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THE TROTSKY REVIVAL -- I

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(The name of Leon Trotsky is back in the news, and the indications are that he and his ideas will receive considerable public attention during the coming months. There appear to be four main reasons why this should be so. The present paper deals with the first and perhaps most important of these. A second paper will summarize the remaining three.)

I

Mao Tse-tung's Chinese Communist policies are currently (and indirectly through attacks on Enver Hoxha) being typed by Khrushchev's communists as "Stalinist." Because the Communist Party of the Soviet Union long ago condemned Trotsky and his theory of "permanent revolution," and because this theory is basic to Mao's policies, the Soviet party now finds itself in the apparently paradoxical position of simultaneously condemning Mao and his Albanian satellite as "Stalinists" and "Trotskyites." This use of terms long thought incompatible, has added one more element of confusion to the present Sino-Soviet-Albanian conflict.

The charge that Mao is a Trotskyite has been brought into the open because of the Chinese leader's growing influence in the communist world and his insistence that his interpretation

of Marxism-Leninism is the right one. Khrushchev, faced with what he can only view as rebelliousness and heresy on the part of the Albanian and Chinese leaders, apparently believes that by branding them "Trotskyites," (as he has through Janos Kadar)<sup>1</sup> he is making the true nature of their political error clear to the world. There can be no doubt, that in applying the "Trotskyite" label, he is doing much more than simply trying to discredit Mao and Hoxha by calling them names. The difficulty goes much deeper. It is a problem of how Marxist-Leninists must define the processes of socialist revolution.

The domestic and foreign policies of China and the Soviet Union are presently determined by differing definitions and one of them (China's) may be traced to Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. As worked out by Trotsky this theory has two important basic concepts, both of which are pertinent to the present Sino-Soviet conflict.

(1) Early in the Twentieth Century all Russian Marxists worried about the industrial "Backwardness" of Imperial Russia, because Marx's proletarian revolution seemed to require a highly industrialized society and a well-developed middle class for success. The Menshevik branch of the Russian Social Democratic Party concluded that proletarian revolution was a long way off, since Russia still had to develop a strong middle class which could carry out a middle-class revolution. According to this (orthodox Marxist) view, only long after the middle-class revolution could a proletariat develop that would some day carry out the proletarian revolution.

Trotsky, too impatient to wait for revolution, took a new tack in 1905. He argued that Russia's industrial backwardness and lack of a strong middle-class was a positive asset for revolution. The proletariat would make the "bourgeois revolution," that is, topple the Tsar. Once in power, it would hang on and "keep the revolution going 'in permanence' until socialism was established both at home and abroad."<sup>2</sup> Thus it would by its own hand combine the bourgeoisie revolution with the next phase -- the proletariat revolution. This part of the theory, which argued that socialist revolution could be more swiftly achieved in a backward country than in a highly-industrialized one was at least in part accepted by Lenin after 1905. It became Bolshevik doctrine with the revolution of 1917.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pravda, 26 December 1961, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Merle Fainsod, How Russia Is Ruled, Cambridge, 1953, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Daniels, The Conscience of the Revolution, Cambridge, 1960, pp. 39-9 (appended here as Appendix I); and Trotsky (Appendix II).



At the moment, the Chinese apparently see opportunity for themselves in this part of the theory of permanent revolution. For them it means that China, starting now from an economy far more backward than that of the Soviet Union, will arrive at the goal of communism, before the Soviet Union. This, of course, signifies (for the Chinese) that they are forging ahead of the heretofore superior Soviet Union, and that the role of revolutionary leadership, particularly among the backward nations of Asia and Africa should be allotted to them.

In a Radio Peking broadcast of November 26, the commentator clearly asserted that China would get to communism ahead of the Soviet Union. The point was also made that the Soviet Union's historical development is being held back by "bad leadership." Although Trotsky was not mentioned by name, it seems clear that China is following his theory of combined development.<sup>4</sup>

(2) The second concept of Trotsky's theory may be called "the essential internationalism of socialist revolutions." By his first concept he showed how "Russia would be the first to set out on 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 stage -- this was to be the second aspect of its "permanency."<sup>5</sup>

Trotsky believed that the Russian revolution would revolutionize Europe. Revolution would follow revolution, and the final outcome would be a socialist world. To the question: What if the revolution fails to spread? Trotsky answered in 1906 that "it would then either succumb to a conservative Europe or become corroded in its economically and culturally primitive Russian environment."<sup>6</sup>

In 1924-25, Stalin, searching for a way to discredit the man he considered his chief enemy, dug up Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. During the same period he gradually developed a clear outline of his own theory of "socialism in one country." These theories, pitted against one another by Stalin, served as the main issues of the famous Stalin-Trotsky conflict, which culminated in 1927 with Trotsky's expulsion from the party, his exile, and subsequent assassination in 1940.<sup>7</sup>

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4 Ernst Kux, "Die Gegensätze zwischen Peking und Moskau," Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 5 January 1962, p. 2.

5 Isaac Deutscher, Stalin, 1950, p. 283 (my italics).

6 Ibid.

7 See Robert Daniels' detailed account of the Stalin development of Socialism in One Country. (Appendix I).

The principal point of Stalin's theory, "socialism in one country," is contained in its title. He argued that the Soviet Union could and must carry out the building of socialism alone. For him the Russian Revolution was self-sufficient. Basing his policies upon this view, he was able to develop a cautious and responsible foreign policy, and to concentrate Soviet efforts upon domestic affairs. His theory also enabled him to charge that Trotsky was an adventurer, an incorrigible revolutionary, a man who had no faith that the Russia he called "backward" could reach socialism alone without the help of Europe.<sup>8</sup>

For a variety of reasons, some of which had little to do with theory, Stalin won his fight. Trotskyism was condemned, and "socialism in one country" became official Soviet Marxism. But the theory of permanent revolution did not die. Trotsky preached it until his death. His Fourth International followed these precepts, and today Hoxha and Mao hold views which appear to have been derived from Trotsky's theory.

Mao calls for permanent revolution, using both of Trotsky's meanings. Along with Hoxha he argues that war itself is a necessary risk, as long as the revolution is going forward.

Displaying Stalin's forcefulness in domestic policies, Mao is pushing his country rapidly toward industrialization and communism. At the same time, he presses for adventurous exploitation of revolutionary opportunities around the world, and disapproves Khrushchev's peaceful co-existence themes. Unlike lesser communist figures, who would consider themselves disgraced by the "Trotskyite" appellation, Mao seems unperturbed. Hoxha continues to respond with statements that Khrushchev is "revisionist" and an "opportunist."

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<sup>8</sup> Janos Kadar roughly repeats these charges in Pravda, 26 December 1961.



EXCERPTS FROM "THE CONSCIENCE OF THE REVOLUTION"

By Robert Vincent Daniels  
Harvard University Press 1960\*  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Permanent Revolution (Chapter 2)

The cleavage among the Bolsheviks in 1917 and the disputes which divided the party both during and after the October Revolution hinged on a subtle but crucial question of the application of Marxian doctrine to Russia. This was embodied in that forecast and description of revolutionary events in Russia called the "theory of permanent revolution," a set of ideas which played a role of particular importance in the history of the Bolshevik movement. In 1917 it provided the Bolsheviks with the basic doctrinal inspiration and justification for their drive to seize power. When the party divided after 1923 into contending groups of leaders and Opposition, the theory of permanent revolution was central among the issues which divided the factions.

Authorship of the theory is rightly attributed to Trotsky, with credit for inspiration and assistance going to the Russian-born German socialist, A. L. Helphand (Parvus). The two collaborated in the formulation of the idea when Trotsky was in Germany in 1904, and Trotsky worked the proposition out in full while in prison after his arrest in December 1905 as a leader of the original St. Petersburg Soviet.<sup>1</sup> The theory appeared in print in 1906 as an essay, "Results and Prospects -- The Driving Forces of the Revolution," in a collection of Trotsky's writings on the revolution of 1905, "Our Revolution."<sup>2</sup>

Trotsky propounded his theory in an effort to solve a problem which plagued all Russian Marxists. According to the ordinary Marxian analysis, Russia was not supposed to be economically and politically ripe for a socialist revolution; the country was at a stage of social and economic development where only a "bourgeois" revolution, such as in the West had experienced in earlier centuries, could occur. But to let the matter rest here was to abandon serious thought of the working class coming to power in the near future and to resign oneself to the role of legal opposition until capitalist democracy paved the way for the next revolutionary advance. This

<sup>1</sup> Deutschner, The Prophet Armed, pp. 101-105, 148.

<sup>2</sup> Trotsky, "Itogi i perspektivy -- dvizhushchie sily revoliutsii" (Results and Prospects -- The Driving Forces of the Revolution), in Nasha revoliutsiya (Our Revolution; Geneva, 1906), translated in abridged form under the title, "Prospects for a Labor Dictatorship," in Trotsky, Our Revolution: Essays on the Working Class and International Revolution (New York, 1918).

conclusion was obviously not attractive to those who were by temperament revolutionaries first and foremost. Most of the Mensheviks, on the other hand, tended to believe in a long evolution for the same reason that they rejected Lenin's rigorous doctrine of the party: they were liberal, moderate, humane, and not fanatical devotees of revolution as an end in itself.

Lenin was a Marxist because he was a revolutionary. When Marxism led to conclusions of an insufficiently revolutionary nature, he refused to accept them and contrived out of Marxist materials a different justification for his unshakable revolutionary stand. The Russian bourgeoisie, according to Lenin, was both too weak and too reactionary to be relied on. The bourgeois revolution would have to be accomplished by the workers and the party which stood for them. A "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" would be set up to administer the affairs of state in the interests of the revolutionary classes until such time as the country would become ready for the transition to socialism. Lenin would have his revolution whatever the circumstances: determined leadership and the conquest of political power were the historically decisive factors. In 1905 he wrote, "The outcome of the revolution depends on whether the working class will play ...the role of leader of the people's revolution.... First let ruthless struggle decide the question of choosing the path.... The workers...are striving to crush the reactionary forces without mercy."<sup>3</sup> A remark Lenin made in 1917 sums up his political philosophy in one line; -- "The question at the root of any revolution is the question of governmental power."<sup>4</sup>

The difficulty of reconciling the Marxian philosophy of history with revolutionary fervor under Russian conditions was clearly manifested in the contrasting doctrinal manipulations of the Mensheviks and Lenin. The one group abandoned the fervor; the other, verbal professions to the contrary, sacrificed the philosophy of history. There remained, however, a third position, of little note when it was originated but of crucial significance for the Bolshevik movement when it prepared to take power. This was Trotsky's thesis of "permanent revolution," which managed to reconcile the Marxian strictures on the conditions for proletarian revolution and the Russian radicals' desire for immediate action.

Trotsky's argument began with the observation, conceded by the other Marxists, that Russia's economic and social development, inspired and accelerated by contact with the more advanced West, had proceeded unevenly. The middle class was not the only revolutionary force in Russia. The Russian economy, growing with the help of Western capital and technology acquired amidst its prevalent peasant backwardness the most

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<sup>3</sup> Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social Democracy," Works, VIII, 32, 104-105.

<sup>4</sup> Lenin, "O dvoevlastii" (On Dual Power), Works, XX, 94.



modern forms of large-scale industry.<sup>5</sup> In consequence, the working class grew quickly, both in numbers and in revolutionary sentiment. A compound social struggle had begun to emerge -- the government and part of the landlords versus almost everyone else, on the one hand; and the industrialists versus the workers, on the other.

This situation led both Lenin and Trotsky to conclude in 1905 that the middle class was likely to desert the revolution in order to protect its property interests, and that the "bourgeois" revolution -- meaning the attainment of democracy and civil liberties and the expropriation of the landlords -- would have to be carried through by the proletariat. To reconcile this necessity with the prognosis of extended capitalist development for Russia, Lenin advanced the formula of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." Trotsky found a different solution of the problem by viewing the Russian proletariat in the context of an international revolutionary movement. He theorized that after the Russian proletariat was called upon to take the lead in the bourgeois revolution, it could install a socialist regime in power. Here is the first sense of the "permanency" of the revolution -- the revolution is permanent or continuous over the period when the bourgeois revolution is completed and the socialist revolution begun. Such a socialist regime could not endure in Russia alone, because of the social and economic backwardness of the country, but help from abroad would be automatic; the revolution in Russia would be the signal for a general socialist revolution in Europe. This is the second sense of the "permanency" of the revolution -- a permanently revolutionary situation as the revolution spreads from Russia to the advanced countries. Industrial Russia would become an integral part of socialist Europe. Backward Russia would become a common problem for all of Europe and thus would be reduced to relatively manageable proportions.

Between 1905 and 1917 the theory of permanent revolution or kindred ideas became increasingly popular in leftist circles within the Russian Marxist movement. One of its most vigorous exponents was Rosa Luxemburg.<sup>6</sup> Pokrovsky, the Vperiodist and Bolshevik historian, though later an archcritic of Trotsky, evidenced sympathy with the concept.<sup>7</sup> Bukharin and Radek, among others, expressed their adherence to the theory during the war.<sup>8</sup> "Permanent revolution" was the only satisfactory intellectual solution for those Russian Marxists who

<sup>5</sup> See Car, The Bolshevik Revolution, II, 13.

<sup>6</sup> See Piaty sezd RSDRP: Protokoly (Fifth Congress of the RSDWP: Protocols; Moscow, 1935), pp. 109-110.

<sup>7</sup> Biography of Pokrovsky, Ency. Dict., XLI-2, appendix, 119. Cf. Trotsky, The Permanent Revolution (New York, 1931), p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

tried to retain the spirit of Western Marxism while remaining vigorously revolutionary.

As anti-Trotsky polemics later stressed, Lenin did -- at first -- take sharp exception to Trotsky's view. During the war years, however, Lenin's intense antiwar internationalism brought him to a position that was for all practical purposes close to Trotsky's.<sup>9</sup> "The task of the proletariat of Russia," Lenin wrote in 1915, "is to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, in order to kindle the socialist revolution in Europe."<sup>10</sup> The outbreak of revolution and the fall of the tsar in February 1917 prompted Lenin to proclaim, "Only a special coincidence of historical conditions has made the proletariat of Russia, for a certain, perhaps very short time, the advance skirmishers of the revolutionary proletariat of the whole world."<sup>11</sup> Lenin had now fully embraced permanent revolution in its international sense.

The February Revolution caught the Bolsheviks completely off guard. The assumption of power by a conservative middle-class regime, supposedly impossible, made Lenin's doctrine of the "democratic dictatorship" meaningless. Events were proceeding more nearly according to the Menshevik expectation. The Mensheviks, together with most of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, reacted as they had planned by becoming a loyal opposition. The soviets, which these parties initially dominated, were guided in this direction.

In their responses to the establishment of the Provisional Government, the Bolsheviks divided, and the basic cleavage between the cautious and the bold was dramatically revealed. Most of the old-line Leninist leadership in Russia tacitly admitted that the Menshevik analysis had been borne out; they

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<sup>9</sup> The fact that Lenin did not explicitly acknowledge his conversion to Trotsky's point of view gave Trotsky's later opponents the opportunity to argue that he and Lenin were always in opposition over "permanent revolution." However, the scholastic efforts which had to be made to force a distinction between Trotsky's ideas and the theory attributed to Lenin, of "the growth of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the socialist revolution," simply underscore the essential agreement which was reached between the two men during 1917. See Meyer, Leninism, pp. 143-144. See also, for example, Y. Rezvushkin, "Lenin o teorii pererastaniya burzhuzno-demokraticheskoi revoliutsii v sotsialisticheskuyu" (Lenin on the Theory of the Growth of the Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution into the Socialist), Prolet. revol., nos. 10 and 11-12, 1928.

<sup>10</sup> Lenin, "A Few Theses," Works, XVIII, 312.

<sup>11</sup> Lenin, "Proshchalnoe pismo k shveitsarskim rabochim" (Farewell Letter to the Swiss Workers), Works, XX, 68.



accepted the "bourgeois" Provisional Government as the most advanced possible, and took on for themselves the role of watchdog and occasional prod in the interests of the democratic revolution. However, Lenin and the left-wingers, both Bolshevik and Menshevik, refused to let the revolution coast along in this manner. Openly or implicitly they embraced Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, with all the ultra-revolutionary hopes for Russia which this idea implied. In his "April Theses" Lenin announced the program which he had worked out for Russia on the basis of his dream of international revolution -- "All power to the soviets" and the overthrow of the Provisional Government, which was to Lenin an integral part of international imperialism.

The immediate test issue was the prosecution of the war. Peace was a widespread demand among the Russian populace, but to achieve it, Lenin maintained, "We need a workers' government, allied in the first place with the mass of the poorest village population, and secondly with the revolutionary workers of all the warring countries."<sup>12</sup> At the same time, Trotsky -- in New York -- was independently expressing himself in the same fashion: "At the head of the popular masses the Russian revolutionary proletariat will fulfill its historic task. ... It is necessary to liquidate not only tsarism, but also the war.... It is the duty of the revolutionary proletariat of Russia to show that behind the evil imperialist will of the liberal bourgeoisie there is no strength, for it has no support in the worker masses."<sup>13</sup>

The theory of permanent revolution had a dual significance for the year of revolution. As the guide for Bolshevik strategy it encouraged the seizure of power and gave doctrinal sanction to this "workers'" revolution in a country professedly unripe for socialism. At the same time it constituted a remarkably accurate forecast and description of the course of revolutionary events -- internally, that is. To this extent it was no doubt unique as an example of the pragmatic testing of a social theory: certain actions were called for which, by their success, upheld the theory.

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<sup>12</sup> Lenin, "Nabrosok tezisov 17-ogo marta, 1917" (Draft of Theses of March 17, 1917 New Style), Works, XX, 10.

<sup>13</sup> Trotsky in Novy mir (The New World; New York), March 16, 19, 20, 1917 New Style, as quoted in Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution, (tr. Max Eastman, New York, 1932), I, appendix 2, 471-474.

Permanent Revolution versus Socialism in One Country (Chapter 10)

The attack on Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution was a bold thrust, for it was aimed at the area in which Trotsky had made his most significant contribution to Bolshevik thinking. Whether acknowledged or not, the theory actually was the basis of Bolshevik reasoning in 1917, and pertaining to developments within Russia it proved to have had a high predictive value. It is not clear exactly how and why the party leaders settled on attacking "permanent revolution," but the strategy proved to be exceptionally clever. The theory of permanent revolution was uniquely apt as a unifying theme for Trotsky's enemies. The attack on it served to bind together the current Opposition and Trotsky's prerevolutionary record of polemics against Lenin; it connected Leftist criticisms of the party's economic policy with Trotsky's alleged theoretical error of understanding the peasantry; and above all it discredited the notion that the retardation of the world revolution could affect the socialist correctness of the Soviet regime.

It is strange at first glance that the international revolution became a major issue among the Russian Communist factions only when the Opposition had its back to the wall and after the illusion of imminent world upheaval had been thoroughly dispelled. By 1924 Soviet Russia had returned to normal diplomatic relations with most of its neighbors and had secured recognition by most of the major European powers. This very fact of stability in Russia's foreign relations, however, created acute theoretical insecurity for the Communist Party leadership, and the Opposition did not hesitate to take advantage of the situation.

For the doctrinal self-confidence of the party leadership, it was necessary to destroy the idea, so convincingly elaborated in Trotsky's theory, that the firm realization of socialism in revolutionary Russia depended on the victory of the socialist revolution in Western Europe. Kamenev tried to argue that facts had refuted the theory: "If Trotsky's theory had proved correct, then it would mean that the Soviet power had long ago ceased to exist. Ignoring the peasantry and not giving any consideration to the decisive question of the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry, this theory of 'permanent revolution' places the workers' government in Russia in exclusive and complete dependence on the immediate proletarian revolution in the West."<sup>69</sup> But existence of the "Soviet" power did not necessarily prove that it was "socialist" -- and this was the cardinal question still lurking in the background, even though the Ultra-Left oppositionists who raised it in 1920 and 1921 had been suppressed. If permanent revolution were accepted, in the absence of the revolution in the West the survival of the Soviet regime under Russian conditions could only be accounted for as the result of the internal transformation of the regime from a socialist one to some other kind.

<sup>69</sup> Kamenev, "The Party and Trotsky," in "For Leninism," pp. 70. (New York, 1931), pp. 30-31.



The dependence of Russian socialism on the world revolution was a long-held assumption in Bolshevik doctrine, and it could not be attacked directly. A stroke of good fortune was the opportunity for the party leadership to link it, via permanent revolution, with Trotsky and his alleged errors as incompatible with "Leninism." But the effort to show a wide and constant cleavage between Trotsky and Lenin was obviously forced; only by the splitting of hairs and the magnification of minutiae could the argument be constructed and again the case against Trotsky could be made to stick only by virtue of the party's complete control of the press.

An elaborate distinction was drawn between Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and what was attributed to Lenin as "the theory of the growing-over of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the socialist revolution." Stalin himself began to argue this difference in "Foundations of Leninism," when he endeavored to explain away the correspondence between the views of Lenin and Trotsky on the rapid dynamics of the revolutionary process in Russia: "Why...did Lenin oppose the idea of 'permanent revolution'? Because he wanted to make the fullest possible use of the revolutionary capacities and energies of the peasantry for the complete liquidation of tsarism and for the transition to the proletarian revolution, whereas the champions of 'permanent revolution' did not understand how important a part the peasantry had and has to play in the Russian Revolution. They underestimated the revolutionary energy of the peasantry."<sup>70</sup> By distorting and magnifying the differences between Lenin and Trotsky, the party leadership managed to dissociate Lenin from his own thinking of 1917 -- the thrust for power in the hope of international support -- and to denounce Trotsky for what had formerly been a universal Bolshevik assumption.

To replace the vanished mirage of international revolution, the communist leaders turned, like Russian revolutionary heroes of old, to a profession of faith in the Russian peasant. Bukharin completely dismissed the necessity for European support. It was not the smychka, the "union" of the proletariat and peasantry in the building of socialism under the leadership of the party of the proletariat, which would provide all the social basis necessary for a victory over Russian backwardness.<sup>71</sup> Bukharin declaimed: "Lenin taught: Our salvation lies in our coming to an understanding with the peasantry, and it is possible for us to do this, and to maintain and secure our position, even if we have to wait a long time for victory in the West.... Leninism contends that the peasantry is to be the ally of the working class during the whole transition period, even if an unwilling ally."<sup>72</sup> This reasoning

<sup>70</sup> Stalin, "On the Foundations of Leninism," Pravda, May 9, 1924.

<sup>71</sup> Bukharin, "The Theory of the Permanent Revolution," in "For Leninism," pp. 349-356.

<sup>72</sup> Bukharin, "A New Revelation as to Soviet Economics, or How the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc can be Destroyed," International Press Correspondence, no. 6, January 20, 1925, p. 40.

undoubtedly produced some genuine horror about Trotsky's alleged underestimation of the peasantry and the Left Opposition's "super-industrialism." The symchka explained the survival of socialism in Russia and proved the rectitude of the leadership. No wonder that Bukharin could say, "The question of the worker-peasant bloc is the central question; it is the question of all questions."<sup>73</sup>

The smychka was in reality sheer farce, though the idea was echoed and re-echoed throughout the party press as a cardinal element of doctrine. Neither the peasants nor the workers had any political power. Nevertheless, the smychka idea was important in the thinking of the Communist Right during the struggle against the Left Opposition and again when the Right Opposition defied Stalin in 1928. Bukharin extended the notion of the smychka to the whole realm of the world revolution, its process and prospects. He pointed out that the peasantry of the colonial and backward areas greatly outnumbered the proletariat of the industrialized countries, so that it was the social situation of Russia, rather than the Western European assumptions of classical Marxism, which typified the world-wide constellation of class forces. Hence, for Bukharin, the entire future of the world revolution was at stake in the success of the smychka formula in Russia. Destroy the possibility of an international alliance of workers and peasants, and the prospects for the universal triumph of socialism would grow dim indeed.<sup>74</sup>

On such grounds the right-wing ideologists concluded with evident sincerity that the Leftists' economic views portended disaster. The secretarial hierarchy was for its own reasons apprehensive of the Left Opposition, fearing a democratic challenge to its power. This common threat was the basis for the retrospectively unnatural alliance which persisted between the Rightists and their cautious program, on the one hand, and the Stalinists and the organized power of the party apparatus, on the other.

Stalin did not rely entirely on his right-wing colleagues for new doctrinal formulations. Borrowing Trotsky's device, Stalin took the occasion of the publication of his own collected writings of the year 1917 to set forth some new views in a specially written preface, "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists."<sup>75</sup> Stalin began with the

<sup>73</sup> Bukharin, "The Theory of the Permanent Revolution," in "For Leninism," p. 367.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 355-356.

<sup>75</sup> Stalin, "Oktiabrskaya revoliutsiya i taktika russkikh komunistov," (The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists), in Stalin, Voprosy leninizma (Problems of Leninism; Moscow and Leningrad, 1931), pp. 107-114.



failure of the revolution in Germany in 1923, which, he explained, was due to the fact that the German proletariat lacked the alliance with the peasantry that the Russian proletariat enjoyed in 1917. He concluded that "the dictatorship of the proletariat is a class alliance of the proletariat with the laboring masses of the peasantry." Using an argument parallel to that set forth by Bukharin, if not actually borrowed from him, Stalin confronted the ticklish issue of how socialism could be possible in a peasant country:

According to Lenin the revolution draws its forces above all from among the workers and peasants of Russia itself. According to Trotsky we have it that the indispensable forces can be found only "in the arena of a world-wide proletarian revolution." And what if the world revolution is fated to come late? Is there a gleam of hope for our revolution? Comrade Trotsky gives us no hope at all.... According to this plan, our revolution has only one prospect: to vegetate in its own contradictions and have its roots rot while waiting for the world-wide revolution.

Stalin was not the man to let a sociological analysis of the Soviet political situation leave him without prospects. Searching back through the pages of Lenin's collected works, he unearthed a passage which provided him with the opportunity to execute a feat of casuistry remarkable both in its boldness and in the extent of the doctrinal refurbishing it afforded. The statement was Lenin's remark of 1915 about fits and starts in the unfolding of world revolution, and the inference that "the victory of socialism is possible at first in a few capitalist countries or even in one taken separately." Stalin was undaunted by the fact that the formula was not meant to apply to Russia, as Lenin's other writings of the period show perfectly well. Citing the one passage as his authority, Stalin leaped to the conclusion that "the victory of socialism in one country alone is entirely possible and probable, even if that country is capitalistically less developed, and even though capitalism remains in other countries which are more developed capitalistically."

In this fashion Stalin provided himself with what was to become a potent doctrinal weapon to counter the charge that under his leadership the Soviet regime was departing from the principles and program of the revolution. He could then dismiss Marxian arguments that Russian backwardness was a serious obstacle to the party's socialist program: Lenin had said that socialism in a single country was possible -- therefore the Russian Soviet regime as presently constituted must be moving properly toward socialism. In characteristic fashion, the former divinity student rested his case on the now canonized utterances of the party's founder, rather than on independent inferences about the political situation. Bukharin had attempted the latter in imagining that the peasantry could serve as a support for socialism in Russia in lieu of

the international revolution. Stalin, however, preferred to base his stand on the pronouncements of authority, meager though they were.

Stalin's case was founded solely on one sentence written by Lenin in his Swiss exile nine years before, taken out of context and distorted to mean something entirely unintended by its author. Thanks to its establishment as doctrine in the face of these facts, "socialism in one country" was a critical turning point in the development of Soviet ideology. It marked the beginning of a pervasive process of reinterpretation and reconstruction, the effect of which has been to bring what is represented as Marxism-Leninism into accordance with the actual evolution of the Soviet state. It inaugurated, furthermore, the practice of proof by textual manipulation, with no questioning of the correctness of the authority really meant. Lenin's words were not to be challenged; nor was their manipulation by Stalin. Stalin was soon to show how effectively he could deal with people who attempted to trip him up on his ideological formulations.



LEON TROTSKY, THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

Translated by Max Shachtman, New York, 1931. Extracts from his Introduction, written at Prinkipo, November 30, 1930, pp. XXV-XLI.

The present book is dedicated to the question which is intimately linked with the history of the three Russian revolutions. But not with that alone. This question has played an enormous role in a recent years in the internal struggle of the C.P.S.U., it was carried into the C.I., played a decisive role in the development of the Chinese revolution and determined a whole series of most important decisions which are bound up with the revolutionary struggle of the countries of the East. It concerns the theory of the "permanent revolution" which, after the teaching of the epigones of Leninism (Zinoviev, Stalin, Bucharin, etc.) represents the original sin of "Trotskyism".

The question of the permanent revolution was once more raised in 1924 after a long interval, apparently quite unexpectedly. Political grounds for it, there were none: for it was a question of differences of opinion which long ago belonged to the past. Psychological grounds, on the contrary, there were many. The group of so-called "old Bolsheviks" which had opened up the fight against me, first of all counterposed this title to me. But a great obstacle in the path of this group was the year 1917. Important as had been the preceding history of ideological struggle and of preparation with regard to the party as a whole, as well as with regard to single individuals, this period found its highest and irrevocable test in the October revolution. "Not a single one of the epigones stood up under this test." Without exception, they all adopted the vulgar position of the democratic Left wingers at the time of the February 1917 revolution. Not a single one of them raised the slogan of the struggle of the proletariat for power. They all regarded the course towards a socialist revolution as absurd or - still worse - as "Trotskyism". In this spirit they directed the party up till the arrival of Lenin from abroad and up till the appearance of his famous theses of April 4. Thereafter Kamenev endeavored, already in direct struggle against Lenin, openly to form a democratic wing of Bolshevism. Later, he was joined by Zinoviev, who had arrived with Lenin. Stalin, heavily compromised by his social patriotic position, stepped aside. He let the party forget his miserable articles and speeches of the decisive March weeks and gradually edged over to Lenin's standpoint. That is why the question rose by itself, so to speak: What did Leninism give to any one of these leading "old Bolsheviks" when not a single one of them showed himself capable of applying independently the theoretical and practical experiences of the party at the most important and most responsible historical moment? Attention had to be diverted from this

question at all costs and another question substituted for it. To this end, it was decided to open fire on the permanent revolution. My adversaries did not, of course, foresee that by the creation of an artificial axis of struggle they would be compelled, without noticing it, to revolve around it themselves and manufacture a new world outlook for themselves.

In its essential features, the theory of the permanent revolution was formulated by me even before the decisive events of 1905. Russia was approaching the bourgeois revolution. Nobody in the ranks of the Russian social democracy (we all called ourselves social democrats then) had any doubts that we were approaching a bourgeois revolution, that is, a revolution produced by the contradictions between the development of the productive forces of capitalist society and the outlived caste and state relationships of the period of serfdom and the Middle Ages. In the struggle against the Narodniki and the anarchists, I had to devote not a few speeches and articles in those days to the Marxian analysis of the bourgeois character of the impending revolution.

The bourgeois character of the revolution could not, however, answer in advance the question as to which classes would solve the tasks of the democratic revolution and what the mutual relations of these classes would be. It was precisely at this point that the fundamental strategical problems began.

Plechanov, Axelrod, Zasulich, Martov, and following them, all the Russian Mensheviks, took as their premise that to the liberal bourgeoisie, as the natural claimant for power, belonged the leading role in the bourgeois revolution. According to this schema, there was assigned to the party of the proletariat the role of the Left wing of the democratic front. The social democracy was to support the liberal bourgeoisie against the reaction and at the same time to defend the interests of the proletariat against the liberal bourgeoisie. In other words, the Mensheviks understood the bourgeois revolution principally as a liberal-constitutional form.

Lenin posed the question differently. The liberation of the productive forces of bourgeois society from the fetters of serfdom signified for Lenin primarily a radical solution of the agrarian question in the sense of the complete liquidation of the landowning class and the revolutionary re-distribution of land ownership. Lenin set to work on the agrarian problem, which affected the life interests of the overwhelming majority of the population and at the same time constituted the basic problem of the capitalist market, with a truly revolutionary boldness. Since the liberal bourgeoisie, which confronts the workers as an enemy, is intimately bound by innumerable ties to large land ownership, the genuine democratic liberation of the peasantry can only be realized by the revolutionary cooperation of the workers and peasants. Their joint uprising against the old society, must, according to Lenin, in case of victory, lead to the establishment of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry".



This formula is now repeated in the Communist International as a sort of supra-historical dogma, without the attempt at an analysis of the living historical experiences of the last quarter of a century, as though we had not been witnesses and participants in the revolution of 1905, the February revolution of 1917, and finally of the October overturn. Such an historical analysis, however, is all the more necessary because there never has been in history a regime of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry".

In 1905, it was a question with Lenin of a strategical hypothesis which required a test in the reality of the class struggle. The formula of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry in large measure bore an intentionally algebraic x) character. Lenin did not answer in advance the question of what the political relations would be between the two participants in the proposed democratic dictatorship, that is, of the proletariat and the peasantry. He did not exclude the possibility that the peasantry would be represented in the revolution by an independent party, independent in the double sense: that is, not only with regard to the bourgeoisie but also with regard to the proletariat, and at the same time, capable of realizing the democratic revolution in alliance with the party of the proletariat in struggle against the liberal bourgeoisie. Lenin even reckoned, as we shall soon see, with the possibility that the revolutionary peasants' party might constitute the majority in the government of the democratic dictatorship.

In the question of the decisive significance of the agrarian revolution for the fate of our bourgeois revolution, I was, at least since the autumn of 1902, that is, from the moment of my first flight abroad, a pupil of Lenin. That the agrarian revolution, and consequently also the general democratic revolution, could be realized only by the united forces of the workers and peasants in struggle against the liberal bourgeoisie, was for me, contrary to all the senseless fairy tales of recent years, beyond any doubt. Yet I came out against the formula: "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry", because I saw its shortcoming in the fact that it left open the question of what class the real dictatorship would belong to. I endeavored to show that in spite of its enormous social and revolutionary weightiness, the peasantry was incapable of creating a really independent party and still more incapable of concentrating the revolutionary power in its hands. Just as the peasantry in the old revolutions since the German Reformation of the XVI century, and even before that, supported one of the fractions of the city bourgeois by its uprisings, and not infrequently insured its victory, so it could show a similar support in our belated bourgeois revolution at the highest swing of the struggle of the proletariat, and help it seize power. From this I drew the conclusions that our bourgeois revolution could solve its task

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x) Algebra deals with general quantities (a,b,c) in contrast to arithmetic which always employs definite quantities (1,2,3).

radically only in the event that the proletariat, with the aid of the many-millions peasantry, were capable of concentrating the revolutionary dictatorship in its hands.

What would be the social content of this dictatorship? First of all, it would have to carry out thoroughly the agrarian revolution and the democratic transformation of the state. In other words, the dictatorship of the proletariat would be a means of solving the tasks of the historically belated bourgeois revolution. But the matter could not be confined to this. Having reached power, the proletariat would be compelled to encroach ever more deeply upon the relationships of private property in general, that is, to take the road of socialist measures.

"Do you perhaps believe", the Stalins, Rykovs and all the other Molotovs rejoined dozens of times from 1905 to 1917 "that Russia is ripe for the socialist revolution?" To that I always answered: No, I do not. But world economy as a whole, and European economy in the first place, is completely ripe for the socialist revolution. Whether the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia leads to socialism or not, and at what rate and over what stages, will depend upon the further fate of European and international capitalism.

These were the essential features of the theory of the permanent revolution at its origin in the early months of 1905. Since then, three revolutions have taken place. The Russian proletariat ascended to power on the mighty wave of the peasant insurrection. The dictatorship of the proletariat became a fact in Russia earlier than in any other of the immeasurably more developed countries of the world. In 1924, that is, seven years after the historical prognosis of the theory of the permanent revolution was confirmed with rare force, the epigones opened up a wild attack against this theory, and plucked isolated sentences and polemical rejoinders out of my old works, which I had since completely forgotten.

It is appropriate to call to mind here that the first Russian revolution broke out more than half a century after the wave of bourgeois revolutions in Europe and thirty-five years after the episodic uprising of the Paris Commune. Europe has had time to disaccustom itself from revolutions. Russia had not experienced any. All the problems of the revolution had to be posed anew. It is not difficult to conceive how many unknown and putative quantities the future revolution held up for us in those days. The slogans of all the groupings were to a certain extent based upon hypotheses. A complete incapacity for historical prognoses and utter lack of understanding of their methods is required in order now, after the event, to consider analyses and evaluations of 1905 as though they were written yesterday. I have often said to myself and to my friends: I do not doubt that my prognoses of 1905 contained many defects which are not hard to disclose now, after the event. But did my critics see better and further? I had considered the defeats in my old works, which I had not perused for a long time, more serious and important than they really are. I convinced myself of that



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in 1928, when the political leisure imposed upon me in the banishment at Alma-Ata, afforded me the possibility to scrutinize with pencil in hand the old works on the permanent revolution. I hope that the reader too will be thoroughly convinced of this by what follows.

It is nevertheless necessary, within the limits of this introduction, to present as exact as possible a characterization of the elements of the theory of the permanent revolution and of the most important objections to it. The differences of opinion have become so broadened and deepened that they now actually embrace all the most important questions of the revolutionary world movement.

The permanent revolution, in the sense which Marx attached to the conception, means a revolution which makes no compromise with any form of class rule, which does not stop at the democratic stage, which goes over to socialist measures and to war against the reaction from without, that is, a revolution whose every next stage is anchored in the preceding one and which can only end in the complete liquidation of all class society.

To dispel the chaos that has been created around the theory of the permanent revolution, it is necessary to distinguish three lines of thought that are united in this theory.

First, it embraces the problem of the transition of the democratic revolution into the socialist. This is really the historical origin of the theory.

The conception of the permanent revolution was set up by the great Communists of the middle of the XIX century, by Marx and his adherents, in opposition to that democratic ideology which, as is known, presumed that all questions should be settled peacefully, in a reformist or evolutionary way, by the erection of the "rational" or democratic state. Marx regarded the bourgeois revolution of '48 as the direct introduction to the proletarian revolution. Marx "erred". Yet his error has a factual and not a methodological character. The revolution of 1848 did not turn into the socialist revolution. But that is just why it also did not achieve democracy. As to the German revolution of 1918, it is no democratic completion of the bourgeois revolution: it is a proletarian revolution decapitated by the social democracy; more correctly, it is the bourgeois counter-revolution, which is compelled to preserve pseudo-democratic forms after the victory over the proletariat.

Vulgar "Marxism" has worked out a schema of historical development, according to which every bourgeois society sooner or later secures a democratic regime, and after which it gradually organizes and raises the proletariat, under the conditions of democracy, to socialism. As to the transition to socialism itself,

there have been various notions: the avowed reformists imagined this transition as the reformist cramming of democracy with a socialist content (Jaurès). The formal revolutionists acknowledged the inevitability of applying revolutionary violence in the transition to socialism (Guésde). But both of them regarded democracy and socialism with regard to all peoples and countries as two not only entirely separated stages in the development of society, but also lying at great distances from each other. This view was predominant also among those Russian Marxists who, in the period of 1905, belonged to the Left wing of the Second International. Plechanov, the brilliant progenitor of Russian Marxism, considered the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat a delusion in contemporary Russia. The same standpoint was defended not only by the Mensheviks, but also by the overwhelming majority of the leading Bolsheviks, among them all the present party leaders without exception, who at that time were resolute revolutionary democrats, for whom the problem of the socialist revolution, not only in 1905 but also on the eve of 1917, still signified the vague music of a distant future.

These ideas and moods declared war upon the theory of the permanent revolution, risen anew in 1905. It pointed out that the democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois nations in our epoch led to the dictatorship of the proletariat and that the dictatorship of the proletariat puts the socialist tasks on the order of the day. In that lay the central idea of the theory. If the traditional view was that the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat led through a long period of democracy, the theory of permanent revolution established the fact that for backward countries the road to democracy passed through the dictatorship of the proletariat. By that alone, democracy does not become a regime anchored within itself for decades, but rather a direct introduction to the socialist revolution. Each is bound to the other by an unbroken chain. In this way, there arises between the democratic revolution and the socialist transformation of society a permanency of revolutionary development.

The second aspect of the "permanent" theory already characterizes the socialist revolution as such. For an indefinitely long time and in constant internal struggle, all social relations are transformed. The process necessarily retains a political character, that is, it develops through collisions of various groups of society in transformation. Outbreaks of civil war and foreign wars alternate with periods of "peaceful" reforms. Revolutions in economy, technique, science, the family, morals and usages develop in complicated reciprocal action and do not allow society to reach equilibrium. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution as such.

The international character of the socialist revolution, which constitutes the third aspect of the theory of the permanent revolution, results from the present state of economy and the social structure of humanity. Internationalism is no abstract



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principle, but a theoretical and political reflection of the character of world economy, of the world development of productive forces, and the world scale of the class struggle. The socialist revolution begins on national grounds. But it cannot be completed on these grounds. The maintenance of the proletarian revolution within a national framework can only be a provisional state of affairs, even though, as the experience of the Soviet Union shows, one of long duration. In an isolated proletarian dictatorship, the internal and external contradictions grow inevitably together with the growing successes. Remaining isolated, the proletarian state must finally become a victim of these contradictions. The way out for it lies only in the victory of the proletariat of the advanced countries. Viewed from this standpoint, a national revolution is not a self-sufficient whole: it is only a link in the international chain. The international revolution presents a permanent process, in spite of all fleeting rises and falls.

The struggle of the epigones is directed, even if not always with the same distinctness, against all three aspects of the theory of the permanent revolution. And how could it be otherwise when it is a question of three inseparably connected parts of a whole. The epigones mechanically separate the democratic and the socialist dictatorships. They separate the national socialist revolution from the international. The conquest of power within national limits is considered by them in essence not as the initial act but as the final act of the revolution: after that follows the period of reforms which leads to the national socialist society. In 1905, they did not even grant the idea that the proletariat could conquer power in Russia earlier than in Western Europe. In 1917, they preached the self-sufficing democratic revolution in Russia and spurned the dictatorship of the proletariat. In 1925-1927, they steered a course towards the national revolution in China under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. Subsequently, they raised the slogan for China of the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants - in opposition to the dictatorship of the proletariat. They proclaimed the possibility of the construction of an isolated and self-sufficient socialist society in the Soviet Union. The world revolution became for them, instead of an indispensable pre-condition for victory, only a favorable circumstance. This profound breach with Marxism was reached by the epigones in the process of the permanent struggle against the theory of the permanent revolution.

The struggle, which began with an artificial revival of historical reminiscences and the falsification of the distant past, led to the complete transformation of the world outlook of the ruling stratum of the revolution. We have already repeatedly set forth that this transvaluation of values was accomplished under the influence of the social requirements of the Soviet bureaucracy, which became ever more conservative, strove for national order, and demanded that the already achieved revolution, which insured the privileged positions to the bureaucracy, now be considered adequate for the peaceful construction of socialism.

We do not wish to return to this theme here. Let it simply be observed that the bureaucracy is deeply conscious of the connection of its material and ideological positions with the theory of national socialism. This is being expressed most crassly right now, in spite of or rather because of the fact that the Stalinist apparatus, under the pressure of contradictions which it did not foresee, is driving to the Left with all its might and inflicting quite severe blows upon its Right wing inspirers of yesterday. The hostility of the bureaucrats towards the Marxist Opposition, whose slogans and arguments they have borrowed in great haste, does not, as is known, diminish in the least. The condemnation of the theory of the permanent revolution above all, and an acknowledgment, even if only indirect, of the theory of socialism in one country, is demanded of the Oppositionists who raise the question of their re-admission into the party for the purpose of supporting the course towards industrialization, and so forth. By this, the Stalinist bureaucracy reveals the purely tactical character of its swing to the Left with the retention of the national reformist strategical foundations. It is superfluous to explain what this means; in politics as in the military affairs, tactics are subordinated in the long run, to strategy.

The question has long ago grown out of the specific sphere of the struggle against "Trotskyism". Gradually extending itself, it has today literally embraced all the problems of the revolutionary world outlook. Permanent revolution or socialism in one country - this alternative embraces at the same time the internal problems of the Soviet Union, the perspectives of the revolution in the East, and finally, the fate of the whole Communist International.

The present work does not examine this question from all sides: It is not necessary to repeat what has already been said in other works. In the Criticism of the Program of the Communist International, I have endeavored to disclose theoretically the economic and political untenability of national socialism. The theoreticians of the Comintern were as silent about it as though their mouths were filled with water. That is perhaps the only thing left for them to do. In this booklet, I above all restore the theory of the permanent revolution as it was formulated in 1905 with regard to the internal problems of the Russian revolution. I show wherein my position actually differed from Lenin's, and how and why it coincided with Lenin's position in every decisive situation. Finally, I endeavor to reveal the decisive significance of the question that interests us here for the proletariat of the backward countries, and thereby, for the Communist International as a whole.

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What accusations have been raised against the theory of the permanent revolution by the epigones? Disregard the innumerable contradictions of my critics, and their whole, veritably immense, literature can be reproduced in the following sentences:



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The Anglo-Russian Committee then became its fruit. The disappointment of the possibility of binding the world bourgeoisie hand and foot with the help of Purcell, Raditch, La Follette and Chiang Kai-Shek, led to an acute paroxysm of fear of an immediate war danger. The Comintern is still passing through this period.

The fourth objection to the theory of the permanent revolution simply amounts to saying that I did not defend the standpoint of the theory of socialism in one country in 1905, which Stalin first manufactured in 1924 for the Soviet bureaucracy. This accusation should be appreciated only as a historical curiosity. One might actually believe that my critics in so far as they thought of anything at all in 1905, were of the opinion then that Russia was prepared for an independent socialist revolution. As a matter of fact, however, they accused me tirelessly in the period of 1905 to 1917 of Utopianism, because I counted upon the probability that the Russian proletariat could come to power before the proletariat of Western Europe. Kamenev and Rykov accused Lenin of Utopianism in April 1917, using against him the vulgar argument that the socialist revolution must first be achieved in England and in the other advanced countries before it could be Russia's turn. The same standpoint was defended by Stalin too, up to April 4, 1917. Only gradually and with difficulty, did he adopt the Leninist formula of the dictatorship of the proletariat in contradistinction to the democratic dictatorship. In the spring of 1924, Stalin was still repeating what the others had said before him: isolated, Russia is not mature for the construction of a socialist society. In the autumn of 1924, Stalin, in his struggle against the theory of the permanent revolution, for the first time discovered the possibility of building up an isolated socialism in Russia. Only then did the Red professors collect quotations for Stalin which convict Trotsky of having believed in 1905 - how terrible! - that Russia could reach socialism only with the aid of the proletariat of Western Europe.

Were one to take the history of an ideological struggle over a period of a quarter of a century, cut it into little pieces, mix them up in a mortar, and then command a blind man to paste the pieces together again, a greater theoretical and historical absurdity could hardly result than the one with which the epigones feed their readers and hearers.



EXCERPT FROM "TWENTIETH CENTURY RUSSIA"

By Donald W. Treadgold  
 Rand McNally & Company\*  
 1959

As the triumvirate took form early 1923 Trotsky was plainly the most important figure outside it; but no one regarded Stalin as the most eminent of the three. Zinoviev, especially, had an international prestige which Stalin lacked, while both Kamenev and he were regarded as theorists in a way Stalin was not -- and a Communist leader had to be a theorist. As the struggle developed between Trotsky and the triumvirs, Stalin counted less on his own influence than on Trotsky's vulnerability. He did not at first try to turn the struggle into a personal contest; an eye witness has told the story of how Zinoviev and Kamenev would snub Trotsky in Politburo meetings, while Stalin would greet him warmly.

Trotsky against the Triumvirate

On the eve of Lenin's death, the Thirteenth Party Conference published, on Stalin's motion, the decision empowering the Central Committee to expel Party members for factionalism. At the moment the leader died a new sanctity enveloped his every word and deed, including this decision, in which Lenin had taken part. Simultaneously the triumvirs decreed a new recruiting campaign, nominally with a view to strengthening the actual worker element in Party ranks. Actually Stalin, as general secretary, was able to bolster his own influence by guiding the Party machinery in selecting new members. In a few short weeks nearly a quarter of a million men and women were admitted in the new "Lenin enrollment."

At the time of the XIII Party Congress in May 1924, the economic situation was improving sufficiently to enable the triumvirs to call their critics to account. Zinoviev openly attacked Trotsky and demanded that he retract his "errors." As Stalin had only shortly before opposed Zinoviev's demand for Trotsky's arrest, he found it wise to remain in the background. Trotsky replied to Zinoviev with a cri de coeur which went to the root of his whole position, morally requiring him to sit passive in the face of doom:

The party in the last analysis is always right because the party is the single historic instrument given to the proletariat for the solution of its fundamental problems. I have already said that in front of one's own party nothing could be easier than to say: all my criticisms, my statements, my warnings, my protests -- the whole thing was a mere mistake. I, however, comrades, cannot say that, because I do not think it. I know that one must not be right against the party. One can be right only with the party, and through the party, for

history has created no other road for the realization of what is right.

The Congress was unmoved. It promptly took steps to discipline the Russian Trotskyites, as well as dissidents in the other parties of the Comintern.

After the XIII Congress, as far as could be seen the chief antagonists were Trotsky on the one hand and Zinoviev and Kamenev on the other. In the autumn of 1924 Trotsky published The Lessons of October, in which he distinguished between objectively revolutionary situations and subjective failures of revolutionary leaders in such situations. As illustrations of the latter, he cited Zinoviev's and Kamenev's opposition to Lenin's decision to launch an armed uprising in the fall of 1917 -- thus reopening an extremely ugly wound -- and he also implied that Zinoviev was largely responsible for the failure of the German Communist revolt of 1923. Trotsky restated his old theory of "permanent revolution," with its emphasis on the world leadership of the proletariat and its implicit challenge to the Leninist position on the role of the poor peasantry in building socialism. "October," said Trotsky, was the crucial stage in the history of the Party; "October" meant to him the time when Lenin adopted Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution -- at least in the sense of rapid passage from the bourgeois to the socialist stage.

Trotsky had made a tactical error. By his emphasis on "October" he opened the way for Zinoviev and Kamenev to retaliate by reminding the Party again of Trotsky's sharp disagreements with Lenin prior to 1917. Stalin's caution had reaped its reward. Since he was not directly drawn into this controversy, he was in a position to make public statements in November which in effect forgave Zinoviev and Kamenev for their earlier mistakes -- he even acknowledged some of his own -- but forcefully recalled to his hearers the fact that Trotsky was, after all, a newcomer in Party ranks.

Meanwhile Stalin unleashed a new weapon, which Trotsky probably had not considered him capable of producing. He set forth a theoretical position of his own from which he could challenge Trotsky. In order to do so he had to reverse himself within the space of a few months. In Foundations of Leninism, he advanced his theory of "socialism in one country."

The theory was an innovation and a repudiation of some things which Lenin had said years earlier; but it was a perfectly logical extension of what Lenin had said and done in 1917 and later. If the Russian Communists were not to be indefinitely bogged down in the NEP stage, they must push on to socialism, even if the world revolution was still further delayed. Authority for such an effort could be found in Lenin. Like Lenin, Trotsky believed the building of socialism could be begun in Russia alone; but what Stalin did was to assert that it could be completed with success and to furnish reasons for his contention. Russia was an enormous country,



rich in natural resources. Provided that "capitalist" intervention was not renewed, the Russian proletariat, drawing on Russia's great potential wealth and protected by its vast spaces, could accomplish the task.

For a time, however, the theory of "socialism in one country" was overshadowed by the acrimonious personal struggle between Trotsky and the two most prominent triumvirs. In January 1925 the Central Committee removed Trotsky from the War Commissariat, even though he remained in uneasy possession of a seat on the Politburo. This was the decisive blow. Although he was still not completely crushed, Trotsky receded to the background. If he had been another kind of man, he might have tried to use the Red Army against his adversaries, but his loyalty to the Party was paramount, and he accepted his deposition without trying to resist.

Although Trotsky was defeated, Zinoviev and Kamenev soon discovered that the victory was not theirs. In March 1925 the Fourteenth Conference of the Party accepted Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country," while Zinoviev and Kamenev paid little attention. Soon afterward Stalin was able to break up the triumvirate quietly. To late Zinoviev and Kamenev attacked Stalin's new theory. By the middle of 1925 he had found new allies in Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsy, who accepted "socialism in one country." Far from yet aspiring openly to individual power, Stalin chose to be regarded as a mediator, and he asserted that "after Ilich Lenin" collegial -- or what would later be called "collective" -- leadership was the only conceivable way of running the party.

#### Stalin Allied with the Right

Rykov had become Lenin's successor as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars; Tomsy was the leader of the Soviet trade-unions; Bukharin, the "Left" Communist of 1918, was now, like Rykov and Tomsy, on the "right" and the leader of those who felt that the NEP was a success, and while indeed socialism might be built in Russia, the ground was secure and there was no great need for haste. Zinoviev and Kamenev, on the contrary, were profoundly uneasy about the continuation of the NEP, but they had been abruptly thrust into the minority. In the autumn of 1925 Zinoviev published his Leninism, attacking NEP as a policy of "continuous retreat," and demanded a renewal of the "policy of 1918" directed against the kulak. Zinoviev managed to use his position in Leningrad to rally the powerful Party organization there to his support, in opposition to the new Politburo majority.

Zinoviev and Kamenev tardily recognized Stalin as the man from whom they had most to fear and carefully prepared an attack on him for the XIV Party Congress, to be held in December 1925. However, the plan completely miscarried. Kamenev, who spoke most sharply in criticism of Stalin at the Congress,

was punished by demotion from full member to candidate member of the Politburo. As reconstituted just after the Congress, the Politburo had three new full members: Molotov, Voroshilov, and Kalinin, all loyal henchmen of Stalin's. Stalin also added several supporters to the list of candidate members of the Politburo and to the newly enlarged Central Committee. Shortly before, Voroshilov had replaced Michael Frunze, who had been named Trotsky's successor but had died soon afterward, as war commissar. Stalin had established a formidable position of strength within both Party and government. Lenin-grad remained the only stronghold of resistance, and Stalin followed up his victory at the XIV Congress by sending Sergei Kirov to replace Zinoviev as Party leader there, ordering him to clean out the opposition.

Only then, in the spring of 1926, when the supporters of all three had been scattered, did Zinoviev and Kamenev make common cause with Trotsky. Stalin's reaction was, "Ah, they have granted themselves a mutual amnesty" -- since a few short months earlier they had been bitterly attacking each other. The three were united enough in their opposition to continuance of the NEP and the "alliance with the middle peasantry" on which it was based; but their past personal antagonisms made their alliance an uneasy and incongruous one.

In the meantime the Right wing of the Politburo was championing the NEP and all that it implied. Bukharin advised the peasants, "Enrich yourselves," which was a phrase Guizot had used under the French monarchy of Louis Philippe, whatever Marxist glosses might be given it. At the XIV Congress Bukharin had set forth the basis on which he accepted Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country": "We shall creep at a snail's pace, but...we are building socialism and...we shall complete the building of it." This amounted to a frame of mind to which the NEP idea was congenial, rather than something uneasily and temporarily accepted for tactical reasons.

For the time being, however, Stalin was less concerned about policy than with getting rid of his enemies in the Left Opposition led by Zinoviev and Trotsky, which was not hard for him to do. In July 1926 Lashevich, a Zinovievite who was Voroshilov's deputy war commissar, was accused of organizing oppositionist groups within the Red Army and was dismissed. Stalin seized the opportunity to expel Zinoviev from the Politburo. On October 4 all the major opposition leaders replied with a statement admitting violation of Party statutes and pledging disbandment of the opposition, but they could not refrain from repeating their policy criticisms of the Politburo majority. Stalin's reply was to remove Trotsky from the Politburo and Zinoviev from the presidency of the Comintern. However, lesser figures in the opposition leadership were allowed to recant and to obtain well-publicized rewards for their submission. At the end of October 1926 the Fifteenth Party Conference sanctioned all these maneuvers and applauded Stalin's description of the opposition leaders as



"Social Democratic" deviators who were reverting to the line of the Second International.

By the beginning of 1927 the Left Opposition had thus lost any immediate hope of success, but its leaders were not yet silenced. Trotsky and his colleagues attacked the Politburo for "Thermidorism, degeneration, Menshevism, betrayal, treachery, kulak-nepman policy against the workers, against the poor peasants, against the Chinese revolution," as the Stalinist writer Popov sums it up.<sup>1</sup> The opposition leaders were able to blame the Politburo majority for a series of foreign setbacks: Britain's rupture of diplomatic relations with the USSR, the assassination of the Soviet ambassador in Warsaw, and especially the crushing of the Chinese Communists by Chiang Kai-shek.

In an article submitted to Pravda, Trotsky climaxed opposition criticism by calling on his adherents to follow the example of Clemenceau (who had opened the way to take over as French premier by attacking his predecessor's failures in World War I) in case war engulfed the USSR (a prospect taken serious by the Communists in 1927). However, advocating a change of government was dangerous in the Soviet Union. If, as all good Communists agreed, the existing regime represented the proletariat, then any move to change it was bound to be anti-proletarian and therefore treasonable. For that reason Stalin promptly engineered the expulsion of Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee. After the two men led street demonstrations on the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution (November 7, 1927), they were expelled from the Party.

The way was now clear for Stalin to oust the opposition from the Party en masse. The XV Congress, in December 1927, decreed as much. It might have been expected that Stalin's tactics would have drawn his opponents together, but on the contrary, the result was that they were neatly split down the middle. Trotsky refused to accept the Congress decision and was thereupon exiled to Alma Ata in Central Asia. But Zinoviev and Kamenev submitted and renounced their earlier-stated views; they were permitted to crawl back into the Party.

### Trotsky Defeated

As far as the Soviet Communist Party and the Comintern were concerned, the controversy between Stalin and Trotsky was now at an end; the followers of Trotsky left what they henceforth called "Stalinist" ranks and attempted to build their own parties and organize them into a Fourth International. The dispute shook and divided the Communist parties throughout the world as no such controversy before or since ever did (the immediately ensuing struggle between Stalin and Bukharin

<sup>1</sup> N. Popov, Outline History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (2 parts; Moscow-Leningrad: Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, 1934), Part II, p. 313.

had fewer repercussions abroad, for it seemed to center on the peasant, for whom most Communists never had any use). By 1927, however, Trotsky and his sympathizers had given up any immediate hope of overcoming Stalin's ascendancy from within the Russian Party. They declared that a "bureaucracy" had come to power in the USSR, and that it must be eliminated. This assertion was difficult to explain on Marxist grounds, unless it were to be on the basis of Marx's analysis of Oriental society, and the Trotskyites shrank from that. Since Trotsky continued to believe that a distorted socialism still existed in the USSR, it was also difficult to think of any through which the Stalinist leadership could be displaced without disturbing the economic foundation. As a result the Trotskyites had to retreat into a position comparable to that of the prewar Social Democrats, opposing all existing governments and declaring that there could be no basic improvement unless they took power. They never managed to do so anywhere.

The rank and file of the world's Communists had little chance to observe the personal differences and antagonisms between Stalin and Trotsky, and supported one or the other on the basis of his theoretical position. The differences may be briefly formulated thus: Trotsky declared that it was impossible to build socialism in Russia because the peasants did not want it; that it would only be possible to do so if the workers of the West revolted, and he was right. Stalin declared that it was impossible to wait for the Western workers to revolt before building socialism, because they were not likely to revolt in the immediate future. Therefore socialism could be built in Russia only if the Party used the peasantry, and he was also right. However, that the Western workers were not Communist, Trotsky could never admit; he could only assert that they would be soon. That the Russian peasants were not Communist, Stalin could never admit, but he could try to compel them to be. As a result Trotsky retreated into utopianism, while Stalin proceeded to establish a minority dictatorship built on terror.