointed to Russia's great assets: her vast spaces and enormous riches in raw materials. A proletarian government could, in his view, through its control of industry and credit, develop those resources and carry the building of socialism to a successful conclusion, because in this endeavor it would be supported by a vast majority of the people, including the peasants.

This, the most essential, part of Stalin's formula was very simple. It proclaimed in terms clear to everybody the self-sufficiency of the Russian revolution. It was true that Stalin begged many a question. He did not even try to meet the objections to his thesis that were raised later by his critics. One objection that most peasants, attached as they were to private property, were certain to put up the strongest resistance to collectivism, he simply dismissed as a heretical slander on the peasantry. Nor did he seriously consider the other argument that socialism was possible only on the basis of the intensive industrialization already achieved by the most advanced western countries; and that Russia by herself would not be able to catch up with those countries. According to his critics, socialism could beat capitalism only if it represented a higher productivity of labor and higher standards of living than had been attained under capitalism.

NOT TO BE MICROFICHED

-9-

The critics deduced that if productivity of labor and standards of living were to remain lower in Russia than in the capitalist countries then socialism would, in the long run,

The student of the controversy may thus often have the uncanny feeling that its very object is indefinable; that, having aroused unbounded passion and bitterness, it simply vanishes into thin air. Stripped of polemical distortions and insinuations, the debate seems in the end, to the student's astonishment, to center on a bizarre irrelevancy. The point was not whether socialism could or should be built but whether the building could be completed in a single isolated state. Metaphorically speaking, the antagonists did not argue whether it was possible or desirable to erect the edifice they wanted; nor did they disagree about the materials of which it was to be built or even about its shape. Ostensibly, the only point at issue was whether it would be possible to cover the edifice with a roof. Stalin's yes was as emphatic as his opponents' no.¹ Both sides still agreed that the "roof" was not to be laid for a very, very long time yet, that classless socialism would not be achieved within the lifetime of one or even two generations. Both sides also agreed that hostile forces might wreck the building at any stage of their work on it -- they constantly saw the shadow of war falling across Russia. Finally, Stalin, like his critics, professed to believe that long before the time came to put on the roof, the problem he had posed would cease to exist, because revolution in the west would free Socialist Russia from isolation.

It might seem then that it was preposterous for the disputants, who were men of action, to pose the problem as they had posed it; and that, on their own showing, they could have travelled a very, very long way together, leaving their differences to professional scholastics to thrash out. Was the whole dispute, then, a mere smoke-screen for a clash of personal ambitions? No doubt the personal rivalries were a strong

¹ At a later stage of the debate, in January 1926, Stalin thus formulated his view: "We mean the possibility of solving the contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry with the aid of the internal forces of our country, the possibility of the proletariat assuming power and using that power to build a complete socialist society in our country, with the sympathy and the support of the proletariat of other countries, but without the preliminary victory of the proletarian revolution in other countries.

"Without such a possibility, the building of socialism is building without prospects, building without being sure that socialism will be built. It is no use building socialism without being sure that we can build it, without being sure that the technical backwardness of our country is not an insuperable obstacle to the building of a complete Socialist society. To deny such a possibility is to display lack of faith in the cause of building socialism, to abandon Leninism." See J. Stalin, Problems of Leninism (English edition), p. 160.

element in it. But the historian who reduced the whole matter to that would commit a blatant mistake. He would still have to explain why "socialism in one country" split the ranks of Bolshevism from top to bottom, why it became an issue of such deadly earnest for a whole Russian generation, why it determined the outlook of a great nation for a quarter of a century. The other suggestion which is often made, that socialism in one country was invented to allay the suspicions of foreign governments, alarmed by "subversive" activities directed from Moscow, is even more pointless. When Stalin formulated his thesis, his name was still almost unknown abroad; and, even later on, the desire to allay foreign suspicions did not prevent him from making statements on communism in Europe that made the flesh of many a Conservative abroad creep.

As sometimes happens in important disputes, where both sides are strongly committed to certain common principles, so in this controversy, too, its explanation cannot be found in the literal meaning of the disputants' words, certainly not in their zealous reiteration of "common" principles, but must rather be sought in the subtle, often imperceptible, shifts in the emphasis of their arguments. The explanation is further to be found in the state of mind and the moods of the milieu in which the disputants act and which they address. In the last resort, the doctrinal controversy grows out of those moods; and they -- the moods -- form the sounding-board that imparts a significant ring to the seemingly undistinguishable formulas that are bandied about. The audience that listens to the disputants is left unmoved by their professions of common principle; it treats these as part of a customary ritual. But it pricks up its ears at the different hints and allusions thrown out by either side; and it avidly absorbs all their undertones and unspoken conclusions. It quickly learns to tell the operative part of any formula from the reservations and escape clauses that seem to contradict it.

Now the operative part of Stalin's thesis, the thing that was really new and striking in it, was the assertion of the self-sufficiency of the Russian revolution. All the rest was a repetition of traditional Bolshevik triums, some of which had become meaningless and others embarrassing, but all of which had to be repeated, because they had the flavor of doctrinal respectability. The thing that was new in Stalin's argument represented a radical revision of the party's attitude. But the revision was undertaken in a manner that seemed to deny the very fact of revision and to represent it as a straight continuation of an orthodox line of thought, a method familiar from the history of many a doctrine. We shall not lead the reader further into the thick of this dogmatic battle. Suffice it to say that Stalin did his best to graft his formula on to the body of doctrine he had inherited from Lenin.

More important than the dogmatic intricacies is the fact that now, in the seventh and eighth years of the revolution, a very large section of the party, probably its majority, vaguely

and yet very definitely felt the need for ideological stock-taking and revision. The need was emotional rather than intellectual; and those who felt it were by no means desirous of any open break with Bolshevik orthodoxy. No revolutionary party can remain in power seven years without profound changes in its outlook. The Bolsheviks had by now grown accustomed to running an enormous state, "one-sixth of the world." They gradually acquired the self-confidence and the sense of self-importance that come from the privileges and responsibilities of power. The doctrines and notions that had been peculiarly theirs when they themselves had been the party of the underdog did not suit their present outlook well. They needed an idea or a slogan that would fully express their newly won self-confidence. "Socialism in one country" did it. It relieved them, to a decisive extent, of a sense of their dependence on happenings in the five-sixths of the world that were beyond their control. It gave them the soothing theoretical conviction that, barring war, nothing could shake their mastery over Russia: the property-loving peasantry, the industrial weakness of the nation, its low productivity and even lower standard of living, all these implied no threat of a restoration of the ancien régime. Whoever, like Trotsky, and later on Zinoviev and Kamenev, dwelt on the dangers to the revolution inherent in all those circumstances, offended the complacency of the party.

Below this psychological attitude, which was confined to the rulers, there was a much broader undercurrent: the party and the working classes had grown weary of the expectation of international revolution which had been the daily bread of Bolshevism. That expectation was dashed in 1917, 1918, and 1920. It rose again in 1923, during the turmoil in Germany. This time the deferment of hope made the heart of the party sick. "The European working classes are letting us down; they listen to their social democratic leaders and tremble over the fleshpots of capitalism" — such was, roughly, the content of

victory of the proletariat in the west to be near; and we are bound in honor to do what we can to speed it up. But -- and this was a very big, a highly suggestive "but" -- do not worry so much about all that international revolution. Even if it were to be delayed indefinitely, even if it were never to occur, we in this country are capable of developing into a fully fledged, classless society. Let us then concentrate on our great constructive task. Those who tell you that this is utopia, that I am preaching national narrow-mindedness, are themselves either adventurers or pusillanimous Social Democrats. We, with our much despised muzhiks, have already done more for socialism than the proletariat of all other countries taken together; and, left alone with our muzhiks, we shall do the rest of the job.¹

Stripped of its terminological pretensions and pseudo-dialectical profundity, Stalin's theory reduces itself to this plain and "sound" colloquialism. But it was as its author that Stalin now established himself as an ideologue in his own right. He was no longer just the General Secretary, the administrative magician of the party: he was the author of a new dogma as well. To old, educated Bolsheviks this was the surprise of their life. When, at one of the party meetings of those days, Stalin involved himself in a theoretical argument, he was interrupted by a half-amused and half-indignant remark from the old Marxist scholar Ryazanov: "Stop it, Koba, don't make a fool of yourself. Everybody knows that theory is not exactly your field." The condescending irony of the educated Marxists did not, however, prevent "socialism in one country" from becoming the national creed. For all its triteness, Stalin's innovation had its weight and its raison d'être. Doctrines may, broadly speaking, be classed into two categories: those that, starting from a long train of intellectual ideas, strike out boldly into a remote uncharted future; and those that, though they are neither deeply rooted in ideas nor original in their anticipations, sum up a powerful and hitherto inarticulate trend of opinion or emotion. Stalin's theory obviously belonged to that second category.

The truly tragic feature of Russian society in the twenties was its longing for stability, a longing which was only natural after its recent experiences. The future had little stability in store for any country, but least of all for Russia. Yet the desire at least for a long, very long, respite from risky endeavors came to be the dominant motive of Russian politics. Socialism in one country, as it was practically interpreted until the late twenties, held out the promise of stability. On the other hand, the very name of Trotsky's theory, "permanent revolution," sounded like an ominous warning to a tired generation that it should expect no Peace and Quiet in its lifetime. The warning was to come true, though not in the way its author expected; but it could hardly have been heeded.

¹ J. Stalin, Sochineniya, vol. vii, p. 21.

In his argument against Trotsky, Stalin appealed directly to the horror of risk and uncertainty that had taken possession of many Bolsheviks. He depicted Trotsky as an adventurer, habitually playing at revolution. The charge, it need hardly be said, was baseless. At all crucial moments -- in 1905, 1917, and 1920 -- Trotsky had proved himself the most serious strategist of the revolution, showing no proneness to light-minded adventure. Nor did he ever urge his party to stage any coup in any foreign country, which cannot be said of Stalin. Trotsky firmly believed that western European communism would win by its own intrinsic momentum, in the ordinary course of the class struggle, in which outside initiative or assistance, though important at times, could play only a subordinate role. In weighing the chances of communism in the west, Stalin was more sceptical; and his scepticism was to grow as the years passed by. Be that as it may, the epithet "adventurer" stuck to the ideologue of the "permanent revolution." Stalin went further and charged Trotsky with a fondness for terror which had allegedly horrified Lenin. This charge, too, was unfair, especially in Stalin's mouth. Trotsky had not shrunk from using terror in the civil war; but he can be said to have been as little fond of it as a surgeon is fond of bloodshed. Yet in the circumstances just described the charge had a vague and yet distinct eloquence. People afraid of the continuation of the terror were led to believe that the man who had laid the charge against Trotsky was himself at least liberal minded.¹

The remarkable trait in Stalin was his unique sensibility to all those psychological undercurrents in and around the party, the untalked of hopes and tacit desires, of which he set himself up as a mouthpiece. In this he was very different from the other triumvirs. At the beginning of the controversy over "permanent revolution" they acted in unison; towards its end they were already poles apart. As Zinoviev and Kamenev admitted later, they started the campaign in order to discredit Trotsky with outdated quotations from Lenin against the "permanent revolution"; at heart they had no quarrel with its basic tenets, which had become the household ideas of the party. Their attacks upon Trotsky's theory were therefore strangely unreal; they were confined to pointless quibbling over long-forgotten episodes of the days of pre-revolutionary exile. They did not even dream of opposing Trotsky with a positive doctrine of their own. It was otherwise with Stalin. What for him, too, had begun as ideological shadow-boxing developed into a real ideological struggle. The debating-point became the issue. He came to feel a real hatred for his opponent's views; and because of this he had to counter with something positive. He sensed which of his arguments evoked the strongest response from the mass of party officials and workers, that vast human sounding-board which was his vox dei. The sounding-board proved unexpectedly responsive to "socialism in one country." As happens with revelationists, a figment of his mind, the vision of socialism in one country, took possession of him; but it did so because it corresponded to the things that were latent in so many other minds.

¹ J. Stalin, The October Revolution, pp. 88 and 92.