

A note from the authors

The present work is a reply to the material on Trotsky by Monty Johnstone published in the Young Communist League journal Cogito (no. 5). That work raised a whole series of historical and ideological questions which are of fundamental importance to every active member of the labour movement today. Such issues as the theory of the permanent revolution and the history of the Bolshevik Party cannot be dealt with in a few lines. To reduce them to an affair of a few paragraphs would inevitably lead to errors and misrepresentations. We have no need, then, to apologise for the length of the present document.

We have tried to deal with the main theoretical issues raised in the Cogito article. In so doing, it was necessary to follow the arguments in the sequence in which they appear in that work, though this frequently cut across both the logical and the theoretical questions involved and the historical context in which they arose. A certain amount of repetition was therefore unavoidable, although, generally speaking, those issues which recur are dealt with differently in different sections. Thus, different aspects of the theory of permanent revolution make their appearance in the section on the history of Bolshevism, and on "Socialism in One Country", as well as under its proper heading. On this and other questions considerations of style have been sacrificed for the sake of political clarity.

Likewise in relation to quotations. We have avoided quoting isolated phrases, which can be easily manipulated and distorted. Most of the passages quoted are reproduced in full in order to convey accurately the meaning intended by their authors. This does not make for easy reading, but is a necessary safeguard against falsification.

Monty Johnstone's declared intention is to produce a work on Trotsky in three parts. Part One - dealing with the "ideas of Trotsky" - has already appeared. Parts

Two - "Trotsky and the International Labour Movement" - and Three - "Trotskyist policies Today" - have yet to see the light of day. For our part, we welcome this

challenge and are quite prepared to answer Comrade Johnstone's arguments, point by point We have therefore refrained here from anticipating Comrade

Johnstone's future writings by developing arguments on, for example the Chinese Revolution or Popular Frontism. We have touched upon these questions only as

examples and illustrations of the questions under discussion. In a future work we will deal with all these questions in a detailed manner.

The present work contains a great deal of material from the writings of Lenin. We have included extracts from many works which will be unfamiliar to most members

of the Young Communist League and the labour movement generally, as they are difficult or impossible to obtain. Unless otherwise stated, quotations from Lenin

come from the English Collected Works in forty-two volumes, the publication of which has recently been completed. It is necessary to point out, however, that this

edition itself is far from complete. The Russian edition of collected works runs into fifty-four volumes, and contains much material, including a whole series of

important letters to Trotsky written shortly before Lenin's death, which has been left out of the English edition. As a supplement to the present work, a further

pamphlet is under preparation which will make this and other relevant material available to the English reader.

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Chapter One - Introduction

"A full discussion among Marxists about the political positions and roles of both Stalin and Trotsky are long overdue. Involving as it will do an assessment of the

major policies and events of the Russian and international labour movement over four decades such a debate will be far reaching, complicated but profoundly

instructive." (Cogito, page 2)

Such is the promise which Monty Johnstone lays before the readers of the Young Communist League journal, Cogito. It is a promise which will be welcomed by all

honest members of the Young Communist League and the Communist Party, many of whom must also be wondering why this important discussion has been long

"overdue", overdue, to be exact for rather more than four decades.

Until recently, a discussion in the Young Communist League and the Communist Party on the question of Trotskyism would have been unthinkable. For forty years,

the works of Trotsky have been "proscribed reading" for the majority of Communist Party members, whose doubts and questions have been met by the leaders with

a steady stream of anti-Trotskyist "exposures", based on distorted accounts of the history of Bolshevism and the Russian Revolution. The last attempt to deal publicly

with the question of Trotskyism was Betty Reid's[1] article in Marxism Today only four years ago, which, among other gems asserts that the Moscow Trials are

purely an affair for Soviet historical research! Such material as this cannot satisfy the demands of Communists who demand truthful accounts and an analysis of the

questions involved. To those comrades, we can say, together with Comrade Johnstone that:

"We would hope...that they will not be content just to learn to trot out the highly selective potted history of the international labour movement and one-sided account

of Communism which are served up in their papers and education classes." (Cogito, page 3)

Together with Comrade Johnstone, we can quote the words of Lenin to the Russian Young Communist League that it is necessary to take "the sum total of human

knowledge...in such a way that Communism shall not be something learned by rote, but something that you yourselves have thought over, that it shall be an inevitable

conclusion from the point of view of modern education."

A discussion presupposes two sides. Comrade Johnstone calls upon his opponents to answer his case. We shall see to what extent he and the leadership of the

Communist Party and Young Communist League will be prepared to allow the "full discussion" to proceed when the basic theoretical questions involved are really

brought home to the rank-and-file of these organisations.

On the face of it, Monty Johnstone's approach to the subject is eminently reasonable and objective. He is at great pains to emphasise that he has no "axe to grind",

but stands between two extremes:

"Such a work would be utterly sterile if carried out from the old positions of fixed adherence to Stalin or Trotsky. Neither apologetics nor demonology but the

Marxist method of objective critical and self-critical analysis in the light of historical experience is required to arrive at a balanced estimate." (Cogito, page 2)

This is the basis of Johnstone's air of lofty objectivity. He promises not to "adhere fixedly" to the "old position" of Stalin, so why should his opponents persist in

defending the ideas of Trotsky? Such is the impeccable logic of Johnstone's argument: no one advocates the "old position" of Dühring these days, so why support the

ideas of Engels? No one imagines that God created the world in seven days, so why perpetuate the one-sided "cult" of Einstein and Darwin?

In reality, Johnstone has posed the question in an entirely un-Marxist way. The question is not whether we "fixedly adhere" to Trotsky, Stalin or any individual. It is

a question of whether we still defend the basic ideas of Marxism itself, ideas which have been worked out scientifically, which have been added to in the light of

historical experience, but which remain, in fundamentals, the same today as in the time of Trotsky and Lenin, or, for that matter, Marx and Engels. The basic issue,

which Comrade Johnstone seeks to avoid, but which underlies all the arguments which he deals with, is precisely whether the "old position" of Marxism still holds

good on such fundamental questions as internationalism, the role of the working class in the struggle for Socialism, the nature of Socialist society, etc. These basic

ideas have been defended by all the great Marxists against the attempts of opportunists, masquerading as "Socialists" and "Communists", to water them down, revise

them and reduce them to reformist impotence. Under the guise of "modern", "scientific", "objectivity", Monty Johnstone attempts to isolate these ideas as

"Trotskyism", something alien to the traditions and conceptions of Marxism, and in doing so returns to the "old position" - of Bernstein, Kautsky and the Mensheviks.

Monty Johnstone's appeals to the Marxist method are worth nothing, because that method bases itself, first and foremost, upon scrupulous honesty and truthfulness

when dealing with the writings of opponents in polemics. The most painstaking accuracy in quoting is to be observed in all the polemical works of Marx, Engels,

Lenin and Trotsky. The great Marxists had no use for misquotation and distortion because for them, a polemic was a means of bringing out the basic ideological

questions involved and of raising the political level of the membership, not scoring paltry debating points. They did not stoop to personal abuse as a substitute

for arguments, but neither did they refrain from describing a rascal as a rascal, in a bid to cast a specious halo of professorial "impartiality" over their writings.

On page three of his article Monty Johnstone writes:

"The case is a political one. Personal abuse and innuendo do not figure in it. " (our emphasis)

True enough, we do not find any trace of the old filth which was churned out for decades by Johnstone's colleagues about "Trotsky-Fascists", "political degenerates",

"agents of Hitler" and the rest of it. Let us just taste a few samples of this Olympian objectivity:

"the magnificently written but highly slanted polemical works of Trotsky",
"swashbuckling rhetoric and flights of fancy [in place of] a calm examination of his

opponents' position...", "adding paternalistically...", "hurling abuse from the sidelines...", "superficially plausible reasoning...", "wishful thinking and infatuation with

the revolutionary phrase...", "windy and exaggerated generalisations [instead of] a balanced examination...", "Trotsky's dogmatic shibboleth...", etc, etc.

Comrade Johnstone has made progress since the days of Palme Dutt, Pollitt, Gollan and Campbell's "balanced, Marxist" analysis of Trotsky-Fascism. His progress

consists in substituting for the language of the gutter the saccharine abuse and innuendo of the seminar room.

"Cult of Personality"

"The Twentieth Congress, by smashing the Stalin cult, opens the way for such an approach in the world Communist movement...Old sectarian habits and attitudes

and bureaucratic resistances have held it up, but things are changing in this respect in many Communist Parties." (Cogito, page 2)

With these few words, Comrade Johnstone "explains" the somersault of the leaders of the World "Communist" movement on the position of Stalin, a position which

they had fervently defended for thirty years, which was the ultimate, the essential article of faith, by which one could distinguish a Communist from a

"Trotsky-Fascist". Having admitted, in so many words, that a discussion on basic developments in the Russian and international labour movement was suppressed

for decades, he then blithely proclaims the 20th Congress as a kind of magical key which opens all the doors barring the way to knowledge.

But just a minute, Comrade Johnstone, what about the "Marxist method of objective critical and self-critical analysis in the light of historical experience"? What about

Lenin's words on "the sum total of human knowledge" and learning by rote? The 20th Congress revealed to the World "Communist" Movement that for a matter of

thirty years, for a whole historical period, all its leaders, its most trusted theoreticians, its most talented journalists had held a position which was not merely incorrect,

but criminal from the standpoint of the Russian and international working class. You ask Communists to accept this without protest, to swallow it whole, and ask no

questions? But surely that is just what the Marxist method is not? Surely this is just what Lenin warned the Russian Young Communist League against fifty years

ago?

The first question which would occur to any thinking Communist is: Why? Why did it happen? How could it happen? We are aware that no one is perfect, that even

the greatest Marxist will sometimes make mistakes...But to make such "mistakes", for such a length of time. That is monstrous. That requires an explanation. That

demands an explanation.

No explanations are forthcoming from Monty Johnstone. Instead, he refers us to the text of Khrushchev's speech on Stalin at the 20th Congress. But there is no point

in looking for the Moscow edition. The speech, which was delivered behind closed doors, has never been published in Russia. Johnstone is obliged to quote the text

of this masterpiece of modern Marxist thought from...the Manchester Guardian!

What is the "analysis" of Stalinism contained in the material issued by Moscow? The famous "theory" of the "Cult of Personality". It appears that, for a whole

historical period, the "Socialist State" was ruled over by a Bonapartist dictator, who dispatched millions to forced labour in Siberia, wiped out whole peoples,

exterminated the entire Old Bolshevik leadership after the most monstrous frame-up trials in history - and all on the strength of his own personality. What a travesty

of Marxism and the Marxist method of analysis! The members of the Young Communist League and the Communist Party are not children, Comrade Johnstone, that

they believe in fairy stories, even if these fairy stories are dreamed up in the Kremlin or in King Street.

For a Marxist it would be impossible to pose the question in this way. The Marxist method does not explain history in terms of the individual genius or villain, in terms

of whims and "personality", but on the basis of social classes and groups, their interests and their interconnections. It is entirely inconceivable, that one man should

be able to impose his ideas upon the whole of society. Marx had long ago explained that if an idea, even an incorrect idea, is put forward, gains support, and

becomes a force in the lives of men, then it must represent the interest of a section of society. If Johnstone's references to the Marxist method are anything more than

a mere stylistic trick, a nice turn of phrase, then we insist that he answers a straight question: whose interests did Stalin represent? His own?

We have said that every honest Communist will welcome a thorough debate on the question of Stalinism and Trotskyism. In this regard we welcome the contribution

made by Comrade Johnstone also. But what kind of a Marxist analysis is it that, while making pompous references to the Marxist method, avoids any attempt at

analysing the fundamental social processes which alone can throw light on the ideas expressed at various times by Trotsky and Lenin? Without explaining these

historical processes, the whole thing becomes entirely arbitrary, reducing itself to a string of isolated quotations torn out of context from the works of Lenin and

Trotsky, artificially juxtaposed in order to "prove" this or that point. Of course, Comrade Johnstone, such is the essence of the "Marxist method" which has been

used by the Stalinists for decades to justify every twist and turn with the appropriate sentence from Lenin. Such a method bears little relation to Marxism, but owes a

great debt to the scientific methods of...the Jesuits.

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NOTES

[1] As this pamphlet goes to print we note that Mrs. Reid has been busy once more "creatively enriching" Marxist thought. The "reasonable" Monty Johnstone

notwithstanding, her latest attack on Trotskyism yields little in viciousness to the last one and surpasses it in ignorance.

Chapter Two - From the History of Bolshevism, Part One

"When the Trotskyists present Trotsky as the comrade-in-arms of Lenin and the true representative of Leninism after his death, it is important to be aware that in fact

Trotsky only worked with Lenin in the Bolshevik Party for six years (1917-23)." (Cogito, page 4)

The arithmetic of Johnstone's argument seems impeccable. But let us also see what those six years represented. The period includes the October Revolution in

which Trotsky "played a role second to Lenin", the civil-war, when Trotsky was Commissar for War (a post he held until 1925) and when he was responsible for the

creation of the Red Army from almost nothing, the building of the Third International, for the first five congresses of which Trotsky wrote the Manifestos and many of

the most important policy statements; the period of economic reconstruction in which Trotsky reorganised the shattered railway systems of the USSR. These are just

a few of the petty jobs which Trotsky accomplished in his brief sojourn in the Bolshevik Party.

Monty Johnstone, however, is quite unabashed by such trivia. He prefers to dwell upon the much more interesting period from 1903-1917 (thirteen or fourteen

years, no less...) in which Trotsky found himself ("not accidentally...") outside the Bolshevik Party. What Monty Johnstone does not make clear is that the

Bolshevik Party itself was not formed in 1903 but in 1912. Up until that time, both the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks regarded themselves as two wings of one

party - the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. By ambiguous wording and the omission of dates from various quotations, Johnstone gives the impression that

the Bolshevik Party in 1903 sprang completely formed and armed on to the stage of history, like Minerva from the head of Zeus. On page six of his article Comrade

Johnstone talks about the Bolshevik-Menshevik split of 1912 when "the Bolsheviks finally split from the Mensheviks and formed their own independent party.

However, on the preceding page he writes that:

"In 1904 he [Trotsky] left the Mensheviks and, though continuing to write for their press and even having occasion to act abroad on their behalf, was to remain from

then till 1917 formally outside both parties." (Cogito, page 5)

The reader scratches his head in bewilderment. How could Trotsky be "formally outside both parties" from 1904 to 1912? We shall deal with this period later and

show the reasons for Comrade Johnstone's strange reticence.

"The basis for this antagonism was Trotsky's violent opposition to Lenin's struggle to build up a stable, centralised and disciplined Marxist Party. When at the second congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party a split took place between the Bolsheviks...who favoured such a Party, and the Mensheviks...who wanted a much looser form of organisation. Trotsky sided with the latter..."

This formulation of Johnstone's constitutes a gross distortion of the history of Bolshevism. The split at the London Congress of 1903 did not take place, as Johnstone asserts, on the question of a "stable, centralised and disciplined Marxist Party", but on the question of the composition of the central bodies of the Party and on one clause in the Party Rules. The differences only emerged during the twenty-second session. Prior to that, on every single political and tactical question, there was no disagreement between Lenin and Martov's "Minority".

Johnstone's presentation of the differences as a clear cut split between Bolshevik "centralisers" and Menshevik "anti-centralisers" is a sheer fabrication, which has its origin in the slanders directed against the Bolsheviks by the Mensheviks after the Congress. On the famous clause on the Party Rules, Lenin himself remarked: "I would willingly respond to this appeal [i.e. for an agreement with the "Mensheviks"] for I by no means consider our differences so vital as to be a matter of life or death to the Party. We shall certainly not perish because of an unfortunate clause in the Rules!"[2]

After the Congress, when Martov and his supporters refused to participate in the work of the Iskra editorial board, Lenin wrote:

"Examining the behaviour of the Martovites since the Congress, their refusal to collaborate on the Central Organ...their refusal to work on the Central Committee,

add their propaganda of a boycott - all I can say is that this is an insensate attempt, unworthy of Party members, to disrupt the Party - and why? Only because they

are dissatisfied with the composition of the central bodies; for speaking objectively, it was only over this that our ways parted..." (Lenin, Works, vol. 7, page 34)

Time after time Lenin emphasised that between himself and the Martovite "minority" there were no differences of principle, no differences so important as to cause a

split. Thus, when Plekhanov went over to Martov, Lenin wrote: "Let me say, first, of all, that I think the author of the article [Plekhanov] is a thousand times right

when he insists that it is essential to safeguard the unity of the Party and avoid new splits - especially over differences which cannot be considered to be important.

To appeal to peaceableness, mildness and readiness to make concessions is highly praiseworthy in a leader at all times, and at the present moment in particular."

(ibid, page 115) And Lenin goes on to oppose expulsions of groups from the Party, advocates the opening of the Party press, for the airing of differences "to enable

these grouplets to speak out and give the whole Party the opportunity to weigh the importance or unimportance of these differences and determine just where, how

and on whose part inconsistency is shown". (ibid, page 116)

Such was always the approach of Lenin to the question of differences within the Party: a willingness to discuss, flexibility, tolerance, and above all, scrupulous

honesty towards his opponents. The same, alas, can hardly be said of the leaders of the "Communist" Party today!

Monty Johnstone deliberately sets out to create a false impression about the split between the two wings of Russian Social Democracy at the Second Congress. To

do this, he picks out quotations from Lenin's Selected Works (The old Stalinist twelve volume edition), which omits most of the material on this and other questions.

Why did Comrade Johnstone not refer to the complete Moscow edition? Is this beyond the resources of King Street? Or was it just in order to impress the average

Young Communist Leaguer who might not have the time or opportunity to check the originals? Comrade Johnstone, here and elsewhere in his work, has shown

himself to be a tireless researcher when it comes to cutting isolated phrases and sentences from One Step Forward, Two Steps Back. But a mere glance through the

relevant volumes of Lenin's Collected Works reveal the utter falsehood of Johnstone's presentation. Thus on page 474 of Lenin's Works (vol. 7), we read:

"Comrade Luxemburg says...that my book [i.e. One Step Forward, Two Steps Back] is a clear and detailed expression of the point of view of 'intransigent

centralism'. Comrade Luxemburg thus supposes that I defend one system of organisation against another. But actually that is not so. From the first to the last page of

my book, I defend the elementary principles of any conceivable system of Party organisation. My book is not concerned with the divergences between one system

of organisation and another, but with how any system is to be maintained, criticised, and rectified in a manner consistent with the Party idea."

In reality, the differences between Bolshevism and Menshevism were not at all clear in 1903, although the discussion revealed certain tendencies of conciliationism

among the Mensheviks, or "softs" as they were known. The two tendencies only crystallised subsequently, under the impact of events, and even then did not reach

the point of a final break until 1912. Far from the period of Monty Johnstone's famous "thirteen or fourteen years" consisting of a clear separation of two political

Parties, right up until 1912, the history of Bolshevism was the history of numerous and repeated attempts to unite the Party on a principled basis. Furthermore, the

differences between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks were not confined, as one would suppose from reading Monty Johnstone, to the question of Party

organisation, but involved every basic political question arising from the analysis of the nature of the Russian Revolution itself.

Insofar as Monty Johnstone attempts to establish differences, he falls far short of the mark. With astounding self-assurance he takes Trotsky to task for his criticism

of the idea, expressed in Lenin's *What is to be Done?*, that the working class, left to itself, was only capable of producing "a trade union consciousness", i.e.

consciousness of the need to struggle for economic demands under capitalism. Monty Johnstone like the Communist Party leaders is apparently unaware that Lenin

himself later repudiated this early formulation, which was an exaggeration that arose from his polemic against the Economists, a tendency which wished to confine

the workers struggle to the level of purely economic demands. Referring to this Lenin explained that "the Economists bent the stick one way. In order to straighten

the stick it was necessary to bend it the other way." Lenin was far from the view, found amongst the Stalinists, that the working class consists of so much putty to be

moulded by the "intellectual" leadership as it pleases.

What is the purpose behind Monty Johnstone's distortion of the history of Bolshevism?

The answer is clear from the rest of his work. Johnstone wishes to perpetuate

the Stalinist myth of the monolithic Bolshevik Party, which had a separate existence right from its inception in 1903. Having established this, he can then place

Trotsky firmly "outside" the Party as an undisciplined, if talented, intellectual. The stage is then set to move on to the main distortion - to establish "Trotskyism" as an

alien and distinct political ideology, hostile to Leninism.

It is true that at the 1903 Congress, Trotsky found himself in the camp of Lenin's opponents. It is also true that Plekhanov, the future social-patriot, stood together

with Lenin. The fact was - that the differences caught everyone by surprise, including Lenin himself, who at first did not grasp their significance. The real point at issue

at the Second Congress was the transition from a small propaganda sect to a real Party, and on this question Lenin undoubtedly held a correct position. In later years

Trotsky, who was always honest in relation to his mistakes, admitted his error without reservation, and stated that Lenin had always been right on this question.

Monty Johnstone, quotes Trotsky's admission, while asserting elsewhere that Trotsky was always unwilling to admit his past mistakes!

But Johnstone is doubly incorrect when he portrays the matter as though Trotsky alone misunderstood the position of Lenin. In fact the split in 1903 and even after

was widely seen by Party activists in Russia as a mere emigre squabble of no practical importance, or to cite Stalin's inimitable phrase "a storm in a tea cup". Let us

quote a typical passage from a work which Comrade Johnstone is also fond of citing. Lunacharsky's Revolutionary Silhouettes:

"...the news of the split hit us like a bolt from the blue. We knew that the Second Congress was to witness the concluding moves in the struggle with Workers

Cause (The Economists), but that the schism should take a course which was to put Martov and Lenin in opposing camps and that Plekhanov was to 'split off'

midway between the two - none as this so much as entered our heads.

"The first clause of the Party Statute...was this really something that justified a split? A reshuffle of jobs on the editorial board - what's the matter with those people

abroad, have they gone mad?" (page 36)

Lenin's correspondence of this period indicates that the majority of the Party did not understand the split and were opposed to it. Only Monty Johnstone, sixty-five

years later can see all the issues as clear as crystal. On the question of the Second Congress, he is not the equal, but the superior of Lenin himself! From the lofty

heights of the Second Volume of his Selected Works, Monty Johnstone passes a damning verdict on Trotsky, who, "by sleight of hand...changed the date of the

emergence of Bolshevism and Menshevism as separate tendencies from 1903 to 1904 in order that he could present himself as never having belonged to the

Mensheviks, adding that his line had 'coincided in every fundamental way' with Lenin's."

To begin with, the reader should note that in the adjacent sentence, Johnstone states that from 1904 to 1917, Trotsky "remained formally outside both Parties", thus,

"by sleight of hand", changed the date of the emergence of Bolshevism, not as a tendency, but as a Party, from 1912 to 1904!

What is the meaning of Trotsky's statement that his line had coincided with Lenin's on all fundamental questions? The reader of Monty Johnstone's "highly selective

potted history" of Bolshevism must be mystified by such a statement. His mystification however, cannot be attributed to Trotsky, but to Monty Johnstone, who

deliberately quotes out of context in order to imply that Trotsky's account of his relations with Lenin is distorted. The distortion is entirely on the side of Comrade

Johnstone, who, as we shall show, hides from the reader the real political differences between Bolshevism and Menshevism, to which Trotsky refers in the above

quotation.

We have already shown the utter worthlessness of Johnstone's account of the 1903 London Congress. His assertion that Bolshevism and Menshevism emerged as

separate tendencies in a political sense in 1903 is without foundation. If that is true, then Lenin himself was guilty of the arch-Trotskyist sin of conciliationism in his

repeated attempts to get the Mensheviks to co-operate in the running of the Party for months after the Congress. Only late in 1904 did Lenin admit the existence of two tendencies in the Party, and set up a Bureau of Majority (Bolshevik) Committees.

The crucial difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism - the attitude to the liberal bourgeoisie - only came to the fore in 1904. It was this political question, and

not any squabble over the Party Rules that determined the evolution of the two tendencies in the direction of an irrevocable split, and led to the final transition of

Menshevism to the side of the White Armies in 1918. It was precisely on this question that Trotsky broke with the Mensheviks in 1904. But Comrade Johnstone is

silent on this. We shall see the reason for his silence in a later section of this work.

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NOTES

[2] Vtoroy S'yezd RSDRP Protokoly, page 275.

Chapter Three - From the History of Bolshevism, Part Two

The tendency of Bolshevism grew and took shape on the basis of the experience of the 1905 Revolution which Lenin described as "the dress rehearsal for October".

Yet Monty Johnstone has nothing to say on the entire period from the London Congress of 1903 to the period of 1910-12. Evidently nothing much happened in

Russia! Johnstone's silence is not accidental. By omitting the experience of 1905 and the attempts at reunification of the Russian Social Democracy which followed,

he deepens the false impression, already created, that throughout the entire period (thirteen or fourteen years...) Bolshevism and Menshevism stood at opposite and

immutable poles - Trotsky, of course, ever standing "outside the Party".

Trotsky in 1905

What role did Trotsky play in the 1905 Revolution, and in what relation did he stand to Lenin, and the Bolsheviks? Lunacharsky, who at that time was one of Lenin's

right hand men, writes in his memoirs:

"I must say that of all the Social-Democratic leaders of 1905-6 Trotsky undoubtedly showed himself, despite his youth, to be the best prepared. Less

than any of them did he bear the stamp of a certain kind of emigre narrowness of outlook. Trotsky understood better than all the others what it meant to

conduct the political struggle on a broad national scale. He emerged from the revolution having acquired an enormous degree of popularity, whereas

neither Lenin nor Martov had effectively gained any at all. Plekhanov had lost a great deal, thanks to his display of quasi-Cadet [i.e. liberal] tendencies.

Trotsky stood then in the very front rank." (Revolutionary Silhouettes, page 61)

Trotsky was the chairman of the Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies, the foremost of those bodies which Lenin described as "embryonic organs of revolutionary

power". Most of the manifestos and resolutions of the Soviet were the work of Trotsky, who also edited its journal Izvestia. The Bolsheviks, in Petersburg, had

failed to appreciate the importance of the Soviet, and were weakly represented in it. Lenin, from exile in Sweden, wrote to the Bolshevik journal Novaya Zhizn,

urging the Bolsheviks to take a more positive attitude to the Soviet, but the letter was not printed, and only saw the light of day, thirty-four years later.

This situation was to be reproduced at every major juncture in the history of the Russian revolution; the confusion and vacillation of the Party leaders inside Russia,

when faced with the need for a bold initiative, without the guiding hand of Lenin.

The political position of Trotsky and its relation to the ideas of Lenin will be dealt with more fully in the section on the theory of the permanent revolution. The crux of

the matter was the attitude of the revolutionary movement to the bourgeoisie and the so-called "liberal" parties. It was on this issue that Trotsky broke with the

Mensheviks in 1904. Like Lenin, Trotsky poured scorn on the class collaborationism of Dan, Plekhanov and others, and pointed out to the proletariat and peasantry

as the only forces capable of carrying through the revolution to the end.

In 1905, Trotsky used the journal *Nachalo*, which had a mass circulation, to put over his views on the revolution, which were close to those of the Bolsheviks and in

direct opposition to Menshevism. It was natural that, in spite of the acrimonious dispute at the Second Congress, the work of the Bolsheviks and Trotsky in the

revolution should coincide. Thus, Trotsky's *Nachalo* and the Bolshevik *Novaya Zhizn*, edited by Lenin, worked in solidarity, supporting each other against the

attacks of the reaction, without waging polemics against each other. The Bolshevik journal greeted the first number of *Nachalo* thus:

"The first number of the *Nachalo* has come out. We welcome a comrade in the struggle. The first issue is notable for the brilliant description of the

October strike written by Comrade Trotsky."

Lunacharsky recalls that when someone told Lenin about Trotsky's success in the Soviet, Lenin's face darkened for a moment. Then he said: "Well, Comrade

Trotsky has earned it by his tireless and impressive work."

The progress of the revolution had given a tremendous impulse to the movement for the reunification of the forces of Russian Marxism. Bolshevik and Menshevik

workers fought shoulder to shoulder under the same slogans; rival Party committees merged spontaneously. Finally, at the suggestion of the Bolshevik Central

Committee, which now once again included Lenin, moves were set afoot to bring about reunification. Trotsky had consistently advocated reunification in his journal

Nachalo, and had attempted to remain apart from the factional struggle, but was arrested and imprisoned for his role in the Soviet before the Fourth (Unity)

Congress took place in Stockholm.

The Congress convened in May 1906, but already by this time the revolutionary wave was ebbing, and with it, the fighting spirit and "Left" speeches of the

Mensheviks. Already Plekhanov was bemoaning the "premature" action of the masses with his celebrated phrase: "They should not have taken up arms." A conflict

was inevitable between the consistent revolutionaries and those who were already abandoning the masses and accommodating themselves to the reaction.

The Stockholm Congress

The main points at issue between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks at the Stockholm Congress were:

- (1) The agrarian question
- (2) The attitude to the bourgeois parties

(3) the attitude to parliamentarianism

(4) the question-of armed insurrection

Plekhanov, giving notice of the frightened opportunism of the Mensheviks, denounced Lenin's plan to mobilise the peasants for the nationalisation of the land as

"dangerous...in view of the possibility of restoration." He summed up in a nutshell the Menshevik attitude to the seizure of power by the workers and peasants with

these words:

"The seizure of power is compulsory for us when we are making a proletarian revolution. But since the revolution now impending can only be petty

bourgeois, we are duty bound to refuse to seize power." (our emphasis)

Such was the argument of the Mensheviks in 1907. The revolution was a bourgeois revolution; the tasks before it were bourgeois-democratic; the conditions for

Socialism were absent in Russia. Therefore, any attempt by the workers to seize power was adventurism; the task of the workers was to seek alliance with the

bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties, to assist them to carry through the bourgeois revolution.

What was Lenin's reply to Plekhanov? He made no attempt to deny that the revolution was bourgeois-democratic, certainly not that it was possible to build

Socialism in Russia alone. All the Russian Marxists, the Mensheviks, Lenin and Trotsky were agreed on these questions. It was ABC that the conditions for a

Socialist transformation were absent in Russia, but had matured in the West. Replying to Plekhanov's dark warnings of "the danger of restoration", Lenin explained:

"If we mean a real, fully effective, economic guarantee against restoration, that is a guarantee that would create the economic conditions precluding

restoration, then we shall have to say: the only guarantee against restoration is a Socialist revolution in the West. There can be no other guarantee

in the full sense of the term. Without this condition, whichever other way the problem is solved (municipalisation, division of the land, etc) restoration

will not only be possible but positively inevitable." (Works, vol. 10, page 280, our emphasis)

Thus, right from the start, Lenin conceived of the Russian revolution as the prelude to the Socialist revolution in the West. He tied the fate of the Russian revolution in

an indissoluble link with that of the international Socialist revolution, without which it would inevitably succumb to internal reaction:

"I would formulate this proposition as follows: the Russian revolution can achieve victory by its own efforts, but it cannot possibly, hold and

consolidate its gains by its own strength. It cannot do this unless there is a Socialist revolution in the West. Without this condition restoration is

inevitable, whether we have municipalisation, or nationalisation, or division of the land; for under each and every form of possession and property the

small proprietor will always be a bulwark of restoration. After the complete victory of the democratic revolution the small proprietor will

inevitably turn against the proletariat: and the sooner the common enemies of the proletariat and of the small proprietors, such as the capitalists, the

landlords, the financial bourgeoisie, and so forth are overthrown, the sooner will this happen. Our democratic republic has no other reserve than the

Socialist proletariat of the West." (ibid, our emphasis)

We quote Lenin's words in full, so that there can be no suspicion of misrepresentation, no accusation from Monty Johnstone that we are quoting from Trotsky, and

not from Lenin. For the reader of Monty Johnstone's article can come to no other conclusion than that Lenin here is talking pure "Trotskyism". He denies the

possibility, not only of "building Socialism" in Russia alone, but even of holding on to the gains of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, without the Socialist

revolution in the West. He "underestimates the role of the peasantry" by explaining that the small-property owners constitute a bulwark of restoration, and will

inevitably turn against the workers, once the democratic revolution is completed.

But no, Lenin did not take these ideas from Trotsky's books on permanent revolution, which he never read, and Trotsky himself was in prison during the Congress.

The ideas expressed by Lenin were the ABCs of Marxism, the fundamental principles of proletarian internationalism and the class struggle, which he

defended against the opportunist distortions of the "erudite" Marxist, Plekhanov. "This is not Marxism, but Leninism" sneered the Mensheviks in 1906. This is

not "Leninism", but "Trotskyism", writes Monty Johnstone in 1968. Call it what you will, gentlemen, for a Marxist, the essence of a thing is not changed merely by

calling it by another name.

In reply to the argument that the Social Democracy must not frighten away its "progressive" bourgeois allies, Lenin said:

"This brought out all the more vividly the fundamental mistake of the Mensheviks. They do not see that the bourgeoisie is counter-revolutionary, that

it is deliberately striving for a deal." (ibid, page 289, our emphasis)

This was the keynote of Lenin's struggle against the Mensheviks throughout the coming period: the need to keep the revolutionary workers' movement away from

ensnarement in alliances with the bourgeoisie and its parties; the insistence on the working class as the only consistent revolutionary class in society, the only class

capable of settling accounts with Tsarism, if need be against the bourgeoisie:

"The only conditional and relative guarantee against restoration is that the revolution should be effected in the most drastic manner possible, effected by

the revolutionary class directly, with the least possible participation of go-betweens, compromisers and all sorts of conciliators: that this revolution

should really be carried to the end " (ibid, page 281)

Lenin went on to criticise the Mensheviks for their parliamentary cretinism, their uncritical and over-optimistic view of the possibilities of Marxists utilising

parliament. He sharply took Plekhanov to task for his cowardly repudiation of armed struggle. These were the issues which separated the Bolshevik and Menshevik

wings of Social-Democracy; not the organisational question, not "centralism", but reform or revolution, class collaborationism or reliance upon the

revolutionary masses. Yet on all of this Monty Johnstone maintains a stubborn silence. The reader may wonder why! We shall be charitable and attribute it to

Comrade Johnstone's natural impatience to get on to the far more "interesting period" from 1910-1916. At any rate, "thirteen or fourteen years" is a long time; who

will miss a matter of five years or so? - especially when that period provides so much material which is "irrelevant" to Monty Johnstone's case against Trotsky.

The Period of Reaction

The Stolypin reaction, which began in 1907, created immense difficulties for the revolutionary movement in Russia and provoked further disagreements in the ranks

of the Social Democracy. The legal activities of the Party were hamstrung by what Lenin called "the most reactionary election law in Europe". The illegal methods of

work, the so-called underground became increasingly important to offset the restrictions imposed by the regime. A section of the Menshevik wing of the Party,

however, was inclined to meet the situation by increasingly accommodating itself to the demands of reaction, eschewing illegal work in favour of a comfortable

parliamentary niche. This was the basis of the so-called Liquidationist dispute which led to a fresh split in the Party.

At the London Congress of 1907, Trotsky for the first time had an opportunity of expounding his views on the revolution before the Party. His speech in the debate

on the attitude to the bourgeois parties, for which he was given only fifteen minutes, was twice commented on by Lenin, who emphatically agreed with the views

expressed by Trotsky, especially his call for a Left Bloc against the liberal bourgeoisie:

"These facts," commented Lenin, "are sufficient for me to acknowledge that Trotsky has come closer to our views. Quite apart from the question of

'uninterrupted revolution', we have solidarity on fundamental points in the attitude towards the bourgeois parties. " (Works, vol. 12, page 470,

our emphasis)

On Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution, which will be discussed in the next section, Lenin was not prepared to commit himself. But on the fundamental

question of the tasks of the revolutionary movement, there was complete agreement. The differences between the positions of Lenin and Trotsky will be dealt with

later. That these differences were regarded by Lenin as secondary was again revealed at the Congress when Trotsky moved an amendment to the resolution on the

attitude towards the bourgeois parties. Lenin spoke against the amendment on the grounds, not that it was wrong, but that it added nothing fundamental to the

original:

"It must be agreed," he said, "that Trotsky's amendment is not Menshevik, that it expresses the 'very same', that is, Bolshevik, idea." [3] (ibid, page

479)

But despite the identity of views on the analysis of the tasks of the revolution, Trotsky still attempted to steer a course in between the rival factions in a vain attempt to prevent a fresh split.

"If you think," he said at the Congress, "that a schism is unavoidable, wait at least until events, and not merely resolutions separate you. Do not run ahead of events."

On the basis of the experience of 1905, Trotsky believed that a fresh revolutionary upheaval would have the effect of pushing the best elements among the

Mensheviks, in particular, Martov, to the left. His main concern was to hold the forces of Marxism together in a difficult period, to prevent a split which would have a

demoralising effect on the movement. This was the essence of Trotsky's "conciliationism", which prevented him from joining the Bolsheviks at this period.

Commenting on this, Lenin wrote:

"A number of Social Democrats in that period sank into conciliationism, proceeding from the most varied motives. Most consistently of all was

conciliationism expressed by Trotsky, about the only one who tried to provide a theoretical foundation for that policy."

This was the crux of the dispute between Lenin and Trotsky before 1917; not the "underestimation of the peasantry", not "socialism in one country", but the question of conciliationism.

Trotsky's mistake was to attach too much importance to the "centrist" (semi-revolutionary) currents in Menshevism. He imagined that the unity of the Marxist movement would be brought about by the coming together of the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks and the purging of the party of the "right" and "left" extremes - i.e. the expulsion of the Menshevik liquidators and the ultra-left Bolsheviks, the "Boycotters" (otzovists). He did not understand, as Lenin clearly did, that unity could only be achieved by first ruthlessly breaking with all opportunist currents; that preservation of the forces of Marxism in a period of revolutionary retreat did not mean an abstract, formal "unity" but the systematic education of the cadres in the methods, and perspectives of the movement. The organisation flabbiness of the Mensheviks, and their political helplessness in the period of reaction was merely a reflection of their utter lack of perspective. On the other hand, Lenin's struggle for a "stable, centralised and disciplined Marxist party" flowed from the absolute necessity of educating and training a vanguard, untainted with the demoralisation and cynicism of the opportunists.

Later, Trotsky understood his mistake and unreservedly admitted that Lenin had been right all along on this question. Yet the Stalinists continue to paint in lurid colours the factional struggle between Lenin and Trotsky, dragging up all the polemical rejoinders, made in the heat of controversy in order to drive a wedge between the ideas of Lenin and Trotsky in general. Trotsky was mistaken, but his mistake was an honest one, the mistake of a revolutionary, with the interests of the revolution at heart. Not accidentally did Lenin refer to conciliationism as flowing "from the most varied motives" - i.e. revolutionary as well as opportunist. Lenin himself occasionally "erred" in his estimation of possible allies among the Mensheviks. In 1909 he offered a bloc to Plekhanov and the "pro-Party" Mensheviks.

According to Lunacharsky, as late as 1917, Lenin "dreamed of an alliance with Martov realising how valuable he could be." In the event, Lenin was proved wrong.

But how incomparably superior are the mistakes of a dedicated revolutionary to the smug scribblings of the Pharisees who, half a century later, in the comfort of their

studies, fight all the old battles over again - and always on the winning side.

The Bolsheviks and Lenin

"The years between 1907 and 1914 form in his [Trotsky's] life a chapter singularly devoid of political achievement...Trotsky does not claim any

practical revolutionary achievement to his credit. In these years, however, Lenin, assisted by his followers, was forging his party, and men like Zinoviev

and Kamenev, Bukharin and, later, Stalin were growing to a stature which enabled them to play leading parts within the party in 1917." (Isaac

Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, page 176)

This passage from Deutscher, quoted by Johnstone, serves only to reveal the utterly philistine mentality of its author. The "leading part" played by Kamenev, Zinoviev

and Stalin in 1917 will be dealt with in a later chapter. Suffice it just to recall that Kamenev and Zinoviev voted against the insurrection in October 1917, and were

denounced by Lenin as "strikebreakers" who should be expelled from the Party! But let us first deal with the period under consideration.

Deutscher's point about the "lack of political achievements" is quite true, but refers not only to Trotsky but to the whole revolutionary movement in the period of

reaction. How did things stand with the Bolsheviks at this time? The onset of reaction produced a serious split in the leadership, in which Lenin found himself in a

minority of one. The predominant mood among the Bolsheviks was ultra-left - a refusal to recognise that the revolution was in retreat. This tendency, the polar

opposite of Menshevik liquidationism, manifested itself in "Boycottism", i.e. the total rejection of participating in elections and working in parliament. Lenin's closest

colleagues, Krassin, Bogdanov and Lunacharsky, broke away to the "left". The latter two fell under the sway of philosophical mysticism, a further reflection of the

mood of despair fostered by the reaction.

The endless faction fights which rent the Social Democracy at this time provoked a reaction in the form of conciliationism, of which Trotsky became the main

spokesman. Conciliationism had its adherents in all the groups, the Bolsheviks included. In 1910, Trotsky succeeded in securing a meeting of the leaders of all the

factions in an attempt to expel both liquidators and the "Boycotters" to keep the Party together:

"The only successful result which he [Trotsky] achieved was the plenum at which he threw the 'liquidators' out of the party, nearly expelled the

'Forwardists' [i.e. the 'Boycotters'] and even managed for a time to stitch up the gap - though with extremely weak thread - between the Leninists and

the Martovites." (Lunacharsky, Revolutionary Silhouettes, page 61)

Nor was Trotsky alone in his views on Party unity. In the summer of 1911, Rosa Luxemburg wrote:

"The only way to save the unity is to bring about a general conference of people sent from Russia, for the people in Russia all want peace and unity,

and they represent the only force that can bring the fighting-cocks abroad to their senses." (our emphasis)

This reference to the mood of Party workers in Russia was not accidental. Throughout the whole period - the whole of the famous "thirteen or fourteen years" - the

prevailing view of the Party activists inside Russia was that the whole Bolshevik-Menshevik split was an unnecessary inconvenience, the product of the poisonous

atmosphere of emigre squabbles. The impression fostered by such people as Johnstone and Deutscher of a Bolshevik Party, united solidly behind the ideas of Lenin,

marching steadfastly onwards to the October Revolution, is a mockery of history.

Lenin himself, even from the earliest period, complains in his letters of the narrow outlook of the so-called "committee men", or Bolshevik agents in Russia. His

complaints become a steady stream of angry protests in the period of 1910-14 against the conduct of his own "supporters" in Russia. Maxim Gorky, who spent this

period shuffling around the periphery of Bolshevism, bemoaned in his correspondence with Lenin the "squabbles among the generals" which were "repelling the

workers" in Russia. The attitude of the Bolshevik "committee men" to the controversies among the emigres is clearly expressed in a letter which was sent by a

Bolshevik supporter in the Caucasus to comrades in Moscow:

"about the 'storm in a teacup' abroad we have heard, of course: the blocs of Lenin-Plekhanov on the one hand and of Trotsky-Martov-Bogdanov on

the other. The attitude of the workers to the first bloc, as far as I know is favourable. But in general the workers are beginning to look disdainfully at the

emigration: let them crawl on the wall as much as their hearts desire, but as for us, whoever values the interests of the movement - work, the rest will

take care of itself! That I think is for the best."

These lines were intercepted by the Tsarist police, who identified the author as "The Caucasian Soso", alias Djughashvili, alias Stalin!

This contemptuous attitude towards theory, towards the "emigre squabbles", the "storm in a tea cup" was widespread among Bolshevik activists, and provoked

heated protests from Lenin, as in the letter, dated April 1912, to Orjonikidze, Spandaryan and Stasova:

"Don't be light-headed about the campaign of the liquidators abroad. It is a great mistake when people simply dismiss what goes on abroad and 'send it

to hell.'" (Works, vol. 35, page 33)

The vulgar conciliationism of Stalin, Orjonikidze and other 'practical' Bolsheviks stands out in all its uncouthness, as motivated, neither by opportunism nor by a

desire for revolutionary unity, but by a simple ignorance of, and indifference to, the broader questions involved.

The upsurge in the workers movement in Russia in 1912 gave fresh heart to the Marxists - and to conciliationist tendencies in the Party. The newly-founded

Bolshevik paper Pravda reflected these moods.

At the very time when Lenin was waging an all-out battle to separate, once and for all, the revolutionary wing of the Party from the opportunist, the very word

'liquidationism' disappeared from the pages of Pravda. Lenin's own articles were printed in a mutilated form, omitting all polemics against the liquidators; sometimes,

they simply disappeared altogether. Lenin's correspondence with Pravda graphically illustrates the state of affairs in Russia: once more the Party "committee men"

found themselves without Lenin's guidance, once more they were floundering hopelessly off course. In a letter, dated October 1912, burning with indignation at the

failure of Pravda to expose the liquidators, Lenin wrote:

"Unless Pravda explains all this in good time it will be responsible for the confusion and disruption [i.e. of the workers' movement]...At this hot time,

Nevskaya Zvezda [Bolshevik paper] is closed down, without a single letter or explanation...political contributors are left in the dark...I am obliged

hotly to protest against this and to decline any responsibility for this abnormal situation, which is pregnant with drawn-out conflicts." (Works, vol. 36,

page 196)

During the election of 1912, Lenin wrote to the Pravda editorial board (of which Stalin was a member):

"...Pravda is carrying on now, at election time, like a sleepy old maid. Pravda doesn't know how to fight. It does not attack, it does not persecute

either the Cadet or the liquidator." (ibid, page 198)

Nor was the disease of conciliationism confined to Pravda. In the elections of 1912, six Bolshevik deputies were elected from the workers' curiae. Lenin, from

Poland, warned the six against falling under the influence of the Menshevik deputies:

"If all our six are from the workers' curiae, they must not submit in silence to a lot of Siberians [i.e. intellectuals, Mensheviks]. The six must come out

with a very clear-cut protest, if they are being lorded over..."

Instead the Bolshevik deputies formed a "united faction" with the "Siberians", which issued a joint proclamation - printed in Pravda - calling for the unity of all

Social-Democrats and the merging of Pravda with the liquidationist journal Luch.

Together with Gorky, four of the Bolshevik deputies put their names forward as

contributors to Luch.

Lenin was furious; but his protests went unheeded. In a final burst of exasperation Lenin wrote:

"We received a stupid and impudent letter from the editorial board [i.e. Pravda]. We will not reply. They must be got rid of...We are exceedingly

disturbed by the absence of news about the plan for reorganising the editorial board...Reorganisation, but better still, the complete expulsion of all

the old timers, is extremely necessary." (our emphasis)

Again:

"...we must plant our own editorial staff in Pravda and kick the present one out. Things are now in a very bad way. The absence of a campaign for

unity from below is stupid and despicable...Would you call such people editors? They are not men but pitiful dishrags and they are ruining the cause."

Such was the language Lenin used when attacking, not Trotsky, not the Mensheviks, but the conciliators and Menshevik camp followers in his own organisation, the

editorial board of his own paper! Truly, Lenin set about the task of the creation of a "stable, centralised and disciplined Marxist party" at this time. In order to build

it, he was forced on more than one occasion to fight against the very apparatus he had struggled to build.

The "Old Bolsheviks" in 1917

For a whole historical period - even more than "thirteen or fourteen years" - Lenin had attempted to educate a leadership, to instil into the cadres of Bolshevism the

basic ideas, method and programme of Marxism. Above all, he hammered home the need to keep the workers' movement free from the ideological contamination of

bourgeois and petty bourgeois democracy. He emphasised repeatedly the absolute necessity of the movement retaining complete organisational independence from

the parties of bourgeois democracy and from the opportunists who attempted to bring the movement under the wing of the bourgeoisie. The absolute correctness of

Lenin's stand was revealed in 1917, when the Mensheviks passed over to the camp of bourgeois democracy.

What was the position of the "Old Bolsheviks" - of Kamenev, Zinoviev, Stalin and Lenin's other "faithful followers" in 1917? Every single one of them advocate

support for the Kerensky Government, unity with the Mensheviks, that is, abandonment of the camp of Marxism for that of vulgar bourgeois democracy.

Of all the "Old Bolsheviks", whom Lenin had struggled to educate in the previous period, not one of them stood up to the decisive test of events.

How was it possible for the leaders of the Bolshevik Party, the Party of Lenin, steeled in struggle, with a correct line from its inception in 1903, to break at the

decisive moment and go over to the side of opportunism? From Monty Johnstone, the perplexed reader can expect no answer. Our "impartial", "scientific"

historiographer knows of no such events! The transition from February to October was evidently accomplished, quite painlessly, by the Bolsheviks "growing over"

from the democratic revolution to the socialist:

"Now that the monarch was overthrown and 'the bourgeois democratic revolution completed, inasmuch as Russia is now a democratic republic', Lenin

mobilised the Bolshevik Party for the second stage of the revolution, which had to transfer power into the hands of the proletariat and the poor

peasantry and take Russia out of the imperialist war." (Cogito, page 11)

What was the position of the Bolshevik leaders in Russia prior to Lenin's arrival in April 1917? In glaring contradiction to everything Lenin had taught throughout the

war, Pravda, which was under the editorship of Kamenev and Stalin, advocated the defence of the Bourgeois-democratic republic:

"When army faces army," wrote Kamenev, "it would be the most inane policy to suggest to one of the armies to lay down its arms and go home. This

would not be a policy of peace, but a policy of slavery, which would be rejected with disgust by a free people."

Lenin's policy of revolutionary defeatism was now proclaimed, by the central organ of the Party on the eve of the Revolution, to be "the most inane policy" and "a

policy of slavery"! Elsewhere Pravda editorials proclaimed:

"Our slogan is not the meaningless 'down with war'. Our slogan is pressure on the Provisional Government with the aim of compelling it [!] to induce [!]

all the warring countries to open immediate negotiations...And until then every man remains at his fighting post."

The policy of Stalin and Kamenev was to take the line of least resistance, to support the Provisional Government "insofar as it struggles against reaction or

counter-revolution", while paying lip service to "the ultimate goal of socialism". This relegation to the remote future of the socialist revolution, while posing as "the

immediate task" capitulation to bourgeois liberalism and reformism, is, of course, nothing new to the Communist Party leaders of today, for whom it represents the

very essence of "Leninism", as enshrined in "the British Road to Socialism" and the policy of the Popular Front. It was essentially the same policy as that of the

Mensheviks, with whom the "Old Bolsheviks" inevitably found themselves in alliance.

How did Lenin, on his return, manage to "mobilise the Bolsheviks for the second stage of the revolution" when all the leading members supported the Provisional

Government? Comrade Johnstone, who passes over the entire episode in silence, is evidently loth to go into the mechanics of this wonderful "mobilisation". It would, however, be extremely "unhistorical" on our part not to offer to fill in the details for him.

From abroad, Lenin watched the developments in the Party with alarm. He wrote repeatedly to Petrograd demanding a break with the bourgeoisie and the policy of defencism. On March 6th, he telegraphed through Stockholm:

"Our tactic: absolute lack of confidence; no support to the new government; suspect Kerensky especially; arming of the proletariat the sole guarantee; immediate elections to the Petrograd Duma; no rapprochement with other parties." (our emphasis)

On March 17th, Lenin wrote:

"Our party would disgrace itself for ever, kill itself politically, if it took part in such deceit...I would choose an immediate split with no matter whom in our party rather than surrender to social patriotism."

These words of Lenin were a clear warning to Kamenev and Stalin, who nevertheless persisted in their position, in spite of the hostility of rank-and-file worker

militants, many of whom resigned from the party in disgust at the capitulation of the leaders. Immediately on his return from exile, Lenin opened up a sharp faction

fight against the "Old Bolsheviks". At a meeting of Bolshevik delegates to the Soviets in April 1917, Lenin spoke bitterly of the capitulationist moods that infected the

leadership:

"The basic question is the attitude to the war. The main thing that comes to the fore when you read about Russia and see what goes on here is the

victory of defencism, the victory of the traitors to socialism, the deception of the masses by the bourgeoisie...

"We cannot allow the slightest concession to defencism in our attitude to the war even under the new government which remains imperialist...

"Even our Bolsheviks show some trust in the government. This can be explained only by the intoxication of the revolution. It is the death of socialism.

You comrades have a trusting attitude to the government. If that is so our paths diverge. I prefer to remain in a minority...

"Pravda demands of the government that it should renounce annexations. To demand of a government of capitalists that it should renounce annexations

is nonsense, a crying mockery of... [a break in the minutes]

"From the scientific standpoint this is such gross deception which all the international proletariat, all... [a break in the minutes] It is time to admit our

mistakes. We've had enough of greetings and resolutions; it is time to act." (Works, vol. 36, pages 434-8)

Turning to the Menshevik Manifesto of the Soviet "To the Peoples of the Whole World", which Pravda had heralded as a "conscious compromise between different

tendencies represented in the Soviet", and which had been voted for by the Bolshevik delegates under the influence of Stalin and Kamenev, Lenin remarked:

"The manifesto of the Soviet of Workers' deputies contains not one word imbued with class-consciousness. It's all talk! Talk, flattery of the

revolutionary people, is the only thing that has ruined all revolutions. The whole of Marxism teaches us not to succumb to revolutionary phrases,

particularly at a time when they have the greatest currency." (ibid, page 439)

Who was Lenin criticising for having succumbed to the "revolutionary phrase", Comrade Johnstone? Was it Trotsky, who was not even in the country at the time?

No, Comrade Johnstone, it was Stalin and Kamenev, those "hardened Bolsheviks", those dedicated "Leninists" who played such an "important role within the Party"

in 1917! Three days before this meeting, Stalin had pronounced in favour of accepting the proposal of the Menshevik Tseretelli for unification of the

Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. His ground for this was that, since both parties agreed on the position of the Manifesto of the Soviet, there were no fundamental

differences of principle between the parties. Referring obliquely to this, Lenin issued a sharp warning:

"I have heard that there is a tendency in Russia towards unification, towards unity with the defencists. This is a betrayal of socialism. I think it is better to

remain alone, like Liebknecht: one against 110." (ibid, page 443)

So here we have it: "betrayal of socialism", "deception of the masses", "nonsense", "a crying mockery", "gross deception". This is the language Lenin had to resort to

in order to "mobilise the Bolshevik Party" for the socialist revolution! After Lenin's tirade, Stalin retired from the stage of public debate heavily compromised by his

social-patriotic stand and quietly sidled over to Lenin's position; Kamenev and Zinoviev persisted in their opposition right up to October, when they voted against

insurrection and waged a campaign inside and outside the Party against it. Such was the "important role" played by these "Old Bolsheviks" that, on the eve of the

October revolution, Lenin angrily demanded their expulsion from the Party.

Monty Johnstone attacks Trotsky for his conciliationism before 1917, but forgets to mention that Stalin and Co. were so clear on the question of conciliationism that

they advocated unification with the Mensheviks a matter of months before the October Revolution, at the very time when the differences between Bolshevism and

Menshevism (i.e. revolution and counter-revolution) should have been posed in the sharpest, most implacable manner.

Having made the point, however, it is necessary to add that, for all their failings, the "Old Bolsheviks" were genuine revolutionaries. They made a mistake, a

fundamental mistake, which, had it not been for the intervention of Lenin and Trotsky would have led to disaster. Without the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky the

Russian Revolution would not have taken place in 1917. Either a workers' dictatorship or Kornilovite reaction: that is the way in which Lenin posed the

alternatives in 1917. Without the struggle waged, in particular by Lenin, with all his immense personal authority, the movement would undoubtedly have fallen

beneath the mailed fist of reaction.

Nevertheless, despite their weaknesses and vacillations, Kamenev and Zinoviev were not put on trial, were not accused of being "agents of German imperialism",

were not tortured to extract false confessions, were not executed. In the traditions of Bolshevism, traditions of tolerance and sense of proportion, Kamenev and

Zinoviev were not only not expelled but even elected to the Central Committee and Politburo, the highest positions of responsibility. Even after that, they did not

always act unerringly, and sometimes made disastrous mistakes: but even the worst mistakes of the "Old Bolsheviks" cannot be equated with the treachery and

outright betrayal of the revolution by the Stalinist bureaucracy and its apologists internationally. The traditions of Stalinist totalitarianism and those of

Bolshevik-Leninism were sundered by a river of blood.

Trotsky and the Bolsheviks in 1917

We have seen how Monty Johnstone utilises the services of Trotsky's "highly sympathetic but also extremely objective biographer", Isaac Deutscher. Johnstone

frequently has recourse to Deutscher, who at once relieves him of the painful necessity of quoting from Trotsky's own works, and obligingly provides him with the

sort of trite, literary commonplaces about Trotsky's psychological and moral attributes which serve him as a useful, if rather rusty, nail upon which to hang his own

"thesis" on Trotsky, which now triumphantly emerges:

"The fact is...that although Trotsky was to join the Bolshevik Party in July, 1917, under the impetus [?] of the oncoming [?] October Revolution in

which he was to play such an outstanding role [??], we find in these fourteen years of Trotsky's life...the very inability to devote himself in a

non-revolutionary period to the overriding task of building up a solid organisation, fitting himself into its ranks, and hence being prepared to submit

himself to its collective discipline that was to reveal itself again after the storms of revolution had died down." (Cogito, page 7)

Johnstone wishes to paint a picture of Trotsky as a revolutionary firebrand, a "brilliant orator", who derived inspiration from the "storms of revolution", a good

rabble-rouser, but essentially a petty-bourgeois individualist, whose morale flagged as soon as the revolutionary situation passed. His whole work is a fine piece of

impressionist word-painting: and like all the works of the impressionists, it looks good, at a distance, if you keep your eyes half shut...

We would ask Comrade Johnstone, firstly, how was it possible for this "brilliant orator" to join the Bolshevik Party "under the impetus" of something which had not

happened? Clearly, Monty Johnstone is itching to switch the date of Trotsky's joining the Bolsheviks to sometime after the October Revolution ("by sleight of

hand"), as they say. But no, such a distortion would be too much even for our Jesuit; reluctantly, Trotsky is made to join "under the impetus of the oncoming

October Revolution!"

There is a further little difficulty, however, namely that Trotsky himself, in Monty Johnstone's words played an "outstanding role" in bringing this "oncoming" revolution

into being. In fact Trotsky, formally joined the Bolshevik Party, not when it was on the crest of a revolutionary wave, on the point of seizing power, as Johnstone

implies, but, on the contrary, when its fortunes appeared to be at a low ebb in the period of reaction following the "July Days" when Lenin was in hiding and many

Bolsheviks were in prison.

Why did Trotsky join the Bolsheviks in 1917? First and foremost, because there were no political disagreements. The article written by Trotsky in America in

March 1917 coincided in their line of thought with Lenin's Letters from Afar, written in Switzerland at the same time. Was this agreement accidental, Comrade

Johnstone? To judge from your one-sided presentation of the past polemics between Lenin and Trotsky, no other conclusion is possible. But then, what about the

lamentable role played by the "Old Bolsheviks" in this period? These were precisely the men who, in your own words, had "fitted themselves into the ranks" and

"submitted to collective discipline" for the previous period; was this also "accidental"? Lenin, in his last letter to the Congress (1923), states that it was not. Nor was

it accidental, Comrade Johnstone, that Lenin's most consistent supporter in his fight against the vacillations of the "Old Bolsheviks" in 1917 was none other than

Trotsky.

The whole purpose of revolutionary theory, of the building of the revolutionary party, is to carry through a revolution. It is precisely the "storms of revolution", in

which the revolutionary movement comes under acute pressure from alien class forces, which puts all theories, men and parties to the decisive test. The reason why

the "Old Bolsheviks" failed this test, the reason why they found themselves hopelessly adrift in the storm of revolution, is precisely because, in the whole of the

previous period they had failed to absorb and understand the methods and ideas of Lenin, which were the methods and ideas of revolutionary Marxism.

The "Old Bolsheviks" had been content, in the previous period, to "fit themselves into the ranks", to follow lamely in the footsteps of Lenin, mechanically repeating his

ideas, which in their hands turned into meaningless incantations. The result was that at the decisive moment, when a drastic turn was necessary, they hesitated, "lost

their heads", opposed Lenin...and landed in the camp of Menshevism. Trotsky, on the other hand, who had set out on a different course, arrived at the same

conclusions which Lenin had reached by another route. From that moment, all the old disputes were consigned to the rubbish-bin of history...only to be grubbed out

again by the Stalinists after Lenin's death in an attempt to oust Trotsky from the leadership.

From the moment of Trotsky's arrival in Petrograd in May 1917, he spoke and acted in solidarity with the Bolsheviks. Commenting on this, the Bolshevik

Raskolnikov recalled that:

"Leon Davidovich [Trotsky] was not at that time formally a member of our party, but as a matter of fact he worked within it continually from the day of

his arrival from America. At any rate, immediately after his first speech in the Soviet, we all looked upon him as one of our party leaders."

(Proletarskaya Revolutsia, 1923, page 71)

On the controversies of the past, the same writer remarked:

"The echoes of the past disagreements during the pre-war period had completely disappeared. No differences existed between the tactical line of Lenin

and Trotsky. That fusion, already observable during the war, was completely and definitely achieved from the moment of Trotsky's return to Russia.

From his first public speech all of us old Leninists felt that he was ours." (ibid, page 150)

If Trotsky did not immediately formally join the Bolshevik Party, it was not out of any political disagreements (he had announced his willingness to join immediately in

discussion with Lenin and his colleagues), but because Trotsky wished to win over the organisation of the Mezhrayontsi ("Inter-District group") which comprised

about 4,000 Petrograd workers and many prominent Left figures such as Uritsky, Joffe, Lunacharsky, Ryazanov, Volodarsky and others who later played prominent

roles in the Bolshevik Party leadership. On this group, a note to the works of Lenin published in Russia after the revolution states:

"On the war question the Mezhrayontsi occupied an internationalist position, and in their tactics were close to the Bolsheviks." (Works, vol. 14, page

448)

On the all-Russian Congress of Soviets held in the beginning of 1918, which was still dominated by Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries, E. H. Carr observes that:

"Trotsky and Lunacharsky were among the ten delegates of the 'united social-democrats' who solidly supported the Bolsheviks throughout the three

weeks of the congress." (The Bolshevik Revolution, vol. 1, page 89)

In order to speed up the accession of the Mezhrayontsi to the Bolsheviks, which was being opposed by some of the leadership, Trotsky wrote in Pravda the

following statement:

"There are in my opinion at the present time [i.e. July] no differences either in principle or in tactics between the Inter-District and the Bolshevik

organisations. Accordingly there are no motives which justify the separate existence of these organisations." (our emphasis)

At this difficult and dangerous time, Trotsky wrote a letter to the Provisional Government, which it is worth quoting in full, in view of the light it sheds on the relations

between Trotsky and the Bolsheviks in 1917. The letter is dated 23rd July, 1917:

"Citizen Ministers:

"I have learned that in connection with the events of July 16-17[4], a warrant has been issued for the arrest of Lenin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, but not

for me. I should like, therefore, to call your attention to the following:

(1) I agree with the main thesis of Lenin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, and have advocated it in the journal Vpered and in my public speeches.

(2) My attitude toward the events of July 16-17 was the same as theirs.

(a) Kamenev, Zinoviev, and I first learned of the proposed plans of the Machine-Gun and other regiments at the joint

meeting of the Bureaus [Executive Committees] on July 16th. We took immediate steps to stop the soldiers from coming out.

Zinoviev and Kamenev put themselves in touch with the Bolsheviks, and I with the 'interward' organisation [i.e.

Mezhrayontsi] to which I belong.

(b) When however, notwithstanding our efforts, the demonstration did take place, my comrade Bolsheviks and I made

numerous speeches in front of the Tauride Palace, in which we came out in favour of the main slogan of the crowd: "All

Power to the Soviets", but we, at the same time, called on those demonstrating, both the soldiers and civilians to return to

their homes and barracks in a peaceful and orderly manner.

(c) At a conference which took place at the Tauride Palace late in the night of July 16-17 between some Bolsheviks and

ward organisations, I supported the motion of Kamenev that everything should be done to prevent a recurrence of the

demonstration on July 17th. When, however, it was learned from the agitators, who arrived from the different wards, that the

regiments and factory workers had already decided to come out, and that it was impossible to hold back the crowd until the

government crisis was over, all those present agreed that the best thing to do was to direct the demonstration along peaceful

lines and to ask the masses to leave their guns at home.

(d) In the course of the day of July 17, which I spent in the Tauride Palace, I and the Bolshevik comrades more than once

urged this course on the crowd.

(3) The fact that I am not connected with Pravda and am not a member of the Bolshevik Party is not due to political differences,

but to certain circumstances in our party history which have now lost all significance.

(4) The attempt of the newspapers to convey the impression that I have 'nothing to do' with the Bolsheviks has about as much truth in it as

the report that I have asked the authorities to protect me from the 'violence of the mob', of the hundreds of other false rumours of that

same press.

"From all that I have said, it is clear that you cannot logically exclude me from the warrant of arrest which you have made out for Lenin, Kamenev, and

Zinoviev.[5] There can also be no doubt in your minds that I am just as uncompromising a political opponent as the above-named comrades. Leaving

me out merely emphasises the counter-revolutionary highhandedness that lies behind the attack on Lenin, Zinoviev and Kamenev."

(From *The Age of the Permanent Revolution*, pages 98-9, our emphasis)

Throughout this whole period, Trotsky, on dozens of occasions, expressed his agreement with the position of the Bolsheviks. In the most difficult days, when the

Party was driven underground, when Lenin and Zinoviev were forced to leave for Finland, when Kamenev was in jail and the Bolsheviks subjected to shameless

calumnies as "German agents", Trotsky spoke out publicly in their defence, and identified his position with theirs. Monty Johnstone knows all this. He knows it and,

he passes it over in silence. All he has to say on this is that:

"In his 'colossal arrogance' Trotsky appears genuinely to have believed that the Bolshevik Party had become 'de-bolshevised' and, on this basis, he

moved towards joining it." (Cogito, page 14)

The phrase "de-bolshevised" comes, not from Trotsky, but from the "impartial" Isaac Deutscher, "colossal arrogance" comes from Lunacharsky's Revolutionary

Silhouettes, where we read the following:

"Trotsky as a man is prickly and overbearing. However, after Trotsky's merger with the Bolsheviks, it was only in his attitude to Lenin that Trotsky

always showed a touching and tender yieldingness. With the modesty of all truly great men he acknowledges Lenin's primacy."

And on page 43 of the same work:

"When Lenin lay wounded - mortally, we feared, no one expressed our feelings about him better than Trotsky. Amid the appalling turmoil of world

events it was Trotsky, the other leader of the Russian revolution, a man by no means inclined to sentimentality who said: 'when you realise that Lenin

might die it seems that all our lives are useless and you lose the will to live.'"

We leave it to the reader of these lines to decide on whose part "colossal arrogance" is shown in the portrayal of the relationship between the two greatest

revolutionaries of our time.

Two years later, Lenin pointed out that in 1917 "Bolshevism drew to itself all the best elements in the currents of socialist thought that were closest to it." To whom

do these lines refer, Comrade Johnstone? To the Left Mensheviks and Left Social Revolutionaries? But most of those elements had already broken with Bolshevism

by 1918. These lines clearly refer to Trotsky and the Mezhrayontsi. The special attitude of Lenin towards the Mezhrayontsi is revealed by the fact that, at a time

when he was urging the toughening-up of the conditions of membership to guard against the influx of unreliable elements, the probationary period was waived for

the Mezhrayontsi, who were allowed to count the period of their membership of the Bolsheviks from the time they joined their own group.

This action was tantamount to the agreement of the Bolsheviks with the statement of Trotsky that there were no tactical or political differences between the two

groups. The very same Congress at which the Mezhrayontsi joined the Bolshevik Party, the "colossally arrogant" Trotsky was elected to the Central Committee, and

he was one of the four names (with Lenin, Zinoviev and Kamenev) which were announced as having polled the highest number of votes (131 out of 134).

The Stalin School of Falsification

"It would be unhistorical indeed if, in evaluating Trotsky, we were to ignore his struggle against Bolshevism during the first fourteen years of its existence

- or consider the matter closed by quoting a remark that Lenin is alleged on Trotsky's authority - to have made in 1917 (in the midst of the Revolution

and after the latter had been in the Party less than four months) to the effect that after he had understood that unity with the Mensheviks was impossible,

'there was no better Bolshevik than Trotsky.'" (Cogito, page 8)

Such is the genuflection, to the Muse of History with which Monty Johnstone ends the first part of his "far-reaching, complicated but profoundly instructive" history of

Bolshevism. Being himself so particular in his use of sources, he refuses to admit as evidence a remark "allegedly" made by Lenin "on Trotsky's authority". What was

this remark and why was it made?

At a meeting of the Petrograd Committee on November 14th, 1917, Lenin spoke on the danger of conciliationist tendencies in the Party leadership which

constituted a threat even after the October Revolution. On November 14th, eleven days after the successful insurrection, three members of the Central

Committee (Kamenev, Zinoviev, Nogin) resigned in protest against the policies of the Party, and issued an ultimatum demanding the formation of a coalition

government including the Mensheviks and the SRs "otherwise the only course that remains is to maintain a purely Bolshevik Government by means of political terror."

They ended their statement with an appeal to the workers for "immediate conciliation" on the basis of their slogan "Long live the government of all Soviet parties!"

This crisis in the ranks seemed likely to destroy the whole of the gains made by October. In response to a dangerous situation, Lenin advocated the expulsion of the

leading miscreants. It was in this situation that Lenin delivered the speech which ends with the words: "No compromise! A homogeneous Bolshevik government." In

the original text of Lenin's speech the following words occur:

"As for coalition, I cannot speak about that seriously. Trotsky long ago said that a union was impossible. Trotsky understood this, and from that time on

there has been no better Bolshevik."

After Lenin's death, the ruling clique: Stalin, Kamenev and Zinoviev began a systematic campaign of falsification, designed to belittle Trotsky's role in the revolution

and to boost their own. To do this, they had to invent the legend of "Trotskyism", to drive a wedge between the position of Trotsky and that of Lenin and the

"Leninists" (i.e. themselves). The hack historians burrowed through the accumulated rubbish of old polemics which had long been forgotten by those who

participated in them: forgotten, because all the questions which had been raised then were resolved by the experience of October and therefore could have

nothing but an abstract, historical interest. But a serious obstacle in the path of the falsifiers was the October Revolution itself. This obstacle was removed by

gradually deleting Trotsky's name from the history books, by re-writing history, and finally by the outright suppression of all, even the most innocuous mention,

of Trotsky's role.

Monty Johnstone himself cites a good example of this: in the 1934 edition of Stalin's *The October Revolution* we find the following statement:

"All practical work in connection with the organisation of the uprising was done under the immediate direction of Comrade Trotsky, the President of the

Petrograd Soviet. It can be stated with certainty that the Party is indebted primarily and principally to Comrade Trotsky for the rapid going over of the

garrison to the side of the Soviet and the efficient manner in which the work of the Military Revolutionary Committee was organised."

"This passage", writes Monty Johnstone, "has been inexcusably expunged from the text of the article published in *Stalin's Works*, Moscow, 1953, IV, p. 157."

(our emphasis)

"Inexcusably expunged" is the language of a man who is surprised and irritated by some minor and unexpected detail. But there is nothing surprising about it, and

Comrade Johnstone's astonishment is entirely feigned. He is well aware that all the writing of Soviet history up to the present time has consisted of nothing but an

utterly false and lying account of the Russian Revolution and especially of Trotsky's role. The distortions of 1924, crass though they were, merely paved the

way for the time when Stalin in the place of the above, could write:

"Comrade Trotsky played no particular role either in the party or the October insurrection, and could not do so being a man comparatively new to our party in the October period." (Stalin's Works, Moscow, 1953 edition)

This, in turn, was only another step towards the complete degeneration of the Stalinist bureaucracy which accused not only Trotsky, but the entire "Old Bolshevik"

leadership of collaborating with German fascism for the overthrow of the Soviet Union. Among other charges made at the time of the infamous Purge Trials of the

30s, Bukharin, whom Lenin described in the suppressed testament as "the Party's favourite" was accused of plotting to assassinate Lenin in 1918!

The remark which Lenin is "alleged on Trotsky's authority" to have made was published in the original edition of the minutes of the Petrograd Committee, but

subsequently suppressed on the grounds that the speech of Lenin had been copied out incorrectly by the minutes secretary. Undoubtedly, the whole text, as is the

case with many of Lenin's speeches is badly edited, full of gaps and incomplete sentences. But only one page was deleted - the page that contains Lenin's

remark on Trotsky. In his book, *The Stalin School of Falsification*, Trotsky reproduces a photo-copy of the page in question. The original is in the Trotsky

Archives, together with a great deal of other material which has been suppressed in the Soviet Union. Monty Johnstone does not question the authority of the

material. He dare not: it has been attested to, not only by every serious historian of the Russian Revolution, but also by the material published by the Soviet

bureaucracy after the Twentieth Congress, including Lenin's suppressed "Testament", which was published by the Left Opposition in Russia and by

Trotskyists abroad thirty years before the text was made public by the Soviet ruling clique. Naturally, they only published a fraction of the material, which

shows Lenin's opposition to Stalin. But a still greater amount remains under lock and key, in the "closed" section of the Lenin Library, available for the scrutiny only

of the Party's hack "historians".

The authenticity of Lenin's remark can be seen from the context in which he was speaking. On the question of conciliationism, no one had been so outspoken as

Trotsky before the War. Trotsky had believed, on the basis of 1905, that a new revolutionary upheaval would push the best elements among the Mensheviks to the

left, enabling unification with the Bolsheviks to come about. Events themselves demonstrated the incorrectness of this position. Trotsky, in 1917, unhesitatingly

admitted his mistake and once and for all put out of his mind any idea of reunification with the Mensheviks. The "Old Bolshevik" faction, on the other hand, clung

relentlessly to their conciliationist illusions even after the seizure of power. What they were asking for in November 1917 amounted to a restoration, or

counter-revolution in a democratic guise. We would ask Monty Johnstone a straight question: who acted more like a Bolshevik in 1917, Trotsky or the self-styled

"Old Bolsheviks?" He will not answer. That is of no moment. Lenin gave the answer at the meeting of the Petrograd Committee in November, 1917.

On page 21 of his work, Johnstone quotes from Lenin's last letter to Congress - the famous Suppressed Testament, which was only made available to the

rank-and-file of the Communist Parties by the Soviet leaders after the 20th Congress. Johnstone quoted what Lenin has to say about Trotsky's personal

characteristics, but omits one sentence which is very relevant to his own work. Lenin, in his last word to the Russian Communist Party, warned that Trotsky's

non-Bolshevik past should not be held against him.

Monty Johnstone has spent over half his work digging up all the refuse he can lay his hands upon from the most obscure polemics of the pre-1917 period. But not

accidentally he fails to quote Lenin's last word on Trotsky and his relation to the Bolshevik Party, before 1917.

For Lenin, as for Trotsky, the year 1917 marked the decisive turning-point, which rendered all the old polemics with Trotsky irrelevant. That is why Lenin never had

occasion to refer to them after 1917. That is also why Trotsky, in 1921, advised Olminsky that the publication of his letter to Chkheidze would be inopportune.

Monty Johnstone insinuates, on these grounds that Trotsky was guilty of the same methods of falsification as Stalin!

"When Olminsky, the President of the Commission of Party History, asked him whether it [the letter to Chkheidze] should be published, he replied that

this would be 'inopportune' adding paternalistically: 'The reader of today will not understand, will not apply the necessary historical correctives and will

simply be confused.' This was precisely the Stalinist motivation for the suppression and falsification of historical documents that was in later

years to be so soundly and correctly denounced by Trotsky himself." (Cogito, page 7, our emphasis)

Since Monty Johnstone has also made not the slightest attempt to explain the historical context of this letter - or any other - his motivation for using it is quite clear.

We hope that we have given some idea as to the real "motivation" of Trotsky at this period (1913), his desire for the unity of the Marxist movement. In his book, In

Defence of Marxism, Trotsky explains fully the reasons for his stand. Johnstone quotes from this work - but, in the usual "highly selective, potted" manner, only

reproduced one phrase, viz: "I had not freed myself at that period especially in the organisational sphere from the traits of a petty bourgeois revolutionist." Let us

reproduce Trotsky's words without "convenient" abridgements:

"I have in mind the so-called August bloc of 1912. I participated actively in this bloc. In a sense I created it. Politically I differed with the Mensheviks

on all fundamental questions. I also differed with the ultra-left Bolsheviks, the Vperyodists. In the general tendency of politics I stood far more closely

with the Bolsheviks. But I was against the Leninist 'regime' because I had not yet learned to understand that in order to realise the revolutionary goal a

firmly welded centralised party is indispensable. And so I formed this episodic bloc consisting of heterogeneous elements which was directed against

the proletarian wing of the party.

"In the August bloc the liquidators had their own faction, the Vperyodists also had something resembling a faction. Most of the documents were written

by me and through avoiding principled differences had as their aim the creation of a semblance of unanimity upon 'concrete political questions'. Not a

word about the past! Lenin subjected the August bloc to merciless criticism and the harshest blows fell to my lot. Lenin proved that inasmuch as I did

not agree politically with either the Mensheviks or the Vperyodists my policy was adventurism. This was severe but it was true.

"As 'mitigating circumstances' let me mention the fact that I had set as my task not to support the right or the ultra-left factions against the Bolsheviks but

to unite the party as a whole. The Bolsheviks too were invited to the August conference. But since Lenin flatly refused to unite with the Mensheviks (in

which-he was completely correct) I was left in an unnatural bloc with the Mensheviks and the Vperyodists. The second mitigating circumstance is this,

that the very phenomenon of Bolshevism as the genuine revolutionary party was then developing for the first time - in the practice of the Second

International there were no precedents. But I do not thereby seek in the least to absolve myself from guilt. Notwithstanding the conception of

permanent revolution which undoubtedly disclosed the correct perspective, I had not freed myself at that period especially in the organisational sphere

from the traits of a petty-bourgeois revolutionist. I was sick with the disease of conciliationism towards Menshevism and with a distrustful attitude

toward Leninist centralism. Immediately after the August conference the bloc began to disintegrate into its component parts. Within a few months I was

not only in principle but organisationally outside the bloc." (In Defence of Marxism, page 141)

Thus, straightforwardly, honestly, Trotsky reveals, and explains his own mistakes. Johnstone, of course, has no interest in letting Trotsky speak for himself, but

merely seizes upon isolated phrases ("disease of conciliationism", "petit-bourgeois revolutionist") which he uses in a thoroughly unscrupulous, thoroughly Stalinist

manner. He attempts an amalgam (the favourite device of Stalinist falsification) between Stalin and Trotsky which is beneath contempt. His "motivation" is twofold:

on the one hand to blacken Trotsky's name as a liar and a falsifier who deliberately concealed his past differences with Lenin[!]; on the other, an even more dastardly

attempt to prettify the bloody horrors of the Stalinist frame-ups, built out of the bones and nervous systems of human beings, by placing them on the same level as

Trotsky's letter to Olminsky!

Monty Johnstone seizes upon this letter in order to underline his arguments about Trotsky's "violent opposition" to Lenin. And some of the expressions Trotsky uses

appear to bear him out. Yet the use to which Johnstone puts this letter completely bears out what Trotsky wrote to Olminsky - that the reader would not understand

the circumstances under which the letter was written, that he would draw the wrong conclusions - precisely the false conclusions which Monty Johnstone invites

his reader to draw today.

When did Trotsky write this letter and why? Trotsky himself explains in My Life:

"My letter to Chkheidze against Lenin was published during this period. This episode, dating back to April, 1913, grew out of the fact that the official

Bolshevik newspaper then published in St. Petersburg had appropriated the title of my Viennese publication, "The Pravda - a Labour Paper". This led

to one of those sharp conflicts so frequent in the lives of the foreign exiles. In a letter written to Chkheidze, who at one time stood between the

Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, I gave vent to my indignation at the Bolshevik centre and Lenin. Two or three weeks later, I would undoubtedly have

subjected my letter to a strict censor's revision, a year or two later still it would have seemed a curiosity in my own eyes. But that letter was to have a

peculiar destiny. It was intercepted on its way by the Police Department. It rested in the police archives until the October revolution, when it went to the

Institute of History of the Communist Party. Lenin was well aware of this letter; in his eyes, as in mine, it was simply "the snows of yesteryear" and

nothing more. A good many letters of various kinds had been written during the years of foreign exile! In 1924, the epigones disinterred the letter from

the archives and flung it at the party, three-quarters of which at that time consisted of new members. It was no accident that the time chosen for this was

the months immediately following Lenin's death. This condition was doubly essential. In the first place, Lenin could no longer rise to call these gentlemen

by their right names, and in the second place, the masses of the people were torn with grief over the death of their leader. With no idea of the

yesterdays of the party, the people read Trotsky's hostile remarks about Lenin and were stunned. It is true that the remarks had been made twelve

years before, but chronology was disregarded in the face of the naked quotations. The use that the epigones made of my letter to Chkheidze is one of

the greatest frauds in the world's history. The forged documents of the French reactionaries in the Dreyfus case are nothing compared to the political

forgery perpetrated by Stalin and his associates." (My Life, pages 515-6)

The use to which the Stalinists put this letter is just one of countless examples of the vile method of the frame-up which they have developed to a fine art. We can say

that many of the expressions used in that letter, and which Monty Johnstone eagerly seizes upon, were hot-headed and wrong. But there is all the difference in the

world between words uttered in a sudden moment of anger or in the heat of a polemic, and the cold-blooded, deliberate and malicious smears of the Stalinists.

Monty Johnstone throws up his hands in pious indignation at the frame-up methods of Stalin's purges. But he does not hesitate to fall back upon the earlier

falsifications cooked up by the Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin clique after Lenin's death. In repeating these malicious lies and falsification, Monty Johnstone, far from

breaking with the methods of Stalin, resurrects them in a new and more "respectable" guise. They do not smell any sweeter for that.

Monty Johnstone's "case" against Trotsky is neither new nor original. It makes a return from the utterly discredited, "Trotsky-fascist" filth of the thirties, to the more

"subtle" pseudo-political arguments of the first period of the rise of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, in 1924-29. At that time the events of October 1917 were

still too fresh in people's minds to immediately accuse Trotsky of being an agent of German imperialism and Bukharin of attempting to assassinate Lenin in 1918.

Instead, the Soviet literary hacks were encouraged to rummage around in the archives, to dig up precisely the same arguments about Trotsky's "violent opposition" to

the Bolshevik Party which Monty Johnstone now parades as his unique contribution to historical science. Since Monty Johnstone has added nothing to these

clapped-out hypocritical distortions of forty years ago it is fitting to allow Trotsky to answer his own defence, exactly as he did in his letter to the Bureau of Party

History in 1924:

"As I have many times stated, in my disagreements with Bolshevism upon a series of fundamental questions, the error was on my side. In order to

outline, approximately in a few words, the nature and extent of those former disagreements of mine with Bolshevism, I will say this: During the time

when I stood outside the Bolshevik party, during that period when my differences with Bolshevism reached their highest point, the distance separating

me from the views of Lenin was never as great as the distance which separates the present position of Stalin-Bukharin from the very foundations of

Marxism and Leninism."

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NOTES

[3] The notes of the Russian edition of the minutes of this Congress, published in 1959, state that: "In fact, Trotsky supported the Mensheviks on every basic

question." (Pyatji S'yezd RSDRP Protokoly, page 812)

[4] "The events of July 16-17": The reference is to the armed demonstration organised by anti-Kerensky units of the army, notably the Machine-Gun regiment. The

Bolsheviks tried to persuade the soldiers that their action was premature but failed to prevent the demonstration from taking place. The action of the soldiers is used

by Kerensky and Co. to prepare to suppress the Bolsheviks, in the reaction of the July Days.

[5] The authorities drew the necessary conclusion and arrested Trotsky shortly afterwards.

Chapter Four - The Theory of The Permanent Revolution

Monty Johnstone devotes no fewer than eight pages of his work (about a quarter of the whole) to an "exposure" of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution, to

which he counterposes Lenin's idea of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry". These theories were first advanced in 1904-5, and received

a striking confirmation on the basis of the revolutionary experiences of 1905. We have already seen the importance of the ideas in the debates in Russian Marxism

before 1914. Monty Johnstone devotes not a sentence to all this. He evidently considers that the average Young Communist Leaguer is "not interested" in the

ideological struggles of the formative years of Bolshevism. In this, we differ from Comrade Johnstone. We do not confine our analysis to "highly selective, potted"

quotations, torn from their contexts, because we are sure that all serious Young Communist League and Communist Party members, and all thinking members of the

Labour movement generally, want to know the truth about these questions. What exactly were the differences all about?

Monty Johnstone portrays the question as though the main difference was between the positions of Lenin and Trotsky. He hastily skates past the position of the

Mensheviks, and thus presents the whole discussion in an entirely false light. Let us examine the three positions and see in what relation they stood to each other.

All three tendencies agreed that the coming revolution would be a bourgeois-democratic revolution, i.e. a revolution produced by the contradiction between the

developing capitalist economy and the semi-feudal autocratic state of Tsarism. But the mere general admission of the bourgeois nature of the revolution could not

answer the concrete question of which class would lead the revolutionary struggle against autocracy. The Mensheviks assumed by analogy with the great bourgeois

revolutions of the past, that the revolution would be led by the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democrats, whom the workers' movement would support.

Lenin, on the other hand, mercilessly criticised the Mensheviks for holding back the independent movement of the workers and poured scorn on their attempts to

curry favour with the "progressive" bourgeoisie. Already in 1848, Marx noted that the German bourgeois "revolutionary democracy" was unable to play a

revolutionary role in the struggle against feudalism, with which it preferred to do a deal out of fear of the revolutionary movement of the workers. It was at this point

that Marx himself first advanced the slogan of "Permanent Revolution".

Following in the footsteps of Marx, who had described the bourgeois "democratic party" as "far more dangerous to the workers than the previous liberals", Lenin

explained that the Russian bourgeoisie, far from being an ally of the workers, would inevitably side with the counterrevolution.

"The bourgeoisie in the mass," he wrote in 1905, "will inevitably turn towards the counter-revolution, towards the autocracy, against the revolution, and

against the people, as soon as its narrow, selfish interests are met, as soon as it 'recoils' from consistent democracy (and it is already recoiling from it!)"

(Works, vol. 9, page 98)

What class, in Lenin's view, could lead the bourgeois-democratic revolution?

"There remains 'the people', that is the proletariat and the peasantry. The proletariat alone can be relied on to march on to the end, for it goes far

beyond the democratic revolution. That is why the proletariat fights in the forefront for a republic and contemptuously rejects stupid and unworthy

advice to take into account the possibility of the bourgeoisie recoiling." (ibid)

Whom are these words directed against? Trotsky and the Permanent Revolution? Let us see what Trotsky was writing at the same time as Lenin:

"This results in the fact that the struggle for the interests of all Russia has fallen to the lot of the only now existing strong class in the country, the

industrial proletariat. For this reason the industrial proletariat has tremendous political importance, and for this reason the struggle for the emancipation

of Russia from the incubus of absolutism which is stifling it has become converted into a single combat between absolutism and the industrial

proletariat a single combat in which the peasants may render considerable support but cannot play a leading role." (Results and Prospects, page 198)

Again:

"Arming the revolution, in Russia, means first and foremost arming the workers. Knowing this, and fearing this, the liberals altogether eschew a militia.

They even surrender their position to absolutism without a fight just as the bourgeois Thiers surrendered Paris and France to Bismarck simply to avoid

arming the workers." (ibid, page 193)

On the question of the attitude to the bourgeois parties (as we have already seen) the ideas of Lenin and Trotsky were in complete solidarity as against the

Mensheviks who hid behind the bourgeois nature of the revolution as a cloak for the subordination of the workers' party to the bourgeoisie. Arguing against class

collaboration, both Lenin and Trotsky explained that only the working class, in alliance with the peasant masses, could carry out the tasks of the

bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Following the entirely false account in Deutscher's *Prophet Armed Monty Johnstone* reproduces all the old nonsense that Trotsky's views on the permanent

revolution derived from Parvus, the famous German Social Democrat, whose slogan "No Tsar but a workers' government", Lenin criticised on a number of

occasions. At no time was any such slogan put forward by Trotsky, who, time and again, both before and after 1905, pointed out the bourgeois democratic nature

of the revolution.

The point at issue in the debates in Russian Social Democracy was not the nature of the revolution (no one disputed that) but which class would lead it. On this

question, two clearly defined trends crystallised in Russian Social Democracy: on the one hand, the Mensheviks, who, repeating like the litany that the revolution

was "bourgeois", sought to compromise the Marxist movement by agreements with the "liberals"; on the other hand, those who pointed to the weakness, cowardice

and treachery of the bourgeoisie and demanded independent action by the masses, under the leadership of the only consistent revolutionary class, the proletariat - if

necessary against the bourgeoisie. These were the famous Two Tactics of Social Democracy which Lenin deals with in his pamphlet from which Monty Johnstone

quotes, and which he mangles beyond recognition.

Johnstone really scrapes the bottom of the barrel, when he drags up the old slander that Trotsky's theory ignored the role of the peasantry in the revolution.

Johnstone repeats the distortion of Stalin that Trotsky in 1905 "simply forgot all about the peasantry as a revolutionary force, and advanced the slogan of 'No Tsar,

but a workers' government', that is the slogan of a revolution without the peasantry." (Stalin, Works, vol. 4, page 392)

Stalin, and now Monty Johnstone, "simply forgot" about the slogan which Trotsky actually advanced in 1905. Neither Tsar nor Zemtsi (i.e. liberals), but the

People! i.e. a slogan embracing the workers and peasants. The leaflet in which this occurs is to be found, along with numerous appeals to the very peasantry which

Trotsky "forgot", in Trotsky's Collected Works (vol. 2, page 256) which were printed in Russia after the October Revolution.

Lenin's Internationalism

What was Lenin's attitude towards the peasantry in the revolution? He argued that the peasantry should be mobilised by the workers in order to carry through the

democratic, anti-feudal tasks. The moment the workers begin to press forward to socialism, the class antagonisms begin to assert themselves, the reactionary

Bonapartist tendencies among the peasantry, which Lenin repeatedly warned against, would be turned against the proletariat. In a country where the overwhelming

majority of the population consisted of peasants the struggle for socialism would encounter the most serious and determined opposition from the wealthier strata of

the peasantry. Yet, according to Monty Johnstone, Lenin, in 1905 already envisaged the "growing over" of the democratic revolution in Russia to socialism:

"Whilst in this period Lenin spoke of the beginning of the struggle for socialist revolution following a 'complete victory' of the democratic revolution, with

the 'achievement of the demands of the present-day peasantry', and undoubtedly [!] did not expect the socialist revolution to follow within eight months

of its precursor, he considered the main factor determining the point of transition from one to the other to be 'the degree of our strength, the strength of

the class conscious and organised proletariat'. History proved that he was right to reject Trotsky's strategy which envisaged essentially [?] a leap [?]

from Tsarism to October, skipping February. [!]" (Cogito, page 13)

Monty Johnstone is wriggling uncomfortably on a hook cast by himself to trap Trotsky! The assertion that the theory of permanent revolution consists "essentially" of

a "leap" from Tsarism to the socialist revolution, without any intermediate phase is arrant nonsense which proves only that Monty Johnstone has either not bothered

to read Trotsky, or else is back to his old "objective, scientific" methods. We would like to ask Monty Johnstone, apart from anything else, wherein lies the

"permanent", "uninterrupted" nature of the revolution if all that is involved is...a "leap" from Tsarism to socialism?

Not satisfied with distorting Trotsky's position in 1905, Monty Johnstone tries to have a go at Lenin, as well! He makes him say things in crying contradiction to his

own analysis, reducing the leader of October to a buffoon. On the one hand, Johnstone repeats ad nauseam that Lenin regarded the revolution as bourgeois (to no

avail, since, everyone except the Stalinist epigones of Lenin, is agreed on this). On the other, he attributes to Lenin in 1905 the idea that the "democratic dictatorship

of the proletariat and peasantry" would "grow over" into the dictatorship of the proletariat! Let us see what Lenin actually did say on the question of the class nature

of the "democratic dictatorship":

"But of course it will be a democratic, not a socialist dictatorship. It will be unable (without a series of intermediary stages of revolutionary

development) to affect the foundations of capitalism. At best, it may bring about a radical redistribution of landed property in favour of the peasantry,

establish consistent and full democracy, including the formation of a republic, eradicate all the oppressive features of Asiatic bondage...lay the

foundations for a thorough improvement in the conditions of the workers and for a rise in their standard of living, and - last but not least - carry the

revolutionary conflagration into Europe." (Works, vol. 9, page 57)

Lenin's position is absolutely clear and unambiguous: the coming revolution will be a bourgeois revolution, led by the proletariat in alliance with the peasant masses.

The best that can be expected of it is the fulfilment of basic bourgeois-democratic tasks: distribution of land to the peasants, a democratic republic, etc. This, of

necessity, since any attempt to "affect the foundations of capitalism" would necessarily bring the proletariat into conflict with the mass of peasant small proprietors.

Lenin hammers the point home: "The democratic revolution is bourgeois in nature. The slogan of a general distribution, or 'land and freedom' is a bourgeois slogan."

(ibid, page 112)

And for Lenin, no other outcome was possible on the basis of a backward, semi-feudal country like Russia. To talk about the "growing over" of the democratic

dictatorship to the socialist revolution is to make nonsense of Lenin's whole analysis of the class correlation of forces in the revolution.

In what sense did Lenin refer to the possibility of socialist revolution in Russia? In the above quotation from Two Tactics, Lenin asserts that the Russian revolution

will not be able to affect the foundations of capitalism "without a series of intermediary stages of revolutionary developments." Monty Johnstone quickly butts in to fill

in the missing link for Lenin: the prerequisite for the transition from the democratic to the socialist revolution is: "the degree of our strength, the strength of the class

conscious and organised proletariat", and adds that history proved Lenin right. History indeed proved Lenin right, Comrade Johnstone, but not for something which

he did not say. Let us dispense with the interpreting service of Monty Johnstone, and let Lenin speak for himself.

Lenin continues the above quotation as follows; the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia will:

"last but not least carry the revolutionary conflagration into Europe. Such a victory will not yet by any means transform our bourgeois revolution into a

socialist revolution; the democratic revolution will not immediately overstep the bounds of bourgeois social and economic relationships, nevertheless, the

significance of such a victory for the future development of Russia and for the whole world will be immense. Nothing will raise the revolutionary energy

of the world proletariat so much, nothing will shorten the path leading to its complete victory to such an extent, as this decisive victory of the revolution

that has now started in Russia." (ibid, page 57)

Lenin's internationalism here stands out boldly in every line. It is an internationalism, not of words, but of deeds - a far cry from the holiday speeches of the present

day Labour and Stalinist leaders. For Lenin, the Russian revolution was not a self-sufficient act, a "Russian Road to Socialism"! It was the beginning of the world

proletarian revolution. Precisely in this fact lay the future possibility of the transformation of the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution in

Russia.

Neither Lenin, nor any other Marxist, seriously entertained the idea that it was possible to build "socialism in a single country", much less in a backward, Asiatic,

peasant country like Russia. Elsewhere Lenin explains, what would be ABC for any Marxist, that the conditions for a socialist transformation of society were absent

in Russia, although they were fully matured in Western Europe. Polemicising against the Mensheviks in *Two Tactics*, Lenin reiterates the classical position of

Marxism on the international significance of the Russian revolution:

"The basic idea here is one repeatedly formulated by *Vperyod* [Lenin's paper] which has stated that we must not be afraid...of Social Democracy's

complete victory in a democratic revolution, i.e. of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, for such a victory will

enable us to rouse Europe; after throwing off the yoke of the bourgeoisie, the socialist proletariat in Europe will in its turn help us to

accomplish the socialist revolution." (ibid, page 82, our emphasis)

This is the crux of Lenin's prognosis of the coming revolution in Russia: the revolution can only be bourgeois-democratic (not socialist) but, at the same time, because

the bourgeoisie is unfit to play a revolutionary role, the revolution can only be carried out by the working class, led by the Social-Democracy, which will rouse the

peasant masses in its support. The overthrow of Tsarism, the uprooting of all traces of feudalism, and the creation of a republic will have a tremendously

revolutionising effect on the proletariat of the advanced countries of Western Europe. But the revolution in the West can only be a socialist revolution, because of

the tremendous development of the productive forces built up under capitalism itself, and the enormous strength of the working class and the labour movement in

these countries. Finally, the socialist revolution in the West will provoke further upheavals in Russia, and, with the assistance of the socialist proletariat of Europe, the

Russian workers will transform the democratic revolution, in the teeth of opposition from the bourgeoisie and the counter-revolutionary peasantry, into a socialist

revolution.

Comrade Johnstone shakes his head furiously. "That is not Leninism. but Trotskyism! You have distorted Lenin's meaning!" Not at all, Comrade Johnstone. The

meaning is quite clear. Let Lenin speak for himself:

"Thus, at this stage, [after the final victory of the "democratic dictatorship"] the liberal bourgeoisie and the well-to-do peasantry plus partly the middle

peasantry organise counter-revolution. The Russian proletariat plus the European proletariat organise revolution.

"In such conditions the Russian proletariat can win a second victory. The cause is no longer hopeless. The second victory will be the socialist

revolution in Europe.

"The European workers will then show us 'how to do it', and then together with them we shall bring about the socialist revolution." (Works, vol. 10,

page 92)

Here and on dozens of other occasions Lenin expressed himself with the utmost clarity that the victory of "our great bourgeois revolution...will usher in the era of

socialist revolution in the West." (Works, vol. 10, page 276, our emphasis) No matter how he twists and turns, and tries to put words into Lenin's mouth, Monty

Johnstone cannot alter the fact that, in 1905, Lenin not only rejected the idea of the "building of socialism in Russia alone" (the very idea would not have entered his

head), but even the possibility of the Russian workers establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat before the socialist revolution in the West.

Lenin and Trotsky

What were the differences between Lenin's ideas and those of Trotsky's? As we have seen, both agreed on the fundamental questions of the revolution: the

counter-revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie; the need for the workers and peasants to carry through the democratic revolution; the international significance of the

revolution, and so on. The differences arose from Lenin's characterisation of the revolutionary-democratic government which would carry through the tasks of the

revolution as the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry".

Trotsky criticised this formulation for its vagueness; that it did not make clear which class would exercise the dictatorship. Lenin's vagueness was intentional. He was

not prepared to say in advance what form the revolutionary dictatorship would take. He did not even preclude the possibility that the peasant elements would

predominate in the coalition. Thus, from the outset, the formula "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" bore an intentionally algebraic character

- with a number of unknown quantities to be filled in by history. In *Two Tactics*, Lenin explained that:

"The time will come when the struggle against the Russian autocracy will end, and the period of democratic revolution will have passed in Russia, it will

then be ridiculous even to speak of 'singleness of will' of the proletariat and peasantry, about a democratic dictatorship, etc. When that time comes we

shall deal with the question of the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat, and speak of it in greater detail." (Works, vol. 9, page 86)

To this idea of Lenin, Trotsky replied that at no time in history had the peasantry ever been able to play an independent role. The fate of the Russian revolution would

be decided by the outcome of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat for the leadership of the peasant masses. The peasantry could either be used

as an instrument of revolution or of reaction. At all events, the only possible outcome of the revolution was either the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, which would fall

into the arms of Tsarist reaction, or the dictatorship of the proletariat, in alliance with the poor peasantry.

A revolutionary government, in which the workers predominated under the banner of Marxism, could not stop half way, confining itself to bourgeois tasks, but would

necessarily pass from the tasks of the democratic revolution to the socialist. In order to survive, the revolutionary dictatorship would have to wage war against

reaction within the country and externally. Thereafter, Trotsky agreed with Lenin, the victory of the Russian revolution would provide a tremendous impetus to the

socialist revolution in the West, which would come to the aid of the Russian workers' state and carry through the socialist transformation.

This, then, was the heinous crime of Trotsky and his theory of the permanent revolution in 1905! This it was, according to Monty Johnstone, that put him "outside the

party"...to predict in advance what actually happened in 1917: to explain that the logic of events would inevitably place the working class in power! Not even Lenin

was prepared to commit himself on this question in 1905, as we have seen.

Of all the Marxists, Trotsky alone foresaw the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia before the socialist revolution in the West:

"It is possible [wrote Trotsky in 1905] for the workers to come to power in an economically backward country sooner than in an advanced

country...In our view, the Russian revolution will create conditions in which power can pass into the hands of the workers...and in the event of the

victory of the revolution it must do so...before the politicians of bourgeois liberalism get the chance to display to the full their talents for governing."

(Results and Prospects, page 195)

Did this mean, as Monty Johnstone asserts, that Trotsky denied the bourgeois nature of the revolution? Trotsky himself explains:

"In the revolution at the beginning of the twentieth century, the direct objective tasks of which are also bourgeois [our emphasis], there emerges as a

near prospect the inevitable, or at least the probable, political domination of the proletariat. The proletariat itself will see to it that this domination does

not become a mere passing 'episode', as some realist philistines hope. But we can even now ask ourselves: is it inevitable that the proletarian

dictatorship should be shattered against the barriers of the bourgeois revolution? Or is it possible in the given world-historical conditions, that it may

discover before it the prospect of breaking through these barriers? Here we are confronted by questions of tactics: should we consciously work

towards a working-class government in proportion as the development of the revolution brings this stage nearer, or must we at that moment

regard political power as a misfortune which the bourgeois revolution is ready to thrust upon the workers, and which it would be better to

avoid?" (Results and Prospects, pages 199-200, our emphasis)

Are these lines of Trotsky really directed against Lenin, Comrade Johnstone? Or are they aimed at the "realist philistines", like Plekhanov, who feared the

consequences of the independent movement of the workers? And where, here, is the "leap" from Tsarism to the socialist revolution, which, Comrade Johnstone

assures us, constitutes the crux of the theory of permanent revolution?

Trotsky's prognosis of 1905 boils down to this: the bourgeoisie in Russia is incapable of playing a revolutionary role. Inevitably, the development of the revolution

must, at some stage, result in the seizure of power by the workers, supported by a section of the peasantry. Only a workers' and peasants' government can solve the

historical tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. But once in power, the proletariat will not relinquish it to the bourgeoisie or the petty bourgeoisie. It must

consolidate its hold on power by passing from bourgeois-democratic tasks to socialist measures. In other words the revolutionary government, in Trotsky's view,

could take no form other than the dictatorship of the proletariat. It must carry on a ruthless fight against internal reaction, and, to do this it must rouse the socialist

workers of the West to its support. Trotsky, like Lenin, defended the ideas of Marxist internationalism against the parochial arguments of the Mensheviks. To the

opportunist thesis that the "conditions for socialism did not exist in Russia and that therefore the revolution should be confined to bourgeois limits, Trotsky and Lenin

emphasised that the conditions for socialism were fully mature on a world scale. Both these great Marxists conceived of the Russian revolution as merely the

first link in the international socialist revolution.

The Permanent Revolution in Practice - Part One

All the theories concerning the nature of the Russian revolution which had been advanced by Marxists before 1917 were necessarily of a more or less general and

conditional nature. They were not blueprints or astrological predictions, but prognoses, intended to provide the movement with a guide to action, a perspective,

which is the basic task of Marxist theory.

The correctness, or otherwise, of these theories can be gauged, not by a perusal of the polemics of 1905, but only in the light of what actually happened. Engels

was very fond of the proverb, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating", while Lenin frequently cited the words of Goethe: "Theory is grey, my friend, but the tree of

life is ever green". For a Marxist, therefore, the proof of any revolutionary theory can only be the experience of revolution itself.

The experience of 1917 strikingly confirmed the prognosis of Lenin and Trotsky on the cowardly, counter-revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie, as manifested in the

actions of the Provisional Government, which came to power after the February revolution. It is characteristic of their profound grasp of Marxist method that both

Lenin and Trotsky, independently of each other, immediately understood the significance of the Kerensky regime and the attitude which the workers should adopt

towards it. Lenin, in Switzerland, and Trotsky, in New York, simultaneously came to the same conclusion, i.e. of the need for implacable opposition towards the

bourgeois Provisional Government, and its overthrow by the working class.

What was the position of the "Old Bolsheviki" who played such an "important role" in the year 1917? Every single one of them advocated support for the

Provisional Government. Of all the cadres of Bolshevism, who, in the words of Monty Johnstone, had "fitted themselves into the ranks" and "submitted themselves

to collective discipline" for a whole period, not one stood up to the decisive test of events. We would ask Monty Johnstone: What was all the preparation of

the last period for: What was the point of Lenin's struggle for "thirteen or fourteen years" to build a "stable disciplined Marxist party" if at the crucial

moment all the "old Bolsheviki" failed to rise to the occasion?

As early as 1909, Trotsky wrote:

"If the Mensheviks, starting from the abstraction, 'our revolution is bourgeois' arrive at the idea of adapting the whole tactics of the proletariat to the

behaviour of the liberal bourgeoisie before the conquest of state power, the Bolsheviks, proceeding, from an equally barren abstraction, 'a democratic,

not a socialist, dictatorship', arrive at the idea of a bourgeois-democratic self-limitation of the proletariat in whose hands state power rests. It is true,

there is a very significant difference between them in this respect: while the anti-revolutionary sides of Menshevism are already displayed in full force

now, the anti-revolutionary traits of Bolshevism threaten enormous danger only in the event of a revolutionary victory." (Trotsky, 1905, page 285)

Monty Johnstone, severing the last two lines of this passage, tries to use them as further proof of Trotsky's hostility to Lenin's position. In fact, with these words,

Trotsky correctly anticipated in 1909 the crisis in the ranks of the Bolshevik Party in 1917 which resulted entirely from the anti-revolutionary

interpretation by the "Old Bolsheviks" of Lenin's slogan "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry".

When Lenin presented his famous April Theses to the party, in which he called for the overthrow of the Provisional Government, they were published in his name

alone: not one of the "leaders" of the party was prepared to associate his name with a position which ran directly counter to all the statements, manifestos, articles

and speeches issued by them since the February revolution. The very day after the publication of Lenin's theses Kamenev wrote an editorial in Pravda under the

heading "Our Differences", in which it was emphasised that the theses represented only Lenin's "personal opinion". The article ended with the following words:

"Insofar as concerns Lenin's general scheme, it appears to be unacceptable, since it starts from the assumption that the bourgeois revolution is finished

and counts on the immediate transformation of the revolution into a socialist revolution."

Note these words well, reader: this is not Lenin arguing against Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, but the "Old Bolshevik" Kamenev indicting Lenin for the

heinous crime of Trotskyism! The arguments of Kamenev and Co. in 1917 read like a parody of the words of Plekhanov at the Stockholm Congress of 1906: the

proletariat is bound to take power in a proletarian revolution, but the revolution is bourgeois and therefore it is our duty not to take power! The wheel had gone full

circle, and the "confusion" of the "Old Bolsheviks" manifested itself in 1911 in a return to the threadbare reformist ideas of the Mensheviks. The "algebraic equation"

of Lenin laid itself open to such misinterpretation, while Trotsky's "arithmetical" formula was quite precise.

Marx long ago noted that opportunism often attempts to cloak itself in the garb of outworn revolutionary slogans, slogans which have outlived their revolutionary

usefulness. So it was in 1917 with the "Old Bolsheviks", who attempted to use the slogan of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" as a mask

to conceal their opportunism. It was in this context that Lenin wrote that:

"The Bolshevik slogans and ideas in general have been fully corroborated by history; but concretely, things have turned out differently than could have

been anticipated (by anyone): they are more original, more specific, more variegated...'The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry'

has already become a reality. in a certain form and to a certain extent, in the Russian revolution." (Quoted by Monty Johnstone, page 11, Lenin,

Selected Works, vol. 6, page 33)

Monty Johnstone reproduces this passage, without explaining the context, in order to prove that Lenin continued to defend the idea of the "democratic dictatorship"

in 1917. But the entire work from which the quotation is taken - Letters on Tactics - is a polemic against Kamenev and Co. designed to prove precisely the

opposite! Monty Johnstone's quotation is inaccurate. He joins two ideas together, which, in the original, are separated by a whole paragraph, which runs as follows:

"Had we forgotten this fact, we should have resembled those "Old Bolsheviks" who have more than once played so sorry a role in the history of our

party by repeating a formula meaninglessly learned by rote instead of studying the specific formula and new features of actual reality." (ibid, Lenin's

emphasis)

This little paragraph which Johnstone "accidentally" left out of the middle of his quotation puts the whole matter in a nutshell. Lenin tried to explain to the "Old

Bolsheviks" that the slogan of the "democratic dictatorship" was not some "super-historical formula" to be incanted at every junction, regardless of the actual

development of the class struggle.

Lenin repeatedly emphasised that there is no abstract truth, but only concrete truth. To attempt to seek salvation in the reiteration of a slogan which had outlived its

usefulness was to break with the method of Marxism, and to retreat from the imperative tasks of the revolution to barren scholasticism. The concrete realisation of

the "democratic dictatorship" which history had actually thrown up was a capitalist government, waging an imperialist war of annexation, incapable of solving, or

even of seriously posing, a single one of the fundamental tasks of the democratic revolution. The algebraic formula of the "democratic dictatorship" had been filled by

history with a negative content.

By a series of twists and turns, Monty Johnstone tries to explain that the Kerensky government represented a realisation of the bourgeois democratic dictatorship, as

foreseen by Lenin in 1905. But just a minute, Comrade Johnstone! What were the tasks of the democratic dictatorship outlined by Lenin in Two Tactics? First and

foremost, a radical solution of the agrarian problem, based on nationalisation of the land; second, a democratic republic based on universal suffrage and a Constituent

Assembly; replacement of the standing army by the armed people. To these must be added, in the conditions prevailing in 1917, the immediate conclusion of a

democratic peace. Is that not so, Comrade Johnstone? But then, if the Kerensky government was the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" (i.e.

the government of the bourgeois-democratic revolution), how is it that not one of these basic tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution were solved by it, or

could be solved by it?

Monty Johnstone, tying himself and his readers in knots, argues that the February revolution was the bourgeois-democratic revolution (and that "Trotsky does not

attempt to deny this"), but at the same time, that it could not solve a single one of the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Indeed, Comrade Johnstone,

Trotsky would not attempt to deny this. Both Lenin and Trotsky understood that the Kerensky government could not seriously tackle these problems; but that was

precisely because it was a government of the bourgeoisie, not of the workers and peasants. Only the dictatorship of the proletariat, in alliance with the

poor peasants, could begin to solve the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia.

By a most peculiar mode of reasoning (to put it politely) Monty Johnstone argues that:

"The February revolution of 1917 was not the proletariat fighting the bourgeois nation as foreseen by Trotsky, but the overthrow of Tsarism by a

bourgeois revolution carried through by the workers and peasants, that Lenin had foreseen. Power did not pass into the hands of a workers'

government. It was shared between Soviets (councils) of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, representing the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat

and peasantry [!] (the bulk of the soldiers were peasants) and the capitalist Provisional Government to which it was voluntarily [!!] surrendering its

supremacy." (Cogito, page 11)

This is fine indeed! The February revolution was a bourgeois revolution carried out by the workers and peasants who then proceeded "voluntarily" to hand over their

supremacy to the capitalists. But the question is: how did the workers and peasants come to hand over power "voluntarily", to the bourgeoisie, which, "as foreseen

by Lenin", was bound to play, and did play, a counter-revolutionary role? The answer is given by Lenin himself. In answer to those elements who asserted that the

proletariat had to obey the "iron law of historical stages", could not "skip February", had to "pass through the stage of the bourgeois revolution", and who thereby

tried to cover up their own cowardice, confusion and impotence by appealing to "objective factors", Lenin replied scornfully.

"Why don't they take power? Steklov says: for this reason and that. This is nonsense. The fact is that the proletariat is not organised and class

conscious enough. This must be admitted: material strength is in the hands of the proletariat but the bourgeoisie turned out to be prepared and

class conscious. This is a monstrous fact, and it should be frankly and openly admitted and the people should be told that they did not take power

because they were unorganised and not conscious enough." (Lenin, Works, vol. 36, page 437, our emphasis)

There was no objective reason why the workers - who held power in their hands - could not have elbowed the bourgeoisie to one side in February 1917, no reason

other than unpreparedness, lack of organisation and lack of consciousness. But this, as Lenin explained, was merely the obverse side of the colossal betrayal of the

revolution by all the so-called workers' and peasants' parties. Without the complicity of the Mensheviks and SRs in the Soviets, the Provisional Government could

not have lasted even for an hour. That is why Lenin reserved his most stinging barbs for those elements among the Bolshevik leadership who had got the Bolshevik

Party itself into tow with the Menshevik-SR bandwagon, which had confused and disorientated the masses, and deflected them from the road to power.

In attempting to discredit the position of Trotsky, which was now identical with that of Lenin, Monty Johnstone merely repeats all the old nonsense which Kamenev

and Co. used against Lenin in 1917. His attempts to maintain the slogan of the "democratic dictatorship" in opposition to the permanent revolution is so

transparently dishonest as to verge on the comical. Thus, the very work from which he tries to scrape quotations in defence of this slogan - Letters on Tactics - is

precisely the one in which Lenin finally buried it once and for all:

"Whoever speaks now of a 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' is behind the times, has consequently gone over to

the side of the petty bourgeoisie and is against the proletarian class struggle. He deserves to be consigned to the archive of 'Bolshevik' pre-revolutionary

antiques (which might be called the archive of 'old Bolsheviks')." (Lenin, Letters on Tactics, Selected Works, vol. 6, page 34)

Referring to the power of the working class, and the impotence of the Provisional Government, Lenin pointed out:

"This fact does not fit into the old scheme. One must know how to adapt schemes to facts, rather than repeat words regarding a 'dictatorship of the

proletariat and peasantry'...in general words which have become meaningless." (Lenin, Selected Works, vol. 6, page 35)

Again:

"Is this reality covered by the old-Bolshevik formula of Comrade Kamenev, which declares that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is not completed?"

No, that formula is antiquated. It is worthless. It is dead. And all attempts to revive it will be in vain." (ibid, page 40)

All Monty Johnstone's efforts are in vain. Lenin himself completely discarded the slogan of the "democratic dictatorship" in April, 1917. Those who clung to it did so

with the intention, not of defending "Leninism" against "Trotskyism", but in order to cover their own ignominious capitulation to Menshevik reformism. And if, in

1917, Lenin could heap so much scorn upon those who tried to revive the "dead...meaningless...antiquated" formula of the "democratic dictatorship of the

proletariat and peasantry", what see we to say about Monty Johnstone and the leaders of the so-called Communist Parties, who fifty years later continue to use and

abuse the slogan for their own cynical and anti-revolutionary purposes?

The Permanent Revolution in Practice (2)

If the references to the theory of Permanent Revolution in Lenin's works prior to 1917 are scant, the references after that are non-existent. Trotsky's book on the

Permanent Revolution was published in Russia and translated into many languages (including English) by the Communist International during Lenin's lifetime, without

a word of protest or criticism from Lenin or the mythical "Majority of the Central Committee". However, in the Complete Works of Lenin, published by the Soviet

Government after the revolution, there appears a note on Trotsky which contains the following passage:

"Before the Revolution of 1905 he advanced his own unique and now completely celebrated theory of Permanent Revolution, asserting that the

bourgeois revolution of 1905 would pass directly to a socialist revolution which would prove the first of a series of national revolutions."

Here without any Johnstone twists and turns the theory of Permanent Revolution is quite accurately described. It was "especially celebrated" after the October

Revolution because in it, the events of 1917 had been accurately predicted, in advance.

On pages 14-15 of his article, Monty Johnstone attempts to discredit the theory of permanent revolution by his usual method of "balanced" snippets of quotations:

"Strange to relate, nowhere in any of Lenin's writing and speeches in the period from April 1917 till his death (they take up twenty-three of the fifty-five

volumes of the new Russian edition) has it been possible to find so much as a hint that Lenin was aware of his 'conversion' to Trotsky's view of

'permanent revolution' - and Lenin was never afraid of admitting past mistakes. On the other hand, we do find Trotsky on more than one occasion

admitting the converse. Thus the 1927 Platform of the Left Opposition...reproduces the declaration of Trotsky and his associates to the Communist

International on 15 December, 1926: 'Trotsky has stated to the International that in those questions of principle upon which he disputed with Lenin,

Lenin was right - and particularly upon the question of permanent revolution and the peasantry'. In a letter to the old 'Left Oppositionist'

Preobrazhensky, who did not accept his theory, Trotsky admitted: 'Up to February 1917, the slogan of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat

and the peasantry was historically progressive.' And even in his Lessons of October he wrote that with his formula of the democratic dictatorship of the

proletariat and the peasantry Lenin had been attacking the question of an advance towards the Socialist dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the

peasants in a 'forcible and thoroughly revolutionary way' - in complete contradiction to his 1909 statement that: 'the anti-revolutionary features of

Bolshevism threaten to become a great danger...in the event of a victory of the revolution." (Cogito, pages 14-15)

Johnstone's argument concerning the absence of comment in Lenin's works after 1917 on the question of the permanent revolution condemns itself. Lenin was

always scrupulous on matters of theory. He would never have allowed a theoretical question on any important issue to remain unresolved. If he wrote no polemics

against the theory of permanent revolution after 1917, if he permitted the publication of Trotsky's works on this question without comment, and approved a note in

the official edition of his Collected Works expressing agreement with this theory, it could only be because, after the issues had been settled by the October

Revolution, he was broadly in agreement with Trotsky on this question. It was not a question of Lenin being "converted" by Trotsky, as we have already explained.

After 1917, former differences between them on the appraisal of the Russian Revolution (differences which, in any case, were of a secondary nature) ceased to have

any but a purely historical significance. As for Trotsky's alleged "mistakes", Trotsky was always prepared, not merely to admit his errors, but to explain them (which

certainly cannot be said of the Communist Party leaders of today!) We have already shown how Trotsky explained his mistake on the question of the Bolshevik

Party. But so far as the theory of permanent revolution is concerned, Trotsky's only "crime" for which the Stalinists can never forgive him - was that his theory was

brilliantly confirmed by events.

In reality, what Monty Johnstone and the other Communist Party "theoreticians" are attacking, under the guise of criticizing the theory of the permanent revolution, is

the revolutionary essence and method of Bolshevism itself. In 1924 "Trotskyism" was cynically invented by Kamenev, Zinoviev and Stalin to serve the interests of

their clique struggle against Trotsky. In this they gained the powerful support of the State and Party bureaucracy, which saw in this the end of the turmoil of the

Revolution and the beginning of a period of peace and "order" in which they could enjoy the privileges which they were stealthily acquiring. Stalin's espousal of the

"theory" of Socialism in One Country was something which Kamenev and Zinoviev, who had been educated in the spirit of Lenin's internationalism, could not

stomach. They broke with Stalin - but the damage had already been done. The bureaucracy adhered all the more strongly to the Stalin faction and the "theory" of

Socialism in One Country. Their indignant and malicious attacks upon "Trotskyism" and "permanent revolution" were merely the expression of their repudiation of the

revolutionary traditions of Bolshevism which conflicted with their material interests.

As to the quotation from the Platform of the Left Opposition - Johnstone knows that this document was not a personal statement of Trotsky's views, but those of

the entire Left Opposition - including Kamenev and Zinoviev. While there was agreement on the fundamental questions in the struggle against Stalinism -

industrialisation, collectivisation, workers' democracy, internationalism, etc - on other questions Kamenev and Zinoviev still held a different position. The passage on

the permanent revolution quoted by Monty Johnstone is one of several which Trotsky opposed, but was out-voted in the Opposition by Kamenev and Zinoviev. For

the sake of unity on the fundamental platform against Stalin, Trotsky concurred with this. His own writings provide a consistent defence of the theory, which

Kamenev and Zinoviev were unwilling to accept, partly because of the role they had played in October on the question of the "democratic dictatorship of the

proletariat and peasantry".

Concerning the quotation from the letter to Preobrazhensky, the reader will see that there is absolutely no contradiction between the position advanced in this letter

and the theory of permanent revolution. Trotsky always considered Lenin's position to be progressive, and close to his own, as against that of the Mensheviks. This

is expressed very clearly in the Lessons of October: Monty Johnstone quotes (with his customary "conciseness") from this pamphlet, but he does not explain why it

was written, when it was written, or what is in it. The work was written in 1923, after the defeat of the revolutionary movement in Germany, largely due to the

bungling of Stalin and Zinoviev.

Trotsky explains in this pamphlet the inevitability of a crisis of leadership in a revolutionary situation because of the enormous pressure of bourgeois "public opinion"

even on the most hardened revolutionary leadership. Engels had explained that it sometimes takes decades for a revolutionary situation to build up, and then two or

three decades can be summed up in a few days; if the revolutionary leadership fails to take advantage of the situation then it might have to wait another ten, twenty

years for a like situation to arise. Recent history is full of such examples, although one would not think so from the work of Monty Johnstone or the lore of the

Communist Parties which even discovered and espoused the "Menshevik Road to Socialism".

Trotsky explains the behaviour of the German Communist Party leaders and of the Stalin-Zinoviev leadership as a substitution of Menshevism for Bolshevism, in the

manner of February, 1917. And as in 1917, the opportunists justified their position by paying lip service to outmoded theories - including the "democratic

dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry". Opportunists are never short of some convenient "theory" or other to excuse their cowardice: thus the Communist

Party "theoreticians", to explain away the sell-out in France in May 1968, fell back upon the distortion of Engels' Introduction to the Class Struggles in France,

which has been used to discredit revolutionism by the Social Democratic revisionists for eighty years!

In order to throw into sharp relief the imposing features of Comrade Johnstone's fearless "objectivity", let us quote in full what Trotsky says in The Lessons of

October about the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry":

"Lenin, even prior to 1905, gave expression to the peculiar character of the Russian revolution in the formula 'the democratic dictatorship of the

proletariat and peasantry'. This formula, in itself, as future development showed, could acquire meaning only as a stage towards the socialist dictatorship

of the proletariat supported by the peasantry. Lenin's formulation of the problem, revolutionary and dynamic through and through, was completely and

irreconcilably counterposed to the Menshevik pattern according to which Russia could pretend only to a repetition of the history of the advanced

nations, with the bourgeoisie in power and the social democrats in opposition. Some circles in our party, however, laid stress not on the dictatorship of

the proletariat and peasantry in Lenin's formula, but upon its democratic character as opposed to its socialist character. And again, this could only

mean that in Russia, a backward country. Only a democratic revolution was conceivable. The socialist revolution was to begin in the West, and we

could take to the road of socialism only in the wake of England, France and Germany. But such a formulation of the question slipped inevitably into

Menshevism, and this was fully revealed in 1917 when the tasks of the revolution were posed before us, not for prognosis but for decisive action.

"To hold, under the actual conditions of revolution, a position of supporting democracy pushed to its logical conclusion of opposition to socialism as

'being premature', meant, in politics, a shift from the proletarian to a petty bourgeois position. It meant going over to the position of the left wing of

national revolution." (The Essential Trotsky, page 122)

What happened in Russia in 1917? According to Monty Johnstone the February Revolution marked the completion of the bourgeois-democratic stage of the

revolution. The October Revolution marked the socialist stage. But, on the one hand, the February Revolution did not solve any one of the tasks of the

bourgeois-democratic phase. On the other hand the socialist revolution initially began with the bourgeois-democratic measures, notably the agrarian revolution.

Monty Johnstone masks his own confusion (and deepens that of his readers!) by desperately seizing on isolated quotes from Lenin - arbitrarily and quite incorrectly

juxtaposing bleeding chunks from Lenin's writings of 1905 with his polemics against the "Old Bolsheviks" in 1917! We would ask Comrade Johnstone: how can a

bourgeois-democratic revolution be completed, when it has not dealt with the most fundamental questions before it?

How could the Bolsheviks mobilise support for the socialist revolution on the basis of bourgeois democratic slogans: ("Peace, Bread, Land")?

In an apogee of exasperation, Monty Johnstone blurts out:

"It required the October Revolution, establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, to carry out those bourgeois democratic tasks which had not been

tackled or completed between February and October." (Cogito, page 12)

Indeed it did, Comrade Johnstone! But that is precisely the nefarious theory of Permanent Revolution. In the October Revolution, the proletariat, in alliance with the

poor peasants, first solved the basic problems of the bourgeois democratic revolution, then went on, uninterruptedly, to carry out socialist measures. Therein lies the

"permanent", uninterrupted nature of the Russian Revolution.

We might also ask Monty Johnstone which tasks had been "tackled or completed between February and October"? Not the distribution of land to the peasants.

Not the establishment of a democratic peace. Not even the setting up of a genuine democratic system of government! The abolition of the monarchy? But even that

was in abeyance: the original intention of the heroes of Russian "democracy" was to create a constitutional monarchy.

The bourgeois democratic "allies" of the working-class, before whose "achievements" Monty Johnstone stands in religious awe were repeatedly flayed by Lenin, who

openly mocked at their impotence:

"Those poltroons, gas-bags, vainglorious Narcissuses and petty Hamlets brandished their wooden swords - but did not even destroy the monarchy!

We cleansed out all that monarchist muck as nobody has ever done before. We left not a stone, not a brick of that ancient edifice, the social-estate

system (even the most advanced countries, such as Britain, France, and Germany, have not completely eliminated the survivals of that system to this

day!), standing. We tore out the deep-seated roots of the social-estate system, namely, the remnants of feudalism and serfdom in the system of land

ownership, to the last. 'One may argue' (there are plenty of quill-drivers, Cadets, Mensheviks, and Socialist Revolutionaries abroad to indulge in such

arguments) as to what 'in the long run' will be the outcome of the agrarian reform effected by the Great October Revolution. We have no desire at the

moment to waste time on such controversies, for we are deciding this, as well as the mass of accompanying controversies, by struggle. But the fact

cannot be denied that the petty-bourgeois democrats 'compromised' with the landowners, the custodians of the traditions of serfdom, for eight months,

while we completely swept the landowners and all their traditions from Russian soil in a few weeks." (Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 33, pages 52-3)

The democratic rights which the workers won in 1917 were the results of their own struggles, not the "gifts" of the "petty Hamlets" of bourgeois parliamentarianism!

As a matter of fact, under the cover of the "democracy" of the Provisional Government (exactly like the later Popular Front Governments in France and Spain) the

reaction was preparing a bloody rebuff to the movement of the masses who had gone "too far". The attempted counter-revolutionary coup of Kornilov in

August-September 1917, with the support and encouragement of the bourgeoisie, signalled the bankruptcy of the whole rotten system of bourgeois democracy in

Russia. In order to decisively defeat the forces of reaction and carry out the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution, it was necessary for the workers and

peasants to snatch the reins of power from the trembling hands of the treacherous and vacillating "democrats". That is a lesson which the "Communist" leaders of

today still stubbornly refuse to learn; their "popular frontism" in Greece, in Spain, in France and elsewhere will pave the way for new and sanguinary defeats of the

working class unless a decisive break is made with the rotten policies of Menshevik class collaborationism.

In the February Revolution, Tsarism had been overthrown precisely by the movement of the workers in the towns, who were then joined by the peasants in uniform.

As for the bourgeoisie and its parties of "liberal democracy" - it played no role whatsoever. Real power was in the hands of the workers' and soldiers' Soviets. The

Provisional Government hung in mid-air, deprived of any solid basis of support, other than that which the cowardly leaderships of the Mensheviks and SRs were

prepared to "voluntarily surrender" to it! What was necessary, as Lenin and Trotsky clearly understood, was for the workers and peasants to organise to convert this

"dual power" (an abortion which resulted from the sell-out of the Mensheviks and SRs) into real workers' power.

Marx and Engels had explained the cowardly, counter-revolutionary role of the German bourgeoisie in 1848 in terms of its fear of the working class movement which

stood menacingly behind it in its struggle against feudalism and autocracy. The Russian bourgeoisie, sixty years later, was even more incapable of imitating the

heroism of its class brothers of 1789. In the History of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky explains that the belatedness of capitalist development in Russia ruled out

the possibility of the Russian bourgeoisie playing a revolutionary role. On the one hand, taking advantage of the techniques learned from Western capitalism, Russian

industry bore a highly concentrated character with a large number of workers thrust together in large numbers, under bad conditions, in the few towns, haunting the

bourgeoisie with the spectre of a new Paris Commune in the event of a mass revolutionary upheaval.

On the other hand, the Russian bourgeoisie was heavily dependent for investment and credit on the purse strings of international capital:

"The social character of the Russian bourgeoisie and its political physiognomy were determined by the condition of origin and the structure of Russian

industry. The extreme concentration of this industry alone meant that between the capitalist leaders and the popular masses there was no hierarchy of

transitional layers. To this we must add that the proprietors of the principal industrial, banking and transport enterprises were foreigners, who realised

on their investment not only the profits drawn from Russia, but also a political influence in foreign parliaments, and so not only did not forward the

struggle for Russian parliamentarianism, but often opposed it: it is sufficient to recall the shameful role played by official France. Such are the elementary

and irremovable causes of the political isolation and anti-popular character of the Russian bourgeoisie. Whereas in the dawn of its history it was too

unripe to accomplish a Reformation, when the time came for leading a revolution it was overripe." (Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution, vol. 1,

page 32)

And these features are not something peculiar to the Russian bourgeoisie: with minor differences, they are an accurate characterisation of the "national"

bourgeoisies of every backward, semi colonial country. Lenin poured scorn on the Mensheviks for their class collaborationism - their "Popular Frontism" (for that

is what it was, though the Mensheviks did not use the word) - their attempts to ingratiate themselves with the parties of so-called "liberal, bourgeois democracy",

under the pretext that the bourgeoisie was a "progressive" force in the struggle against autocracy. And what would he say if he could witness the even more blatant

class collaborationism of the Communist Party everywhere in the world today: in Greece, in Spain, in Indonesia, in India? Nowhere has the "democratic"

bourgeoisie played anything other than the most corrupt and counter-revolutionary role. Yet nowhere do the Communist Party leaderships pursue an

independent, Leninist, class policy vis-à-vis the politicians of bourgeois democracy.

The Stalinist "theory" of "stages", which has been incanted monotonously by the Communist Party "theoreticians" including Monty Johnstone, is a crude and

mechanical caricature of the ideas of Lenin. What has Monty Johnstone to say about the German revolution of 1918 or the Italian stay-in strikes of 1920? In the

former case, the German workers seized power in a bloodless revolution, only to be sold out by their Social Democratic "leaders", who, hiding behind the

"bourgeois-democratic" nature of the revolution, "voluntarily surrendered" (!) power to the bourgeoisie! Was this, as the Social Democratic leaders claimed, the

"democratic stage" of the German revolution, Comrade Johnstone? If so, why did Lenin denounce the Social Democratic leaders for betraying the socialist

revolution?

A similar process took place in Italy in 1920, where the massive wave of sit-in strikes created a revolutionary situation: the failure of the socialist leaders to pose

clearly the revolutionary way forward led to the defeat of the Italian workers and directly to the rise of Mussolini. Like the German Social Democratic leadership,

they excused themselves on the grounds that the masses were "not ready" for socialist revolution. But if Lenin could bitterly attack the Italian Socialist leaders for

failing to advance the revolutionary programme then, what would he have to say about the French Communist Party "leadership" in the general strike of May 1968

which was infinitely deeper and broader than the movement in Italy in 1920?

Opportunists of every stripe have always placed the responsibility for defeats at the door of the masses who are allegedly "unready" for socialism. But the history of

the last fifty years shows time and time again the willingness of the working class to struggle and make heroic sacrifices to achieve a social transformation. "Why

always blame the leaders?" ask the Communist Party "theoreticians" of 1968, echoing the indignant words of the Kautskys, Scheidemanns and Serratis in 1918-20.

Having lost all faith in the ability of the working people to change society, the haughty bureaucrat is unable to conceive of any connection between his parliamentary

cretinism and the failure of the masses, without a conscious revolutionary lead, to carry through their movement to a victorious conclusion.

What lessons have the Communist Party leaders drawn from all this? Monty Johnstone uses quotations from some of the polemics of Lenin. But he does not choose

to quote from Lenin's numerous polemics against the Mensheviks, who tried to tie the Russian proletariat to the "progressive", "liberal" bourgeoisie. Why does he not

quote Lenin's innumerable attacks upon class collaborationism, his insistence upon the revolutionary workers and peasants as the only classes capable of carrying

through the democratic revolution?

Apparently, in all of Lenin's writings, Monty Johnstone sees only one long denunciation of the heresy of Permanent Revolution. He sees nothing relevant to the crass,

Menshevik policies of Stalin in China in 1925-27. He sees nothing connected with the Cuban Communist Party which supported Batista as a "progressive

anti-American force" in the thirties, and which denounced Castro as a "petit-bourgeois adventurer", of the Iraqi Communist Party which hailed Kassar, as the Great

Deliverer, till he began to shoot them down, and drive them underground! The Soviet comrades pursue a good neighbourly policy vis-à-vis the "progressive" Shah of

Persia. which involves handing over political refugees to the firing squad. The Indonesian comrades, with their "Leninist" policy of a bloc of "workers, peasants,

intelligentsia, national bourgeoisie, progressive aristocrats and all patriotic elements" grovelled before the "progressive" dictator Sukarno as a result of which half a

million Communists were murdered without resistance. China and Russia vied with each other in praise of that "valiant anti-imperialist fighter" Ayub Khan, till he was

overthrown by the Pakistani workers and peasants.

These are just a few samples of the "Leninist" orientation of the "Communist" Party leaderships today. Under the pretext of loyalty to the slogan of the "democratic

dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry", they are everywhere pursuing a policy of class collaboration which is just what Trotsky called it, a "malicious caricature

of Menshevism".

Many comrades in the Communist Party and Young Communist League will have been confused by Monty Johnstone's mental gymnastics on the Permanent

Revolution. We hope that some of the points have been clarified here. The theory of the Permanent Revolution is not the complicated, arid theoretical question which

Johnstone makes it out to be, but one which sums up the whole experience of the revolutionary movement in Russia of the October Revolution. Without a

clear understanding of these questions, no Marxist will be able to find his bearings in the present world situation. The tragedies of Indonesia, of Greece, of Pakistan,

will be repeated. It is up to all serious socialists to study the lessons of these events to prepare themselves theoretically for the future role they must play in Britain and

internationally.

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Chapter Five - Trotsky and Brest-Litovsk

"Although Trotsky had supported Lenin against the opposition of Kamenev and Zinoviev on the need to organise an insurrection in October 1917 he was to find

himself at loggerheads with him at the beginning of 1918 on the signing of a peace treaty with Germany. The way he acted on this question highlights both his strength

and his weaknesses." (Cogito, page 17)

This is the first and last reference in Johnstone's article of Lenin's struggle against the "Old Bolsheviks" in 1917. That it comes in a subordinate clause is an indication

of the place it occupies in Monty Johnstone's scheme of things. Of course, Trotsky "just happened" to have the same position as Lenin on the little question of the

October revolution, in the face of opposition from Kamenev, Stalin and Zinoviev, but on other "fundamental questions", he again found himself in opposition to "the

correct line".

Monty Johnstone here attempts the same trick which he used in the section on the "Permanent Revolution". In that section, by "forgetting" about the position of the

Mensheviks, he exaggerates out of all proportion the differences between Lenin and Trotsky. On Brest-Litovsk, again Johnstone knows of only two positions:

Lenin's (i.e. for immediately accepting the German terms) and Trotsky's (which he characterises as "neither peace nor war"). But Monty Johnstone knows perfectly

well that on this question, there were not two positions, but three: the positions of Lenin and Trotsky and that of Bukharin, who stood not only for a rejection of the

German terms, but for a revolutionary war against Germany. He also forgets to mention the little point that Bukharin's position was originally that of the majority

of the Party at the time of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations.

What was the attitude of the Bolsheviks towards the war? In 1915, considering the possibility of the Bolsheviks coming to power in Russia, Lenin wrote an article in his journal *Sotsial-Democrat* under the heading *Some Theses*:

"To the question what the party of the proletariat would do if the revolution put it in power in the present war, we reply: we should propose peace to all the

belligerents on condition of the liberation of the colonies, and of all dependent and oppressed peoples not enjoying full rights. Neither Germany nor England nor

France would under their present governments accept this condition. Then we should have to prepare to wage a revolutionary war i.e. we should not only carry out

in full by the most decisive measures our minimum programme, but should systematically incite to insurrection all the peoples now oppressed by the Great Russians,

all colonies and dependent countries of Asia (India, China, Persia, etc) and also - and first of all - incite the proletariat of Europe to insurrection against its

governments and in defiance of its social chauvinists." (Collected Works, vol. 21, page 403)

Such was the bold, revolutionary strategy worked out by Lenin in advance for the Russian Revolution. It has nothing in common with the mealy-mouthed pacifism

which the Communist Party parsons preach today, and which they try to foist upon the leader of October. Lenin and the Bolsheviks, before 1917, stood for

revolutionary war: a war directed by the Revolution against imperialism, which would combine the armed struggle of the Red Army with the insurrection of the

workers of Europe and the peoples of the oppressed nations.

In the period of agitation and preparation prior to October, the Bolsheviks repeatedly emphasised that they stood for a "peace without annexations or indemnities",

that they would offer such a peace to the imperialists, and, in the event of their refusing, the Bolsheviks would launch a revolutionary war against them. Thus, Lenin

wrote late in September, 1917:

"If the least probable should occur, i.e. if no belligerent state accepts even an armistice, then the war on our side would become a really necessary, really just and

defensive war. The mere fact that the proletariat and the poorest peasantry will be conscious of this will make Russia many times stronger in the military respect,

especially after a complete break with the capitalists who rob the people, not to mention that then the war on our side will be, not in words, but in fact, a war in

alliance with the oppressed peoples of the whole world." (Collected Works, vol. 26, page 63)

The idea of revolutionary war was accepted without question as part of the basic strategy of the Party. Thus, when Kamenev and Zinoviev wrote their open letter

opposing the October Revolution, one of their key arguments was the prospect of a revolutionary war, with which they attempted to frighten the workers:

"The masses of soldiers support us because we advance not a slogan of war, but a slogan of peace...If we seize power alone now and if we find ourselves

compelled by the entire world situation to engage in a revolutionary war, the soldier masses will recoil from us."

This was a good argument for signing the Brest-Litovsk peace, months in advance. But it was proof, not of the historical foresight of Kamenev and Zinoviev, but

only of their shaky nerves and opportunist waverings. Their later support for the signing of the Treaty was merely the obverse side of their opposition to the October

insurrection: the two cannot be separated. For a Marxist, not only what is said, but who says it and for what reasons, are the important questions.

What was the attitude of the Bolsheviks towards the treaty of Brest-Litovsk? The army which they inherited from Tsarism had completely disintegrated; whole units had demobilised themselves; discipline had broken down; the officers had gone over to reaction. It was this concrete situation, and not any fundamental theoretical considerations which determined the actions of the Bolsheviks. To portray the disagreements in the Party as anything more than tactical differences is a complete travesty of the truth. Under different circumstances - if, for example, they had had time to build the Red Army - the question would have been posed in an entirely different way, as was demonstrated by the Polish war of 1920.

The first policy pursued by the Bolsheviks was to prolong the negotiations as long as possible, in the hope that a revolutionary movement in the West would come to the assistance of the revolution. This idea, which "realist" philistines today characterise as "Trotskyism" was expressed on dozens of occasions not only by Trotsky but also by all of the Bolshevik leaders, including Lenin. Kamenev, for example, who later supported Lenin's stand on the signing of the peace, said of the propaganda conducted at Brest-Litovsk that "our words will reach the German people over the heads of the German generals, that our words will strike from the hands of the German generals the weapon with which they fool the people". Events worked out differently to what Kamenev anticipated, but at the time he spoke for the entire Bolshevik Party.

The main credit for conducting the successful propaganda at Brest-Litovsk was Trotsky's. He turned the conference into a platform for expounding the ideas of the revolution to the war-weary workers of Europe. Trotsky's speeches were later collected together and published in several editions and in many languages by the Communist International during Lenin's lifetime. Only after 1924 did the Stalinists suddenly discover in them the "revolutionary phrase", which warranted their

suppression.

The delay of the revolution in the West, and the military weakness of the Russian Revolution, caused a difference of opinion in the Party leadership, a difference in

which Lenin found himself in a minority. The first time the differences were expressed was on January 21, 1918 - when the negotiations were nearing a climax.

Fearing a new offensive if the Bolsheviks rejected a German ultimatum, Lenin proposed an immediate signing of the peace, even on the disastrous terms offered by

the Germans. Trotsky agreed that there was no possibility of continuing the war, but thought that negotiations should be broken off and the Bolsheviks should only

capitulate in the event of a new advance. Bukharin demanded the waging of a revolutionary war.

Far from the false picture presented by the Stalinists from 1924 onwards of Lenin and the Bolsheviks being defied by an undisciplined and ultra-left Trotsky, both

Lenin and Trotsky constituted the "moderate" minority in the leadership on this question. And what was true of the leadership was doubly true of the rank and file.

The overwhelming majority of workers opposed the signing of the treaty. When the leadership invited the Soviets to give their views on Brest-Litovsk, over

two hundred responded: of these, only two large Soviets (Petrograd and Sevastopol - the latter with reservations) supported peace. All the other big workers'

centres, Moscow, Ekaterinburg, Kharkov, Ekaterinoslav, Ivanovo-Vozuesensk, Kronstadt, etc, voted by overwhelming majorities to break off the

negotiations.

At the Central Committee meeting on January 24, 1918 the final decision was taken on the line which Trotsky should adopt at Brest-Litovsk. Before the meeting,

Trotsky records a conversation with Lenin in which he agreed to Trotsky's plan to refuse to sign the treaty but to declare hostilities at an end, on condition that

should the Germans advance again, Trotsky would support the immediate signing of the treaty and on no account support the proposal for a "revolutionary war".

To this Trotsky agreed[1]. Here Lenin did not put forward his demand for the immediate signing of the treaty, but merely moved a motion which was passed,

calling on Trotsky to drag out the negotiations as long as possible. A vote was then taken on Trotsky's motion to stop the war but refuse to sign the treaty,

which was also passed.

According to Monty Johnstone, "when faced with the harsh terms demanded by the Germans, overestimation of the immediate revolutionary perspectives

overshadowed his [Trotsky's] appreciation of the reality of the situation and led him to refuse to sign the treaty." (Cogito, page 17)

We have already seen what "led Trotsky to refuse to sign the treaty", in the above account of the disagreements in the Party. Monty Johnstone, here as elsewhere,

confines his "analysis" to a few snippets of quotations which do not deal with any of the fundamental issues, but only the polemical rejoinders of the

participants, and which create the impression that Trotsky's position was his personal whim and not the view of the Party. Johnstone continues:

"Lenin, on the other hand, stressed that the Germans had the whip hand and that the war-weary, ill-equipped and hungry Russian troops could not hold out against

their powerful military machine.[!] He therefore [!] urged accepting the German terms, humiliating as he considered them to be, as soon as the Germans presented an

ultimatum, warning that the alternative would be that the Germans would advance further into Soviet territory and impose even worse terms." (Cogito, page 17)

Monty Johnstone portrays the whole affair as an antagonism between Trotsky and Lenin. He is determined to purvey the image of Lenin as a smug "realist" philistine,

opposing the revolutionary "dreams" of Trotsky. He quotes isolated phrases from Lenin about world revolution being "a good fairy tale", without explaining the

reasons which Lenin gave for his stand on Brest-Litovsk, reasons which flowed from an intransigent revolutionary socialist internationalism.

In the course of the discussion Lenin found himself "supported" by Zinoviev and Stalin. Stalin stated that "there is no revolutionary movement in the West, no facts of

it, only a possibility." Zinoviev declared that although "by making peace we shall strengthen chauvinism in Germany and for a certain time weaken the movement in

the West" this was far better than "the ruin of the socialist republic". Lenin was obliged publicly to repudiate support based on the arguments of these

"realists", whose philistinism Monty Johnstone now attempts to foist on him.

In reply to Zinoviev, Lenin stated categorically that if "the German movement is capable of developing at once in the event of peace negotiations...we ought to

sacrifice ourselves since the German revolution will be far more powerful than ours." Precisely to protect his rear against this kind of opportunism, Lenin repeatedly

emphasised that:

"It is not open to the slightest doubt that the final victory of our revolution if it were to remain alone, if there were no revolutionary movements in other countries,

would be hopeless...Our salvation from all these difficulties, I repeat, is an all-European revolution."

After 1924, the legend was invented of Trotsky stubbornly opposing Lenin and the leadership by refusing to sign the peace for which everyone yearned. On

February 14, after Trotsky had reported back to the Soviet Central Executive Committee on the action he had taken, Sverdlov moved a resolution, on behalf of the

Bolshevik faction that: "Having heard and fully considered the report of the peace delegation, the Central Executive Committee fully approves of the action of its

representatives at Brest-Litovsk." As late as March 1918, Zinoviev said at the Party Congress that "Trotsky is right when he says that he acted in accordance with

the decision of the majority of the Central Committee." No one tried to deny that.

Trotsky, no more than Lenin, was under any illusion that the "war-weary, ill-equipped and hungry Russian troops" could sustain a new attack, let alone launch a

revolutionary war. But, on the one hand, the mood both of the mass of workers and the majority of the Party leadership was set against accepting the terms of the

treaty which were not merely "humiliating", but a major disaster for the young Soviet state. On the other hand, a new German offensive would convince the masses of

Western Europe that the Bolsheviks only agreed to an annexationist peace under compulsion. This was an important political motive, in view of the vicious smear

campaign being waged by the "Allied Governments" (Britain and France), that the Bolsheviks were German agents, paid by the Kaiser to take Russia out of the war.

There was a strong feeling in Russia that this was the prelude to negotiations with Germany for a peace settlement at Russia's expense. (History has since proved that

such a policy was being considered by British and French government circles.)

After the renewal of the German ultimatum, Lenin again argued for an immediate signing of the peace, but was defeated, by a narrow majority in the Central

Committee. Trotsky still voted against, since the offensive had not begun. Lenin then reformulated the question as follows: "If the German offensive begins, and no

revolutionary upheaval takes place in Germany, are we still not to sign peace?" On this the "left" Communists (Bukharin and the supporters of revolutionary war)

abstained. Trotsky voted for the motion, which was in line with the agreement he had reached earlier with Lenin. When, on the next day, the Bolsheviks received

evidence of the German advance, Trotsky switched over to Lenin's side, giving him a majority on the Central Committee.

On February 21, new and harsher terms were announced by General Hoffmann, with the clear intention of making impossible the signing of a peace. The German

general staff staged a provocation in Finland, where they crushed the Finnish workers' movement. This underlined the fears of the Bolsheviks that the Allies had

come to an agreement with German imperialism to crush the Soviet Republic. There was a serious possibility that, even if the Bolsheviks signed the treaty, the

Germans would continue their advance. Trotsky initially held this view, but when Lenin reiterated his position, in the teeth of renewed opposition from the "Lefts",

Trotsky did not side with the advocates of revolutionary war, but abstained, to give Lenin a majority.

It seems strange that one so infatuated with the "revolutionary phrase" should on two decisive occasions have voted on the Central Committee, to give Lenin a

majority! But since we are on the subject of "the revolutionary phrase" let us take a look at Lenin's pamphlet of that name, from which Johnstone quotes so

copiously.

The Revolutionary Phrase was published by Lenin as an article in Pravda on February 21, 1918, as the beginning of a public campaign in favour of signing the

peace. Johnstone cites this article several times as though it were directed against Trotsky. In fact, Trotsky's name does not appear once in this article. Whom

is it directed against? The answer is in the very first line:

"When I said at a Party meeting that the revolutionary phrase about a revolutionary war might ruin our revolution, I was reproached for the sharpness of my

polemics." (Works, vol. 27, page 19, our emphasis)

Anyone who reads the article can see quite plainly that it is directed against those who advocated a revolutionary war against Germany, despite the military weakness

of the Soviet Republic: i.e. the "left" Communist group of Bukharin. That is why in all the polemics, Lenin directs 99% of his attacks against Bukharin's group, and

Trotsky, if he is mentioned at all, is taken up only in passing and in a relatively mild manner. The distortion appears all the more crass and clumsy when we recall that

Lenin's article was published on February 21, three days after Trotsky had voted for Lenin's proposal on the Central Committee. It is sheer dishonesty on

Johnstone's part to print words which Lenin directed against the ultra-left Bukharin in such a way as to suggest that they were meant for Trotsky. This distortion is

made possible by the fact that Johnstone does not mention Bukharin at all, thereby creating an entirely exaggerated, false and dishonest impression of the

differences between Lenin and Trotsky.

E. H. Carr, the celebrated bourgeois historian, whom Monty Johnstone can hardly accuse of being either a Trotskyist or "unhistorical", comments on the differences

between Lenin and Trotsky on Brest-Litovsk thus:

"Lenin's disagreements with Trotsky over Brest-Litovsk were less profound than those which separated him from the followers of Bukharin. Trotsky's strong

personality and his dramatic role in the Brest-Litovsk story gave them a greater practical importance and a greater prominence in the eyes both of contemporaries

and of posterity. But the popular picture of Trotsky, the advocate of world revolution, clashing with Lenin, the champion of national security or socialism

in one country, is so distorted as to be almost entirely false." (The Bolshevik Revolution, vol. 3, page 54, our emphasis)

To judge from Monty Johnstone's "highly selective, potted history" the entire history of Bolshevism and the Soviet Power (with a few brief exceptions, such as the

"episode" of the October Revolution to which Comrade Johnstone kindly devotes one paragraph) consisted of struggles between Lenin and Trotsky! Such is the

admirable "balance", "objective", work, which Comrade Johnstone promised us in his Introduction.

It will not be amiss to illustrate the utter one-sidedness of Johnstone's "objectivity" by citing two other incidents concerning the relationship of the Soviet Republic to

the capitalist world and the position of Lenin and Trotsky. Immediately after the Brest-Litovsk controversy, Trotsky found himself at loggerheads with an important

section of the leadership on the question of accepting aid from Britain and France. The motion of acceptance was moved by Trotsky, and opposed by Bukharin and

the "lefts", together with Sverdlov. Lenin was not present at the meeting, but the minutes contain a note from him which runs as follows:

"I request you to add my vote in favour of taking potatoes and ammunition from the Anglo-French imperialist robbers."

Two years after Brest-Litovsk, a similar split in the leadership took place over the war with Poland. Trotsky opposed any attempt to carry the war into Poland once

Pilsudski's attack had been repulsed, on military and political grounds. Lenin favoured an offensive, on the grounds that the workers of Warsaw and other cities

would be encouraged by a revolutionary war to rise against Pilsudski and carry out a revolution. The Red Army, after a brilliant advance, was defeated at the gates

of Warsaw, and driven back across the Curzon line to a position behind the line they had occupied at the commencement of hostilities. In the treaty which followed,

the Bolsheviks were forced to cede a large area of Byelorussia to Poland, which separated Germany and Lithuania from the Soviet Republic.

Was Lenin in 1920 infatuated by the "revolutionary phrase"? Was he guilty of indulging in the "fairy tale" of world revolution and "wishful thinking"? Only a philistine

would dare to say so. Lenin was a revolutionary and an internationalist. His actions were dictated, first and foremost, by the interests of the world proletarian

revolution.

Lenin had not advocated peace at Brest-Litovsk as anything more than a breathing space, in which to rebuild the shattered armies of Russia, to create a Red Army

for defence and offence, as a means of assisting the revolution in the West: in the very same breath that he argued for the signing of peace, Lenin added that it was

"indispensable to prepare for revolutionary war".

Lenin's own characterisation of his stand over Brest-Litovsk is a sufficient antidote to the poison of pacifism, "peaceful coexistence", and social patriotism which the

Stalinists have tried to read into it:

"At the Brest-Litovsk peace we had to go in the face of patriotism. We said: if you are a socialist, you must sacrifice your patriotic feelings in the name of the

international revolution, which is coming, which has not yet come, but in which you must believe if you are an internationalist." (Works, vol. 28, November/December

1918)

Lenin was the supreme political realist. He always based his actions on a meticulous examination of all the elements which made up the international balance of class

forces. But there is no guarantee of success in revolution. To imagine this is to join the ranks of those "objective" philistines, whose peculiar talent is always to be

right - after the event. However, the reasons why Lenin was in favour of signing the Brest-Litovsk Peace have nothing in common with those advanced by Johnstone

and the Communist Party leaders which are intended, not to shed light upon Lenin's position on Brest-Litovsk, but as a cover-up for their own pusillanimous and

anti-Leninist policies of today.

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NOTES

[1] The accuracy of this report is attested to by Lenin, who repeated it later in a speech at the Eleventh Party Congress. (Works, vol. 27, page 113)

Chapter Six - The Rise of Stalinism

Monty Johnstone does not waste his reader's time by introducing into his "balanced estimate" of Trotsky's career any details of the key role which he admits Trotsky

played in the Civil War, to which he devotes one paragraph. Perhaps it would have prejudiced the reader's sense of objectivity to discover, for instance, that Lenin

provided Trotsky during the Civil War with blank sheets of paper to which Lenin's signature was appended, authorising any action which the "revolutionary

phrasemonger" saw fit to take!

Glossing over the little episode of the Civil War, Johnstone refers us to his old friend Isaac Deutscher, in whose *Prophet Armed* the story is "stirringly told" of "both

Trotsky's mistakes (sometimes serious) and of his achievements (which much outweighed them)" And that is clearly the reason why Monty Johnstone is not

over-anxious to dwell on the Civil War. Having spent the first half of his work trying to paint a picture of Trotsky as a petty-bourgeois individualist, devoid of

organisational abilities, he goes on, without the least hint of embarrassment, to quote the words of Gorky:

"Show me another man", he (Lenin) said, thumping the table "capable of organising in a year an almost exemplary army and moreover of winning the

esteem of the military specialists." (Cogito, page 17)

Fearing lest the "balance" of this estimate should be upset by all this Monty Johnstone hastens to add another quotation from Gorky where, Lenin is supposed to

have said of Trotsky:

"He isn't one of us. With us, but not of us. He is ambitious. There is something of Lassalle in him, something which isn't good."

Monty Johnstone's scrupulous use of quotations has already been commented on. This is another good example. The second quotation does not occur anywhere

in the original edition of Gorky's *Reminiscences of Lenin*, written in 1924. At that early date it would not have been possible to insert so blatant a falsehood. But

Gorky was obliged to rewrite his memoirs in 1930. On Stalin's orders, parts of Gorky's memory faded, while other "memories" made their first appearance: among

them, the particular piece of falsification quoted by Monty Johnstone. And since Comrade Johnstone is interested in Gorky's report of Lenin's attitude to Trotsky, let

us throw in another piece from the genuine, original memoirs where Lenin attacks the slanderers who attempted to drive a wedge between him and Trotsky: "Yes,

yes, I know they lie a lot about my relations with him."

The Trade Union Controversy

"In the first big Party discussion after the Revolution involving the problem of bureaucracy, Trotsky clashed head on with the majority of the Bolshevik

Central Committee. Lenin strongly criticised his policy of bureaucratically nagging the Trade Unions as expressing 'the worst in military experience' and

containing 'a number of errors that are connected with the very essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat.'" (Cogito, page 19)

Once again, the reader should note Monty Johnstone's method of "analysis", which consists purely and simply of taking isolated snippets of quotations, torn from

their contexts, with no indication of the background, of the arguments themselves, or even of the dates! Marxists, beginning with Marx, have always insisted upon

such small things as dates, accurate and full quotations, theoretical analysis, and the rest. Only by a scrupulously honest approach can historical questions be

explained.

The trade union dispute was one episode in the whole crisis of the political and economic mode of organisation known as War Communism, and cannot be

understood apart from this question. Lenin described War Communism as "communism in a besieged fortress". This system, based upon strict centralisation and the

introduction of quasi-military measures into all fields of life, flowed from the difficulties of the revolution isolated in a backward, war-shattered country, under

conditions of civil war and foreign intervention. Yet Monty Johnstone poses the question as if Trotsky alone held the position of "militarisation of labour". The first

years of Soviet power were characterised by acute economic difficulties, partly the result of war and civil war, partly as a result of the shortage of both materials and

skilled manpower, and partly of the opposition of the peasant small property owners to the socialist measures of the Bolsheviks.

In 1920, the production of iron ore and cast iron fell to 1.6% and 2.4% of their 1913 levels. The best record was for oil, which stood at 41 % of its 1913 level. Coal

attained 17%. The general production of fully manufactured goods in 1920 stood at 12.9% of their 1913 value. Agricultural production dropped in two years

(1917-19) by 16%, the heaviest losses being sustained by those products exported from the villages to the town: hemp fell by 26%, flax by 32%, fodder by 40%.

The conditions of civil war, together with the chronic inflation of the period, brought trade between town and countryside to a virtual standstill.

The ghastly conditions of the workers in the towns led to a mass exodus from industry to the land. By 1919 the number of industrial workers declined to 76% of the

1917 level, while that of building workers fell to 66%, railway workers to 63%. By 1920, the figure for industrial workers generally fell from three millions in 1917 to

1,240,000 - i.e. to less than half. In two years the working class population of Petrograd was halved. Even these figures do not convey the full extent of the

catastrophe since they leave out of account the decline in labour productivity of those ragged half-starved workers who remained in the factories.

Even more serious than the economic consequences, from the Bolshevik point of view, was the rapid erosion of the class basis of the Revolution which Rudzutak

graphically described at the second all-Russian Congress of trade unions in January 1919:

"We observe in a large number of industrial centres that the workers, thanks to the contraction of production in the factories, are being absorbed in the

peasant mass, and instead of a population of workers we are getting a half peasant or sometimes purely peasant population."

In order to put a stop to this catastrophic decline, drastic measures were introduced to get industry moving, to feed the hungry workers and to end the drift from

town to country. That was the essential meaning of "War Communism". The Seventh Party Congress in March 1918 called for "the most energetic, unsparingly

decisive, draconian measures to raise the self-discipline and discipline of the workers and peasants." To the complaints of the Mensheviks, Lenin replied that:

"We should be ridiculous utopians if we imagined that such a task could be carried out on the day after the fall of the bourgeoisie, i.e. in the first stage of transition from capitalism to socialism, or without compulsion."

The arguments of the Mensheviks and the "lefts" based upon a caricature of bourgeois arguments about the "freedom of labour" reflected the growing mood of

disenchantment with the dictatorship of the proletariat among the backward and petty-bourgeois strata, especially the peasantry who bore the brunt of the policy of

War Communism.

Lenin had seen as early as 1905, that the peasantry would support the Revolution insofar as it gave them land, but that the rich strata would inevitably pass over to

the opposition as soon as the revolution began to attack the foundations of private property. A dangerous situation would be created if the revolution remained

isolated. The proletariat was a tiny minority in a sea of peasant small-property owners. Without a steady supply of raw materials and food from the villages, industry

would grind to a halt. But, given the shattered condition of industry; there was no possibility of immediately establishing conditions of healthy exchange between town

and country, of providing the peasantry with the manufactured goods it demanded in exchange for its products. At the Ninth Party Congress Lenin put the matter in a

nutshell:

"If we could tomorrow give 100,000 first-class tractors, supply them with benzene, supply them mechanics (you know well that for the present this is a

fantasy), the middle peasant would say: 'I am for Communism'. But in order to do this, it is first necessary to conquer the international bourgeoisie, to

compel it to give us these tractors."

Lenin explained time and again that the only real solution to the problems facing the revolution was the victory of the socialist revolution in one or more of the

advanced countries. In the meantime, the economic crisis had to be tackled by drastic measures. Even after the Civil War, Lenin made a speech at the All-Russian

Congress of Soviets in 1920 where he explained that "In a country of small peasants, it is our chief and fundamental task to discover how to achieve state

compulsion in order to raise peasant production." (our emphasis)

To arrest the flow of workers from town to country, draconian measures were introduced against "labour desertions". In 1920, a worker at the Kolomesky works

told the visiting British Labour delegation that "desertions from the works were frequent and that deserters were arrested by soldiers and brought back from the

villages." An official decree, passed after the Ninth Party Congress (March 1920) prescribed severe punishment for "labour desertion" up to and including hard

labour. Labour was put on a military footing. "War Communism" meant the "militarisation of labour", for a temporary period.

Those who lump together Lenin and Trotsky with the regime of Stalin and his heirs, by using the arguments of Kautsky and the Mensheviks about the "regime of

coercion", ignore the differences of time, place, methods and conditions. Even in the most democratic of bourgeois states, such as Britain, under wartime conditions

measures were taken prohibiting the free movement of labour, changing of jobs, etc. as "exceptional" measures. The Bolsheviks were faced with Civil War, following

hard upon four years of a disastrous imperialist war. The country was ruined by the depredations of the White Guards and the armies of intervention. Under such

conditions drastic measures were absolutely necessary. But as always with Lenin and Trotsky freedom of discussion and criticism by the workers and peasants,

especially within the Bolshevik Party itself, was safeguarded. Even in capitalist Britain, during the War, the workers were prepared to accept "exceptional" measures,

which they thought were necessary for the defence of their rights. In Russia, with a workers' and peasants' government, the workers were prepared to accept

temporarily the harsh measures which were necessary to preserve the Revolution.

Trotsky - an "Arch-bureaucrat"?

Monty Johnstone is uncomfortably aware of the fact that, after Lenin's death, the struggle against bureaucratic degeneration and Stalinism was led by Trotsky and the

Left Opposition. He is therefore at pains to make out a "case" that Trotsky himself was an "arch-bureaucrat", the enemy of workers' democracy and free Trade

Unions. He creates the utterly false impression that the "militarisation of labour" was the standpoint of Trotsky alone and, by dint of his customary impressionism,

hints that Trotsky carried through "his" policies against the majority of the Central Committee! Just how this feat was accomplished, Comrade Johnstone does not

explain. He cannot do so because it is a plain lie.

On January 15, 1920, a government decree transformed the Army of the Urals into the first "revolutionary army of labour". A later decree entrusted to the

revolutionary council of the first labour army the "general direction of the work of restoring and strengthening the normal economic and military life in the Urals".

Similar powers were granted to the council of the labour armies of the Caucasus and the Ukraine. An army was sent to assist in the construction of a railway in

Turkestan, another worked the Donetz coal mines. While Red soldiers helped in the running of industry, those workers who were not called up for military service

were conscripted for the "Front of Labour" as explained above.

Was all this the work of the arch-bureaucrat Trotsky? On January 12, 1920, Lenin and Trotsky spoke on a joint platform to a meeting of Bolshevik trade union

leaders. The object of the meeting was to persuade them to accept the policy of "militarisation of labour". The motion of acceptance, tabled in the names of Lenin

and Trotsky, was defeated, with only two votes cast in favour - those of Lenin and Trotsky. Imagine such an incident occurring in the time of Stalin or today!

This incident was not isolated. On every one of the main economic and political questions at this time, Lenin and Trotsky were in complete agreement. On

the controversial question of employment of bourgeois specialists in the army and industry, Lenin and Trotsky fought a hard battle to get their proposals accepted by

the rest of the Bolshevik Party leadership. Similarly, on the issue of one-man management and the agrarian policy, there was complete identity of views. On all of

this, Monty Johnstone keeps mum. Such information would only upset the "balance" of his analysis.

Once again, the Trade Union Controversy

"In 1920 in addition to his job as Commissar for War, he [Trotsky] had taken over the Department of Transport, of vital economic and military

importance. Placing the railwaymen and the workers in the railway repair workshops under martial law, he met the objections of the railwaymen's union

by dismissing its leaders and appointing others more compliant in their place. He did the same with other transport workers' unions His efforts brought

results: the railways were restored ahead of schedule." (Cogito, page 19)

By means of precisely that innuendo which was supposed not to feature in his work, Johnstone tries to create an impression of Trotsky, the arch bureaucrat, "taking

over" the railways at gunpoint and, on his own initiative, bulldozing the workers in true Stalinist fashion. What are the facts?

The destruction of Russia's vast railway networks was one of the most crippling blows to the economy dealt by the Civil War. Of 70,000 versts of track, only

15,000 escaped damage. More than 60% of the locomotives were out of order. The dislocation of the economy caused by the breakdown of communications

reached crisis point in 1920, when, unless drastic action was taken, the whole of Russian industry would suffer an irreversible catastrophe. Coming at the height of

the Polish War, this meant that the fate of the revolution was in the balance.

The Ninth Party Congress, in a special resolution, declared that the main problem in overcoming the crisis on the railways was the railwaymen's union. This was an

old craft union, traditionally Menshevik, which had already clashed with the Bolshevik government on the question of control of the railways. The Ninth Party

Congress which placed Trotsky in charge of the work of restoring the railways, also empowered him to draft into the union a body of able and loyal workers, to

prod it into action. When the officials of the union refused to submit to the new regulations, not Trotsky, but the Central Committee of the Party decided to replace

the old officials with a new committee composed of dedicated communists: only one vote was cast against, that of the "Right" Communist and Trade Union leader,

Tomsky. The rest, including Lenin, Zinoviev and Stalin, all voted in favour.

Johnstone portrays Trotsky as the "evil genius" behind the "militarisation of labour" and War Communism. He conveniently forgets that Trotsky was the first of

the Bolshevik leaders to advocate the abandonment of War Communism, as early as February, 1920. At that time, Trotsky submitted to the Central Committee

a set of theses which pointed to the continued disruption of the economy, the weakening of the proletariat, and the widening gulf between town and country. He

advocated the replacement of forced requisition of grain by a grain tax, and measures aimed at the partial restoration of the shattered market economy. In essence,

these policies were subsequently adopted under the New Economic Policy.

Trotsky's proposals, which were opposed by Lenin, were defeated in the Central Committee, which favoured the continuation of the policies of War Communism.

Accepting that the "war" methods would have to be continued for a further period, against his own point of view, Trotsky endeavoured to make the system work as

well as possible. It is for this crime that Trotsky is once again pilloried by Monty Johnstone who "acts dumb" about Trotsky's opposition to the basis of War

Communism itself.

Johnstone paints a portrait of Trotsky as the dictatorial "arch-bureaucrat" on the strength of a few extracts of a speech in which Trotsky criticised the liberal

idealisation of "free labour" in the abstract, and pointed out that non-free labour could also be productive. The remark that chattel-slavery, in its day, had been

progressive, indisputable from a Marxist point of view, is taken out of context and given a sinister twist by Monty Johnstone (following in the footsteps of Deutscher).

Alas! The speech which Comrade Johnstone so eagerly snatches from Deutscher's ever-open palm was made, not at the Tenth Party Congress, but at the Third

All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions, where Trotsky, as the spokesman for the Bolsheviks, was speaking, not against Lenin, but against the Mensheviks, whose

tearful pleas for the "freedom of labour" Monty Johnstone now repeats so touchingly.

The Mensheviks, in order to discredit the Bolshevik government, used the measures which had been forced on the Soviet Republic by the conditions of Civil War

and intervention in a thoroughly dishonest and unscrupulous way. Their arguments were a caricature so far as "democracy" and "free labour" were concerned. The

Bolsheviks stood for the most complete freedom - even including freedom for bourgeois parties - provided they did not attempt armed rebellion against the Soviet

power. But under the circumstances when the "liberal" bourgeoisie had fled to the camp of the White Armies, such talk amounted to the demand that the Revolution

should not defend itself against White reaction. The alternative to the dictatorship of the proletariat was not, as the Mensheviks claimed, some kind of Weimar

democracy. but the bloody rule of reaction. The Social-Democratic critics of Bolshevism were the sort of people who were quite prepared to act as accomplices of

Imperialism in the bloody and obscene world war, but who threw up their hands in horror at the "ruthless" measures of Lenin and Trotsky. Yet it was their betrayal

of the revolutionary movements of 1917-21 that paved the way for the rise of Nazism and a new and even more barbaric world war.

The differences among the Bolsheviks on the trade unions were not, as one would suppose from the vulgar portrait painted by Monty Johnstone, between the

"arch-bureaucrat" Trotsky and Lenin the defender of "free labour", but an expression of the crisis in the Party brought about by the impasse of War

Communism. The original differences, as Lenin explained, were inconsequential. But small frictions in the leadership, under the given conditions, led to a series of

divisions in the Party, with not two platforms, but five at least being put forward.

Lenin's prime consideration at this time was to prevent a split in the leadership and to preserve the tenuous thread binding the proletariat and its vanguard to the

non-proletarian and semi-proletarian masses. Under the prevailing conditions of economic crisis, of mass illiteracy, of a numerically weakened and increasingly

demoralised working class, and above all, of the crushing preponderance of the petty-bourgeois peasant masses, the Bolshevik Party was increasingly coming under

the pressure of alien class forces. The fact that the Bolsheviks had been forced, contrary to their intentions, to illegalise the opposition parties, meant that these

pressures would inevitably seek to find expression through the Bolshevik Party itself. What Lenin feared most was a split in the Party along class lines. This lay at

the basis of Lenin's opposition to Trotsky's original proposal to "shake up" the union officials and bring them into line with central planning, which caused friction with

the Trade Union leader Tomsy.

Monty Johnstone begins his account of the trade union controversy with a quote from Lenin's article *The Party Crisis*. Lenin had attempted to keep the differences

within the leadership by setting up a commission to investigate the trade unions. In the course of the Central Committee discussion, Lenin, in his own words made a

number of obviously exaggerated and therefore mistaken "attacks" which sharpened the conflict. Trotsky had refused to join the commission. Monty Johnstone

quotes Lenin's words of censure:

"This step alone causes Comrade Trotsky's original mistake to become magnified and later to lead to factionalism."

But this is one of Comrade Johnstone's half quotes. Let us see what Lenin adds in the very next sentence:

"Without this step, his mistake (in submitting incorrect theses) remained a very minor one such as every member of the Central Committee, without

exception, has had occasion to make." (Works, vol. 32, page 45)

Monty Johnstone's readers are allowed to read only as much of Lenin as he considers good for their health. By quoting only polemical rejoinders, Monty Johnstone

"helps" Lenin by "sharpening" his struggle against Trotsky for him. Elsewhere in this section he repeatedly presents as the standpoint of Trotsky arguments which

were consistently advanced and defended by Lenin and all the leaders of Bolshevism. Paraphrasing and "improving" Trotsky's arguments, Johnstone writes:

"Russia, he [Trotsky] argued repeatedly, suffered not from the excess but from the lack of efficient bureaucracy, [?] to which he [?] favoured giving

certain limited concessions. Reporting this, Deutscher comments: 'He thus makes himself the spokesman of the managerial groups.'" (Cogito, page 20)

Johnstone's invocation of the shade of Deutscher does not add the least odour of sanctity to his arguments. Anyone who has read Deutscher will know that he

attacks not only the "dictatorial" ideas of Trotsky, but also of Lenin, and in fact does not distinguish between the two. His philistine appraisal of Trotsky is the

identical twin of his views on Lenin, and on revolutionaries in general.

The arguments which Monty Johnstone puts in the mouth of Trotsky correspond exactly to the views advanced hundreds of times by Lenin on the need for

efficiency, for business-like management, for specialists to whom Lenin "favoured giving certain limited concessions", not the outrageous "concessions" extracted by

the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies in Russia and Eastern Europe today, but simply and solely to get the shattered economy moving again, to enable the revolution to

survive until the revolutionary proletariat of Europe could come to its assistance. Once again, Johnstone presents as "Trotskyism" the ideas of Lenin, of the Bolshevik

Party, of Marxism itself. But this merely underlines the profound gulf which separates all the ideologists of Stalinism from the ideas and traditions of Bolshevism.

Bending the arguments, Johnstone puts Lenin's words in the mouth of Trotsky; and on the lips of Lenin, the arguments of those true defenders of the caricatures of

free labour - the Mensheviks.

Lenin on the Trade Unions

"In practice, said Lenin, the Soviet state was 'a workers state with bureaucratic distortions'. For a long time, he argued, the trade unions would need to

'struggle against the bureaucratic distortions of the Soviet apparatus', and for 'the protection of the material and spiritual interests of the masses of the

toilers by the ways and means that this apparatus cannot employ.'" (Cogito, page 21)

What is the meaning of this quotation? Not that Lenin differed from Trotsky in the estimation of the state apparatus and its bureaucratic deformations. The point at

issue was the immediate policy to be adopted if the system of War Communism was to be maintained. However, what is really interesting and significant is the fact

that throughout this entire section of his work, Monty Johnstone does not make clear a single one of Lenin's arguments on the trade union question. And

this is no accident.

Lenin argued, dialectically, that the trade unions in a workers' state must be independent, in order that the working class can defend itself against the state, and in turn

defend the workers' state itself. Lenin was emphatic on this point because he saw the danger of the state raising itself above the class and separating itself from it.

The workers, by themselves through their organisations, could exercise a check on the state apparatus and on the bureaucracy.

It is ironical to read Johnstone's strictures on Trotsky's alleged "bureaucratic tendencies", in the light of what happened to the "independence of the trade unions" in

Russia under Stalin and the position today. Evidently, when Trotsky was "in power" he was a bureaucrat; when Stalin was in power, he, regrettably also succumbed

to the "Cult of Personality". It is all a question of "personalities"! This is the method, not of Marxism, but of the middle-class vulgarians, who see politics in terms of

individuals who "sell out" as soon as they come to power. And yet, despite this highly "critical" approach Monty Johnstone's critical faculties evaporate into thin air as

soon as we reach the famous "Twentieth Congress":

"Trotsky is presented by his supporters [!] as the champion of the struggle against bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. Since during the last seventeen

years of his life Trotsky was tireless in his denunciation of many aspects [?] of Stalin's bureaucratic regime that the Soviet Communist Party was to

unmask [?] in 1956, the Trotskyist claim appears plausible. However, as we shall see the truth is considerably more complex." (Cogito, page 19)

Indeed, the truth is "considerably more complex"! What sort of "unmasking" was performed by Khrushchev and Co. in 1956? That Stalin was a tyrant, a slayer, a

mass murderer, a madman, etc? That Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Kosygin and the others all stood trembling in their shoes before the dictatorship (as the Soviet

"Communist" Party apparently only "discovered" in 1956!) but for Marxists the problem only begins there. What is more important are the social relations which

could produce such a monstrosity. And the vital question in relation to the Twentieth Congress is: What has changed since 1956?

As early as 1920, Lenin saw the processes which were taking place in the Soviet state apparatus. All his material on the Trade Union question, which is not dealt

with by Monty Johnstone, is concerned with the idea of the workers and their organisations as a check on the bureaucracy, its accumulative tendencies, corruption,

waste, and mismanagement. Lenin saw the development of a healthy workers democracy and of the gradual withering away of the state as indispensable for the

movement towards socialism.

For Monty Johnstone, to judge from his boundless admiration of Khrushchev's "unmasking" activities, Russia and Eastern Europe are now healthy socialist countries, busily eliminating all traces of bureaucratism, cult of personality, and Stalinism generally - with the exception of a number of "regrettable" (and, apparently, inexplicable) incidents such as the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the frame-up trials of the writers, which, evidently bear no relation at all to the general state of affairs!

Monty Johnstone's quotation from Lenin on the bureaucratisation of the state and the role of the unions must have been made tongue in cheek.

Since 1956, the Russian bureaucracy has been forced to remove a number of the most barbaric practices of the Stalin regime - practices, which under capitalism, would only be possible in a fascist state - such as slave-labour, etc. But for all that, the police-state and the terror remain; only the names have changed. The situation with regard to the trade unions in Russia shows the complete falsity of the assertion that the bureaucracy is reforming itself out of existence. We ask Monty

Johnstone: Thirteen years after the Twentieth Congress, where are the independent trade unions in the Soviet Union?

Under Stalin, the elementary rights of the Soviet working class were taken away. Today, under his heirs, Brezhnev and Kosygin, there is no right to strike, no right

to collective bargaining, no right to elect democratic factory committees (rights which existed under Lenin and Trotsky, even in the blackest period of the Civil

War). The trade unions in Russia and Eastern Europe are a caricature: a belt for the transmission to the working class of the orders of the bureaucratic overlords.

The monstrous corruption, waste and mismanagement which Lenin wished to hold in check by means of the workers' organisations, has today reached proportions

which threaten to undermine the advances made by the Soviet working class on the basis of the planned economy.[1]

It is a crying contradiction, which any thinking member of the Young Communist League or Communist Party will see, that the weak, embattled Soviet Republic at

the time of Lenin and Trotsky, despite the bureaucratic deformations to which Lenin honestly refers, nevertheless guaranteed the freedom and independence of both

the trade unions and the Party. Young Communist Leaguers should take the trouble to read the material of the Tenth Party Congress in Lenin's Works and ask

themselves honestly: could such a free discussion of the issues take place in any "Communist" Party today?

In contrast to the period of Civil War and NEP, when the Bolsheviks were forced by the weakness of the Soviet power and the threat of capitalist restoration to

restrict certain democratic rights as a temporary, emergency measure, the Soviet Union today is the second industrial nation in the world. And yet, the bureaucracy is

terrified at the prospect of granting even the most basic democratic rights to the Soviet workers. Thus in Czechoslovakia, the relative independence of the trade

unions which the workers wrested from the bureaucracy after the fall of Novotny, provoked the boot of Russian reaction. So afraid were the Brezhnevs and

Kosygin of the effect this would have on the Soviet working class!

Monty Johnstone's attempt to pose as the friend of the "freedom of labour" against the "arch-bureaucrat" Trotsky sounds all the more hollow when one compares the

situation in the Soviet Union today to even Franco's Spain. There, too, certain "concessions" have been granted to the working class, out of fear of revolution. The

difference is that whereas even in Spain, where the trade unions are illegal, the workers, have set up genuine organisation - the illegal "Workers' Commissions", which

conduct strikes and struggle on behalf of the class and even negotiate with the bosses, in "Socialist" Russia, anyone who attempted to organise on these lines would

soon find himself behind bars.

In reality, mirrored in the trade union issue is the whole question of social relations in the Soviet Union and the other bureaucratically deformed worker's states. To

talk about advancing to socialism (or "Communism"!) implies the full, free development of the working class as the ruling class in society controlling, checking and

accounting. It means the involvement of the whole of society in the planning and running of industry and of the state, with the corresponding melting away of

bureaucracy. This is the only guarantee of the transition to a classless society. Socialist planning needs the check of workers' democracy as the human body needs

oxygen.

The bureaucratic, totalitarian set-up in the USSR is not only oppressive to the Soviet working class and repellent to the workers of the West. It is also increasingly an

impediment to the free and harmonious development of the productive forces in the Soviet Union. It is a crushing indictment of the caricature of socialism that, fifty

years after the October Revolution, the workers lack even those elements of democracy which are present in advanced capitalist countries. While the bureaucracy

boasts of "building Communism" the death-penalty had been reintroduced - for economic offences - such is the extent of swindling, corruption and theft which

bedevils the Soviet economy - a concrete proof of the bankruptcy of the regime and the need for workers' democracy. The Soviet workers will inevitably come to

understand that the only way out for them is the programme of Lenin and Trotsky. When they realise that, they will realise it, the days of the bureaucracy will be

numbered.

The Tenth Party Congress and the NEP

The Tenth Party Congress took place in an atmosphere of crisis; the period of "War Communism" had entered its last, most convulsive phase. Armed peasants

uprisings took place in a series of provinces, culminating in a serious insurrection in Tambov. Discontent spread to the hungry towns. In February, 1921 a series of

strikes broke out in Petrograd because of the shortage of bread. Menshevik elements took advantage of the unrest to put forward the counter-revolutionary slogan

of "Soviets without Communists".

In this context as Lenin said, the debate on the Trade Unions was an "impermissible luxury", which was "pushing to the forefront a question which for objective

reasons cannot be there." The real point at issue was not the immediate question of the trade unions - but this served as a catalyst which crystallised a number of

clearly defined tendencies within the party.

The end of the Civil War, and especially the demobilisation of the Red Army, deepened the crisis and discontent of the peasant masses. Lenin explained that certain

opposition currents in the party were "bound up with the tremendous preponderance of peasants in the country, with their dissatisfaction with the proletarian

dictatorship." The question of the trade unions shrank before these issues which exploded in the middle of the Congress in the Kronstadt uprising.

The Kronstadt uprising undoubtedly reflected the growing mood of disillusionment with War Communism among the masses, first and foremost of the more

backward and peasant elements, but increasingly among workers whose morale had been undermined by years of war, civil war and famine. Faced with the

implacable opposition of the peasant masses, the revolution was forced to retreat. The requisition of grain was abolished and replaced by a tax, and measures were

taken to restore the market economy, to encourage a measure of private trade. Certain industries were even denationalised, but the major levers of the economy, the

banks, insurance companies, the large industries, together with the monopoly of foreign trade, remained in the hands of the state.

These concessions to bourgeois "freedom" were not made light-heartedly as a victory over the "arch-bureaucracy" of War Communism, but as a retreat under

pressure, as temporary concessions granted to the petty-bourgeois masses in order to prevent a split between the workers and peasants which would lead to the fall

of Soviet power.

Defending these concessions at the Tenth Congress, Lenin referred to the crushing pressure of the peasant masses on the working class as "a far greater danger than

all the Denikins, Kolchaks, and Yudenichs put together. It would be fatal," he continued, "to be deluded on this score! The difficulties stemming from the

petty-bourgeois element are enormous, and if they are to be overcome, we must have greater unity, and I don't just mean a resemblance of unity. We must all pull

together with a single will, for in a peasant country only the will of the mass of the proletarians will enable the proletariat to accomplish the great task of its leadership

and dictatorship. Assistance is on its way from the Western European countries but it is not coming quickly enough. Still it is coming and growing." (Works, vol. 32,

page 179)

Lenin, as always, put the matter clearly and honestly. The retreat of the NEP had been dictated by the enormous pressure of the peasantry on the workers' state,

isolated by the delay of the socialist revolution in the West. Lenin always referred to it as a temporary state of affairs, a "breathing space", before the next dramatic

developments of the international socialist revolution. But he was also acutely aware of the dangers that lay on that road, especially the dangers of a revival of the

bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements with the growth of the market economy:

"This peril - the development of small production and of the petty-bourgeois in the rural areas - is an extremely serious one," Lenin warned the Tenth Congress. In

answer to those who were inclined to complacency, Lenin emphasised the point: "Do we have classes? Yes we do. Do we have a class struggle? Yes and a most

furious one!" (Works, vol. 32, page 212)

Monty Johnstone gives a completely one-sided account of the Tenth Congress, heavily emphasising the trade union question, omitting all references to the main

issues involved, and dealing with the trade union question in a one-sided manner - posing the question once more as a "battle royal" between Lenin and Trotsky,

while failing to mention the other positions advanced - of Bukharin, the so-called "Workers' Opposition" and the "Democratic Centralists", for instance. Yet again,

these omissions enable Monty Johnstone to create a completely false impression. The sheer cynicism of his approach can best be seen from his attempt to identify

Trotsky's position on the trade unions with the decision of the Congress to ban factions in the Party:

"Organising a faction around the ideas expressed in his pamphlet...he [Trotsky] launched a debate in the Party, culminating at the Tenth Congress in

March 1921, in his overwhelming defeat and a decision to ban factions in the Party."
(Cogito, page 20)

This is news indeed! No one at the Tenth Congress ever accused Trotsky of "organising a faction" around anything. This particular piece of Johnstonian innuendo is

evidently meant to link-up with Lenin's polemical rejoinder about Trotsky's earlier "factionalism" (i.e. his refusal to join the committee to investigate the Trade

Unions). Johnstone knows perfectly well that the decision to ban factions was taken for reasons not connected with either the trade union discussion or Trotsky's

role in that discussion.

The reasons are given in the passage quoted from Lenin above, which clearly explains that this extraordinary measure was dictated by the dangers of alien class

pressure expressing themselves through groups in the Party. In the immediate context of the Tenth Congress, the measure was directed, not against Trotsky, but

expressly against the so-called "Workers' Opposition", a quasi-syndicalist group led by Shlyapoikov and Kollontai, which was formally dissolved by the Congress.

The resolution on this point clearly explains the reasons for the measure:

"The said deviation is due partly to the influx into the party of former Mensheviks, and also of workers and peasants who have not yet fully assimilated

the communist world outlook. Mainly, however, this deviation is due to the influence exercised upon the proletariat and on the Russian Communist

Party by the petty-bourgeois element, which is exceptionally strong in our country and which inevitably engenders vacillation towards anarchism,

particularly at times when the condition of the masses has greatly deteriorated as a consequence of the crop failure and the devastating effects of war,

and when the demobilisation of the army numbering millions sets loose thousands of peasants and workers, unable immediately to find regular means of

livelihood." (Works, vol. 32, page 245)

Precisely in the debate on the "Workers' Opposition", Lenin made a statement which completely gives the lie to the innuendoes of Monty Johnstone about Trotsky's

alleged "factionalism":

"The Workers' Opposition said: 'Lenin and Trotsky will unite.' Trotsky came out and said: 'Those who fail to understand that it is necessary to unite are

against the Party; of course we will unite, because we are men of the Party.' I supported him. Of course, Comrade Trotsky and I differed; and when

more or less equal groups appear within the Central Committee, the Party will pass judgement, and in such a way that will make us unite in accordance

with the Party's will and instructions." (Works, vol. 32, page 204)

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NOTES

[1] For a detailed analysis of this, see *Bureaucratism or Workers' Power*, by Ted Grant and Roger Silverman.

Chapter Seven - Lenin's Struggle against Bureaucracy

"In the last period of his life Lenin was desperately concerned about the growth of bureaucracy in the Soviet state and in the Party." (Cogito, page 22)

Monty Johnstone, having given one paragraph to the Russian Revolution, and one paragraph to the Civil War, maintains his "balance" by granting an equal amount of

space to Lenin's struggle against the forces of internal reaction in the Soviet state and party.

How did Lenin deal with the question of the Soviet bureaucracy? Did he simply remain "desperately concerned" about it? Or did he attempt something which our

"theoreticians" of the Communist Parties today persistently avoid, namely an analysis of the causes of bureaucracy in order to wage an implacable struggle

against it?

Monty Johnstone refers to "bureaucracy" as if it were simply a matter of "bureaucratic behaviour", excessive red-tape, officialdom, etc. Such an approach has

nothing in common with the Marxist method, which explains bureaucracy as a social phenomenon, which arises for definite reasons. Lenin, approaching the question

as a Marxist, explained the rise of bureaucracy as a parasitic, capitalist growth on the organism of the workers' state, which arose out of the isolation of the

revolution in a backward, illiterate peasant country.

In one of his last articles, *Better Fewer But Better*, Lenin wrote:

"Our state apparatus is so deplorable, not to say wretched, that we must first think very carefully how to combat its defects, bearing in mind that these

defects are rooted in the past, which, although it has been overthrown, has not yet been overcome, not yet reached the stage of a culture that has

receded into the past." (Works, vol. 33, page 487)

The October revolution had overthrown the old order, ruthlessly suppressed and purged the Tsarist state; but in conditions of chronic economic and cultural

backwardness, the elements of the old order were everywhere creeping back into positions of privilege and power in the measure that the revolutionary wave ebbed

back with the defeats of the international revolution. Engels explained that in every society where art, science and government are the exclusive of a

privileged minority, then that minority will always use and abuse its positions in its own interests. And this state of affairs is inevitable, so long as the vast

majority of the people are forced to toil for long hours in industry and agriculture for the bare necessities of life.

After the revolution, with the ruined condition of industry, the working day was not reduced, but lengthened. Workers toiled ten, twelve hours and more a day on

subsistence rations; many worked weekends without pay voluntarily. But, as Trotsky explained, the masses can only sacrifice their "today" for their "tomorrow" up to

a very definite limit. Inevitably, the strain of war, of revolution, of four years of bloody Civil War, of a famine in which five million perished, all served to undermine

the working class in terms of both numbers and morale.

The NEP stabilised the economy, but created new dangers by encouraging the growth of small capitalism, especially in the countryside where the rich "kulaks"

gained ground at the expense of the poor peasants. Industry revived, but, being tied to the demand of the peasantry, especially the rich peasants, the revival was

confined almost entirely to light industry (consumer goods). Heavy industry, the key to socialist construction, stagnated. By 1922 there were two million unemployed

in the towns. At the Ninth Congress of Soviets in December, 1921, Lenin remarked:

"Excuse me, but what do you describe as the proletariat? That class of labourers which is employed by large-scale industry. But where is this

large-scale industry? What sort of proletariat is this? Where is your industry? Why is it idle?" (Works, vol. 33, page 174)

In a speech at the Eleventh Party Congress in March, 1922, Lenin pointed out that the class nature of many who worked in the factories at this time was

non-proletarian; that many were dodgers from military service, peasants and de-classed elements:

"During the war people who were by no means proletarians went into the factories; they went into the factories to dodge war. And are the social and

economic conditions in our country today such as to induce real proletarians to go into the factories? No. It would be true according to Marx; but Marx

did not write about Russia; he wrote about capitalism as a whole, beginning with the fifteenth century. It held true over a period of six hundred years,

but it is not true for present-day Russia. Very often those who go into the factories are not proletarians; they are casual elements of every description."

(Works, vol. 33, page 299)

The disintegration of the working class, the loss of many of the most advanced elements in the Civil War, the influx of backward elements from the countryside, and

the demoralisation and exhaustion of the masses was one side of the picture. On the other side, the forces of reaction, those petty bourgeois and bourgeois elements

who had been temporarily demoralised and driven underground by the success of the revolution in Russia and internationally, everywhere began to recover their

nerve, thrust themselves to the fore, taking advantage of the situation to insinuate themselves into every nook and cranny of the ruling bodies of industry, of the state

and even of the Party.

Immediately after the seizure of power, the only political party which was suppressed by the Bolsheviks was the fascist Black Hundreds. Even the bourgeois Cadet

Party was not immediately illegalised. The government itself was a coalition of Bolsheviks and Left Social-Revolutionaries. But, under the pressure of the Civil War,

a sharp polarisation of class forces took place in which the Mensheviks, SRs and "Left SRs" came out on the side of the counter-revolution. Contrary to their own

intention, the Bolsheviks were forced to introduce a monopoly of political power. This monopoly, which was regarded as an extraordinary and temporary state of

affairs, created enormous dangers in the situation where the proletarian vanguard was coming under increasing pressure from alien classes.

In February, 1917, the Bolshevik Party had no more than 23,000 members in the whole of Russia. At the height of the Civil War, when party membership involved

personal risk, the ranks were thrown open to the workers, who pushed the membership to 200,000. But as the war grew to a close, the party membership actually

trebled reflecting an influx of careerists and elements from hostile classes and parties.

Lenin at this time repeatedly emphasised the danger of the Party succumbing to the pressures and moods of the petty-bourgeois masses; that the main enemy of the

revolution was:

"everyday economics in a small-peasant country with a ruined large industry. He is the petty-bourgeois element which surrounds us like the air, and

penetrates deep into the ranks of the proletariat. And the proletariat is de-classed, i.e. dislodged from its class groove. The factories and mills are idle -

the proletariat is weak, scattered, enfeebled. On the other hand the petty-bourgeois element within the country is backed by the whole international

bourgeoisie, which retains its power throughout the world." (Works, vol. 33, page 23)

The "purge" initiated by Lenin in 1921 had nothing in common with the monstrous frame-up trials of Stalin; there was no police, no trials, no prison-camps; merely

the ruthless weeding out of petty-bourgeois and Menshevik elements from the ranks of the Party, in order to preserve the ideas and traditions of October from

the poisonous effects of petty-bourgeois reaction. By early 1922, some 200,000 members (one-third of the membership) had been expelled.

Lenin's correspondence and writings of this period, when illness was increasingly preventing him from intervene in the struggle; clearly indicate his alarm at the

encroachment of the Soviet bureaucracy, the insolent parvenus in every corner of the state apparatus. Thus, in a letter to Sheinman in February, 1922:

"At present the State Bank is a bureaucratic power game. There is the truth for you, if you want to hear not the sweet communist-official lies (with

which everyone feeds you as a high mandarin), but the truth. And if you do not want to look at this truth with open eyes, through all the communist

lying, you are a man who has perished in the prime of life in a swamp of official lying. Now that is an unpleasant truth, but it is the truth." (Works, vol.

36, page 567)

Contrast this fearless honesty of Lenin with all the saccharine falsehoods with which all the Communist Party leaders and "theoreticians" fed the international

communist movement about the Soviet Union for generations, and judge for yourself the depths of degradation in which the self-styled "Friends of the Soviet Union"

have plunged the ideas and traditions of Lenin! Again, in a letter dated April 12, 1922:

"The more such work is done, the deeper we go into living practice, distracting the attention of both ourselves and our readers from the stinking

bureaucratic and stinking intellectual Moscow (and, in general, Soviet bourgeois) atmospheres, the greater will be our success in improving both our

press and all our constructive work." (Works, vol. 36, page 579)

At the Eleventh Congress, Lenin placed before the Party a searing indictment of bureaucratisation of the state apparatus:

"If we take Moscow," he said, "with its 4,700 Communists in responsible positions, and if we take the huge bureaucratic machine, that gigantic heap,

we must ask: who is directing whom? I doubt very much whether it can be truthfully said that the Communists are directing that heap. To tell the truth,

they are not directing, they are being directed." (Works, vol. 33, page 288, our emphasis)

To carry out the work of weeding bureaucrats and careerists out of the state and party apparatus, Lenin initiated the setting up of RABKRIN (the Workers' and

Peasants' Inspectorate) with Stalin in charge. Lenin saw the need for a strong organiser to see that this work was carried out thoroughly; Stalin's record as a party

organiser appeared to qualify him for the post. Within in a few years, Stalin occupied a number of organisational posts in the Party: head of RABKRIN, member of

the Central Committee and Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat. But his narrow, organisational outlook and personal ambition led Stalin to occupy the post, in a short

space of time, as the chief spokesman of bureaucracy in the party leadership, not as its opponent.

As early as 1920, Trotsky criticised the working of RABKRIN, which from a tool in the struggle against bureaucracy was becoming itself a hotbed of bureaucracy.

Initially, Lenin defended RABKRIN against Trotsky. His illness prevented him from realising what was going on behind his back in the state and party. Stalin used

his position, which enabled him to select personnel to leading posts in the state and party to quietly gather round himself a bloc of allies and yes-men, political

nonentities who were grateful to him for their advancement. In his hands, RABKRIN became an instrument for building up his own position and eliminating his

political rivals.

Lenin only became aware of the terrible situation when he discovered the truth about Stalin's handling of relations with Georgia. Without the knowledge of Lenin or

the Politburo, Stalin, together with his henchmen Dzerzhinsky and Ordzhonikidze, had carried out a coup d'etat in Georgia. The finest cadres of Georgian

Bolshevism were purged, and the party leaders denied access to Lenin, who was fed a string of lies by Stalin. When he finally found out what was happening, Lenin

was furious. From his sick-bed late in 1922 he dictated a series of notes to his stenographer on "the notorious questions of autonomisation, which, it appears, is officially called the question of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics".

Lenin's notes are a crushing indictment of the bureaucratic and chauvinist arrogance of Stalin and his clique. But Lenin does not treat this incident as an accidental

phenomenon - a "regrettable mistake", like the invasion of Czechoslovakia, or a "tragedy", like the crushing of the Hungarian worker's commune, but the expression

of the rotten, reactionary nationalism of the Soviet bureaucracy. It is worth quoting Lenin's words on the state apparatus at length.

"It is said that a united state apparatus was needed. Where did that assurance come from? Did it not come from the same Russian apparatus, which, as

I pointed out in one of the preceding sections of my diary, we took over from Tsarism and slightly anointed with Soviet oil?

"There is no doubt that that measure should have been delayed until we could say, that we vouched for our apparatus as our own. But now, we must, in

all conscience, admit the contrary; the state apparatus we call ours is, in fact, still quite alien to us; it is a bourgeois and Tsarist hotchpotch and

there has been no possibility of getting rid of it in the past five years without the help of other countries and because we have been "busy"

most of the time with military engagements and the fight against famine.

"It is quite natural that in such circumstances the 'freedom to secede from the union' by which we justify ourselves will be a mere scrap of paper, unable

to defend the non-Russians from the onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great-Russian chauvinist, in substance a rascal and a tyrant, such as the

typical Russian bureaucrat is. There is no doubt that the infinitesimal percentage of Soviet and sovietised workers will drown in that tide of

chauvinistic Great-Russian riff-raff like a fly in milk." (Works, vol. 36, page 605, our emphasis)

After the Georgian affair, Lenin threw the whole weight of his authority behind the struggle to remove Stalin from the post of General Secretary of the party which he

occupied in 1922, after the death of Sverdlov. However, Lenin's main fear now more than ever was that an open split in the leadership, under prevailing conditions,

might lead to the break-up of the party along class lines. He therefore attempted to keep the struggle confined to the leadership, and the notes and other material

were not made public. Lenin wrote secretly to the Georgian Bolshevik-Leninists (sending copies to Trotsky and Kamenev) taking up their cause against Stalin "with

all my heart". As he was unable to pursue the affair in person, he wrote to Trotsky requesting him to undertake the defence of the Georgians in the Central

Committee.

Needless to say, the documentary evidence of Lenin's last fight against Stalin and the bureaucracy has been suppressed for decades. Lenin's last writings were

hidden from the Communist Party rank-and-file in Russia and internationally. Lenin's last letter to the Party Congress, despite the protests of his widow, was not read

out at the Congress and remained under lock and key until 1956 when Khrushchev and Co. published it. along with a few other items (including the letters on

Georgia) as part of their campaign to throw the blame for all that had happened in the past thirty years on to Stalin's shoulders.

Monty Johnstone and his like sneer at the material of Lenin - letters, minutes, etc - suppressed by the Soviet bureaucracy, which has been published in the West "on

Trotsky's authority". But the same wretched Jesuits of Stalinism also dismissed as "forgeries" the Suppressed Testament and Lenin's last letters, published by

Trotskyists, not after the Twentieth Congress (of blessed memory) but thirty years before the Communist Party leaders were prepared to admit their

existence. Communist Party members and Young Communist Leaguers must ask themselves honestly whose word they prefer to take: that of Trotsky and his

followers who told the truth about Lenin's struggle against Stalinist bureaucracy and published works which the Communist Party leaders had denied to their

rank-and-file for a whole historical period, or that of Monty Johnstone and his friends whose entire political past indicates their complete dishonesty in regard to the

heritage of Lenin and the history of the Russian revolution.

Monty Johnstone quotes odd passages from Lenin's Suppressed Testament, but nowhere does he make clear what the content of that letter was. Lenin warns of the

danger of a split in the Party, because "our party rests upon two classes, and for that reason its instability is possible..." Lenin did not see the disagreement between

Trotsky and Stalin as accidental, or flowing from "personalities" (although he gives a series of penetrating sketches of the personal characteristics of the leading

members of the Party).

Lenin's last letter must be seen in the context of his other writings of the previous few months, his attacks on bureaucracy and the bloc which he formed with Trotsky

against Stalin. Lenin worded his letter very cautiously (he had originally intended to be present at the Congress for which according to his stenographer Fotieva, he

had "prepared a bombshell for Stalin"). For each of the leading members, he gives both the positive and negative features of their character: in Trotsky's case, he

refers to his "exceptional abilities" ("the most able man on the Central Committee at the present time") but criticises him for his "far-reaching self-confidence" and "a

tendency to be too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs" - faults which, however serious they may be in themselves, have nothing whatsoever to

do with the Permanent Revolution, "Socialism in one Country", or any of the other canards invented by the Stalinists.

In relation to Stalin, Lenin writes that "Comrade Stalin having become General Secretary, has concentrated enormous power in his hands, and I am not sure that he

always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution."

That is already a political question, and linked up with Lenin's struggle against the bureaucracy in the Party. In *Better Fewer, But Better*, written shortly before,

Lenin commented: "Let it be said in parentheses that we have bureaucrats in our Party offices as well as in Soviet offices." In the same work, he launched a

sharp attack on RABKRIN, which was clearly meant for Stalin:

"Let us say frankly that the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection does not at present enjoy the slightest authority.

Everybody knows that no other institutions are worse organised than those of our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and that under present conditions

nothing can be expected from this Peoples' Commissariat." (Works, vol. 33, page 490)

In a postscript to his letter, Lenin advocated the removal of Stalin from the post of General Secretary, ostensibly on grounds of "rudeness" - but advocating his

replacement with a man "who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority - namely, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious,

etc." The diplomatic mode of expression does not conceal the indirect accusation, very clear in the light of the Georgian events, of Stalin's rudeness, capriciousness

and disloyalty.

In presenting Lenin's Testament as a document merely concerned with the "personalities" of the leaders, the Communist Party "theoreticians" fall into a completely

vulgar misrepresentation of Lenin. Even if the "Testament" leaves room for ambiguity (it does not, except for slovenly minds) the whole body of Lenin's last writings

provide a clear programmatic statement of his position, which cannot be distorted.

Repeatedly, Lenin characterised the bureaucracy as a parasitic, bourgeois growth on the workers' state, and an expression of the petty-bourgeois outlook - which

penetrated the State and even the Party.

The petty-bourgeois reaction against October was all the more difficult to combat because of the exhausted state of the proletariat, sections of which were also

becoming demoralised. Nonetheless, Lenin and Trotsky saw the working class as the only basis for a struggle against bureaucracy, and the maintenance of a healthy

workers' democracy as the only check on it. Thus, in one article *Purging the Party* Lenin wrote:

"Naturally, we shall not submit to everything the masses say because the masses, too, sometimes - particularly in time of exceptional weariness and

exhaustion resulting from excessive hardship and suffering - yield to sentiments that are in no way advanced. But in appraising persons, in the negative

attitude to those who have "attached" themselves to us for selfish motives, to those who have become "puffed-up commissars" and "bureaucrats", the

suggestions of the non-Party proletarian masses and, in many cases, of the non-Party peasant masses, are extremely valuable." (*Works*, vol. 33, page

39)

The rise of bureaucracy was understood by Lenin as the product of economic and cultural backwardness which was the result of the isolation of the revolution. The

means of combating this were linked, on the one hand, with the struggle for economic progress and the gradual elimination of illiteracy, which was linked

inseparably with the struggle to involve the working masses in the running of industry and the state. Lenin and Trotsky always relied upon the masses in the

fight against the "puffed-up commissars". Only by the conscious self-activity of the working people themselves could the transition to socialism be assured.

On the other hand, Lenin repeatedly explained that the terrible strains imposed upon the working class by the isolation of the revolution in a backward country put

immense difficulties in the way of the creation of a really cultured, and harmonious, classless society. Time and again Lenin stressed the problems that arose from the

isolation of the revolution. Monty Johnstone asserts that Lenin, towards the end of his life, was coming to accept the position of "Socialism in One Country", citing as

proof of this the statement in On Co-operation that "NEP Russia will be transformed into socialist Russia" since it possessed "all that is necessary and sufficient" for

building a socialist society. (Cogito, page 29)

Comrade Johnstone, after a desperate search through Lenin's Selected Works, can find only one quotation which can be even vaguely interpreted as implying the

acceptance of the idea of "Socialism in One Country". Alas! the vagueness is dispelled by even a cursory glance at the text of this rough, uncorrected document

which the Stalinists attempted, after Lenin's death, to summon to their aid. What Lenin is referring to in this article is not the "building of socialism" within the frontiers

of the Tsarist empire, but the social forms which are necessary to carry out the gradual elimination of the elements of "state capitalism" (NEP) and then begin the

tasks of socialist construction (electrification, industrialisation, etc). Lenin's careful qualifications, which emphasise the absence of the material basis for socialism,

leave no doubt as to his position. Thus, referring to the need for a "cultural revolution" for the overcoming of material backwardness (and therefore of class conflicts

in society) Lenin wrote:

"This cultural revolution would now suffice to make our country a completely socialist country; but it presents immense difficulties of a purely cultural

(for we are illiterate) and material character (for to be cultured we must achieve a certain development of the material means of production, must have a

certain material base)." (On Co-operation, Works, vol. 33, page 475)

To cover himself against possible misrepresentation, Lenin, in any case, explains that he is dealing with the question of education in abstraction from the problem

of the international position of the revolution:

"I should say that emphasis is shifting to educational work...were it not for the fact that we have to fight for our position on a world scale. If we

leave that aside, however and confine ourselves to internal economic relations, the emphasis is shifting to education." (ibid, page 474)

Far from Lenin "in the last period of his working life coming more and more in practice" to adopt the perspectives of Socialism in One Country, Lenin resolutely

explained that the difficulties of the revolution: the problems of backwardness, of illiteracy, of bureaucracy could only finally be overcome by the victory of the

socialist revolution in one or several advanced countries. This perspective, which was hammered home by Lenin hundreds of times from 1904-5 onwards, was

accepted as a truism by the entire Bolshevik Party up to 1924. In the last months of his life, Lenin never lost sight of this fact. Among his last writings are a series of

notes which made his position abundantly clear:

"We have created a Soviet type of state," he wrote, "and by that we have ushered in a new era in world history" the era of the political rule of the

proletariat, which is to supersede the era of bourgeois rule. Nobody can deprive us of this, either, although the Soviet type of state will have the finishing

touches put to it only with the aid of the practical experience of the working class of several countries.

"But we have not finished building even the foundations of socialist economy and the hostile power of moribund capitalism can still deprive us of that.

We must clearly appreciate this and frankly admit it; for there is nothing more dangerous than illusions (and vertigo, particularly at high altitudes). And

there is absolutely nothing terrible, nothing that should give legitimate grounds for the slightest despondency, in admitting this bitter truth; we have

always urged and reiterated the elementary truth of Marxism - that the joint efforts of the workers of several advanced countries are needed

for the victory of socialism." (Works, vol. 33, page 206, our emphasis)

In these lines of Lenin there is not an ounce of "pessimism" or of "underestimation" of the creative capacities of the Soviet working class. In all the writings of Lenin,

and especially of this period, there is at once a burning faith in the ability of the working people to change society and a fearless honesty in dealing with difficulties.

The difference in the attitudes of Stalinism and Leninism towards the working class lies precisely in this: that the former seeks to deceive the masses with "official" lies

and smug illusions about the building of "Socialism in One Country" in order to lull them into passive acceptance of the leadership of the bureaucracy, while the latter

strives to develop the consciousness of the working class, never patronising it with lies and fairy-stories, but always revealing unpalatable truths, in the full confidence

that the working class will understand and accept the need for the greatest sacrifices, provided the reasons for them are explained honestly and truthfully.

The arguments of Lenin were designed, not to stupefy the Soviet workers with "socialist opium", but to steel them for the struggles ahead - for the struggle against

backwardness and bureaucracy in Russia and for the struggle against capitalism and for the socialist revolution on a world scale. It was the sympathy of the working

people of the world, Lenin explained, that prevented the imperialists from strangling the Russian Revolution in 1917-20. But the only real safeguard for the future

of the Soviet Republic was the extension of the Revolution to the capitalist countries of the West.

At the Eleventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party - the last which Lenin attended - he emphasised repeatedly the dangers to the State and Party arising out

of the pressures of backwardness and bureaucracy. Commenting on the direction of the State, Lenin warned:

"Well, we have lived through a year, the state is in our hands, but has it operated the New Economic Policy in the way we wanted in the past year? No.

But we refuse to admit that it did not operate in the way we wanted. How did it operate? The machine refused to obey the hand that guided it. It was

like a car that was going not in the direction the driver desired but in the direction someone else desired; as if it were being driven by some mysterious,

lawless hand, God knows whose, perhaps of a profiteer, or of a private capitalist, or of both. Be that as it may, the car is not going quite in the

direction the man at the wheel imagines, and often it goes in an altogether different direction." (Works, vol. 33, page 179, our emphasis)

At the same Congress Lenin explained, in a very clear and unambiguous language, the possibility of the degeneration of the revolution as a result of the pressure of

alien classes. Already the most farsighted sections of the émigré bourgeoisie, the Smena Vekh group of Ustryalov, were openly placing their hopes upon the

bureaucratic-bourgeois tendencies manifesting themselves in Soviet society, as a step in the direction of capitalist restoration. The same group was later to applaud

and encourage the Stalinists in their struggle against "Trotskyism". The Smena Vekh group, which Lenin gave credit for its class insight, correctly understood the

struggle of Stalin against Trotsky, not in terms of "personalities" but as a class question, as a step away from the revolutionary traditions of October.

"The machine no longer obeyed the driver" - the State was no longer under the control of the Communists, of the workers, but was increasingly raising itself above

society. Referring to the views of Smena Vekh, Lenin said:

"We must say frankly that the things Ustryalov speaks about are possible, history knows all sorts of metamorphoses. Relying on firmness of convictions,

loyalty, and other splendid moral qualities is anything but a serious attitude in politics. A few people may be endowed with splendid moral qualities, but

historical issues are decided by vast masses, which, if the few do not suit them, may at times treat them none too politely." (Works, vol. 33, page 287)

In these words of Lenin we find the defeat of the Left Opposition explained in advance with a million times more clarity than in all the pretentious theorising of the

"intellectuals" about the relative psychological, moral and personal attributes of Trotsky and Stalin. The State power was slipping out of the hands of the Communists,

not because of their personal failings or psychological peculiarities, but because of the enormous pressures of backwardness, of bureaucracy, of alien e/ass

forces, which weighed down upon the tiny handful of advanced, socialist workers and crushed them.

Lenin likened the relationship of the Soviet workers and their advanced guard to the bureaucracy and the petty-bourgeois end capitalist elements to that of a

conquering and conquered nation. History has shown repeatedly that for one nation to defeat another by force of arms is not of itself, a sufficient guarantee of

victory. In the event of the cultural level of the victors being lower than that of the vanquished, the latter will impose its culture upon the conquerors.

Given the low level of culture of the weak Soviet working class, surrounded by a sea of small property owners, the pressures were enormous. They reflected

themselves not only in the State, but inevitably in the Party itself, which became the centre of the struggle of conflicting class interests.

Only in the light of all this can we understand Lenin's position in the struggle against bureaucracy, his attitude to Stalin, and the contents of his Suppressed

Testament. That document expresses his conviction that the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin is "not a detail, or is a detail which can acquire a decisive

significance", in the light of the fact that "Our party is based upon two classes." In a letter written shortly before the Eleventh Party Congress, Lenin explained the

significance of conflicts and splits in the leadership in these words:

"If we do not close our eyes to reality we must admit that at the present time the proletarian policy of the Party is not determined by the character of its

membership, but by the enormous undivided prestige enjoyed by the small group which might be called the Old Guard of the Party. A slight conflict

within this group will be enough, if not to destroy this prestige, at all events to weaken the group to such a degree as to rob it of its power to determine

policy." (Works, vol. 33, page 257)

What determined Lenin's bitter struggle against Stalin was not his personal foibles ("rudeness") but the role he played in introducing the methods and ideology

of alien social classes and strata into the very Party leadership which should have been a bulwark against those things. In the last months of his life,

weakened by illness, Lenin turned more and more frequently to Trotsky, for support in his struggle against the bureaucracy and its creature, Stalin. On the question

of the monopoly of foreign trade, on the question of Georgia, and finally, in the struggle to oust Stalin from the leadership, Lenin formed a bloc with Trotsky, the

only man in the leadership he could trust.

Throughout this entire last period of his life, in numerous articles, speeches, and above all letters, Lenin repeatedly expressed his solidarity with Trotsky. On all the

important issues we have mentioned, it was Trotsky whom he singled out to defend his point of view in the leading bodies of the party. Lenin's appraisal of Trotsky in

the Suppressed Testament can only be understood in the light of these facts. Needless to say, all the evidence for the existence of this bloc between Lenin and

Trotsky against the Stalin clique was kept under lock and key, for many years. But truth will out. The letters to Trotsky published in Volume 54, of the latest Russian

edition of Lenin's Collected Works, although even now not complete, are irrefutable proof of the bloc that existed between Lenin and Trotsky.

Those very letters, along with other material were long ago published by Trotsky in the West - as early as 1928 in *The Real Situation in Russia*. Even now the

bureaucracy dare not publish all the material in their possession. To stall the growing suspicions of the Communist Party rank-and-file abroad they utilise the services

of the Monty Johnstones to sneer at the writings of Lenin published "on Trotsky's authority". They will have need of such friends, precisely because their own

"authority" is rapidly disappearing in the eyes of honest Communist Party militants everywhere.

Trotsky and the Struggle Against Bureaucracy

"In 1923, as he [Lenin] lay incapacitated on his deathbed...this question was discussed in the Party leadership which, with Trotsky's participation, drew

up a resolution - unanimously adopted on 5th December, 1923 - spotlighting the bureaucratisation of the Party apparatus and the danger arising from it

of the detachment of the masses from the Party, and calling for the development of freedom for open party debate and discussion." (Cogito, page 22)

Comrade Johnstone poses the question as though the Party leadership unanimously took up Lenin's position on the question of bureaucracy - in which case it is hard

to see what the difference was between Trotsky and Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev, the leading "triumvirate". Alas! One resolution does not make a struggle against

bureaucracy. Stalin, in his day, also frequently denounced the "evils of bureaucracy". Khrushchev, Kosygin and others have sponsored not a few resolutions on this

subject. For a Marxist, however, a resolution is a guide to action; but for a cynical bureaucrat, there is nothing better than a "unanimous", "anti-bureaucratic"

proclamation to throw dust in the eyes of the masses.

Monty Johnstone's appeal to this resolution sounds all the more hollow in the light of what subsequently happened. Exactly how the transition was made from

"unanimous, anti-bureaucratic" resolutions to the police-terror, concentration camps and all the other horrors of Stalinist totalitarianism, Johnstone doesn't explain.

The behaviour of the dominant Kamenev-Zinoviev-Stalin faction on the Central Committee was a strange way of manifesting their loyalty to Lenin. Despite the

protests of Krupskaya, Lenin's "testament" was suppressed. Despite his clear directive, Stalin was not removed. Lenin's advice about increasing the working class

composition of the party and its organisations was cynically used to justify the drafting into the party of large numbers of inexperienced and politically backward

elements, who were putty in the hands of the apparatus-men, hand-picked by Stalin's machine.

Simultaneously, a campaign of calumny and falsification was opened up against Trotsky. It was at this time that all the old smears about Trotsky's non-Bolshevik past

(which Lenin had written off in his "testament"), about the "permanent revolution", Brest-Litovsk, and the rest, were dragged up by the ruling clique to discredit

Trotsky and oust him from the leadership. Zinoviev, when he subsequently broke with Stalin and went over to the Opposition, later admitted that the myth of

"Trotskyism" was deliberately invented at this time.

Kamenev, Zinoviev and Stalin were not, at this stage, consciously aware of the processes which were taking place in the Soviet state and which they were

unwittingly abetting. They did not realise in what direction their attacks on Trotsky and "Trotskyism" would lead them. But in attempting to drive a wedge between

"Trotskyism" and Leninism, they set in motion all the machinery of historical falsification and bureaucratic harassment which marked the first decisive step away from

the ideas and traditions of October towards the monstrous bureaucratic police state of Stalin and Brezhnev.

Referring to Trotsky's criticism of bureaucracy in *The New Course*, Monty Johnstone states:

"Although its overall approach is rather negative, there is much that can be seen to have been right in its attacks on the growth and power of the Party

apparatus under Stalin's control especially of what we now know of the gross abuses, violating the very essence of Socialist democracy and legality in

which this was to result...*The New Course*...contains trenchant Marxist criticisms of the methods of Stalinist bureaucracy..." (Cogito, page 22)

The reader will not fail to note, this new and startling "concession" of Comrade Johnstone's. With all the wisdom of hindsight, and with a truly schoolmasterly air,

Monty Johnstone gives Trotsky's analysis of Stalinist bureaucracy a neat tick - with marks deducted for a "rather negative" overall approach. In the meantime,

concealed behind the nebulous formula "violation of Socialist democracy" lie thirty years of bloody reaction against October; the extermination of the entire Old

Bolshevik leadership; the liquidation of entire Soviet peoples; the destruction of millions in slave-labour camps, and the destruction of revolutions abroad. These

minor "episodes" find no place in Monty Johnstone's "balanced" analysis. No, far better to write them off as "mistakes" of the past, which still "await analysis". Monty

Johnstone, who shows himself to be such a diligent researcher into the minutiae of the archives of Bolshevism, modestly declines the task of analysing and explaining

the bloody crimes of Stalinism over the past three or four decades.

Marxism, is first and foremost, a method of historical analysis, which provides the advanced guard of the working class with the perspectives which are the essential

pre-requisites of a successful struggle for power. Marxists do not stumble about blindly in the wake of the historical process, mumbling about "mistakes" and

"accidents" or weeping crocodile tears over "tragedies". The task of a Marxist is to analyse and understand in advance the general tendencies and processes in

society. Of course, such an analysis cannot provide a blueprint, accurately predicting every little detail. That is unnecessary. It is sufficient to have understood the

general process, in order not to be taken by surprise by history.

Trotsky explained the development of Stalinism in advance as the expression of a petty-bourgeois reaction against October. He explained, as Lenin had done, the

tremendous threat of internal degeneration of the Party in which the bureaucracy - that caste of upstart officials who had done well out of the revolution and saw no

need to disturb their comfortable office routine by continuing the revolutionary struggles - would act as the transmission belt diffusing the moods of petty-bourgeois

reaction and despair into the party.

The New Course is described by Comrade Johnstone as a work containing "trenchant Marxist criticisms" of bureaucracy. The reader may be excused if he feels

somewhat perplexed. We know that beautiful butterflies come from ugly and twisted chrysalises. But how did the Trotsky of the "trenchant Marxist criticisms"

suddenly emerge from the congenital ultra-left, revolutionary phrasemonger and petty-bourgeois individualist of the previous twenty-one pages? Was it an accident,

Comrade Johnstone, that Trotsky and the Left Opposition alone, after Lenin's death could produce such "trenchant Marxist criticism" of the Stalinist bureaucracy?

Where was the criticism of the Pollitts and Dutts, the Khrushchevs and Kosygins at that time? Is it a fundamental tenet of the Marxist-Leninist outlook that "trenchant

Marxist criticism" always comes only after the event?

Even here, Monty Johnstone distorts Trotsky's position by describing it as a criticism of the methods of Stalinist bureaucracy. That was not at all the position of

Trotsky. That is precisely the type of "anti-bureaucratism" of Stalin, Kosygin, Brezhnev, Gollan. In The New Course, Trotsky does not deal with mannerisms, but

social classes and strata. The leaders of the bureaucracy have always been prepared to rail against "bureaucratic methods", "red tape", etc. But such an approach

as Trotsky explains, has nothing in common with Marxism:

"It is unworthy of a Marxist to consider that bureaucratism is only the aggregate of the bad habits of office holders. Bureaucratism is a social

phenomenon in that it is a definite system of administration of men and things. Its profound causes lie in the heterogeneity of society, the difference

between the daily and the fundamental interests of various groups of the population." (The New Course, page 41)

Far from the idea of bureaucracy as a "state of mind" or merely a remnant of capitalism which automatically "withers away" with the approach of the higher order of

socialism, Trotsky warned that the emergence of a privileged stratum of officials was inevitable under the prevailing conditions of economic and cultural

backwardness in Russia, would create enormous dangers for the revolution itself. Under certain conditions (a split in the party, the combination of the peasantry,

petty capitalists and a section of the bureaucracy on a restorationist platform) an actual counter-revolution was possible, as Lenin had repeatedly warned.

Trotsky pointed to the example of the degeneration of the German Social Democracy, which prior to 1914 was regarded as the leading body of the world Marxist

movement. This degeneration was explained by Lenin and Trotsky, not by the personal failings or betrayal of individual leaders (although these, too, played a fatal

role), but first and foremost by the objective conditions in which the German party had functioned before the War; the absence of great social upheavals and

revolutionary struggles, the stagnant parliamentary milieu which created "a generation of bureaucrats, of philistines, of dullards whose political physiognomy was

completely revealed in the first hours of the imperialist war."

In the years following the Civil War, there crystallised a new social stratum of Soviet officials, in part drawn from the old Tsarist bureaucracy, in part from the

bourgeois specialists and also from former workers and Communists who had been absorbed into the machinery of state and party and had lost touch with the

masses. It was this stratum of conservative bureaucrats, self-satisfied and narrow-minded jacks-in-office, from which Stalin's faction in the Party derived its support.

These were the elements who, after 1921 shouted loudest against the "Permanent Revolution" and "Trotskyism". By that they understood not Trotsky's writings of

1905, not the obscure polemics of the past, but the storm and stress of October and the Civil War. The bureaucrat wishes nothing better than peace and quiet to

get on with his orderly job of organising those "beneath" him. The slogans advanced by Stalin-Bukharin clique "socialism at a snail's pace" and "socialism in one

country" were precisely what the bureaucracy wanted to hear.

The years of revolution and Civil War had exhausted the masses and partly undermined their morale. The defeat of a series of revolutions internationally weakened

the appeal of the Bolshevik ideas among the more backward and petty-bourgeois strata. From the outset, the Bolshevik-Leninist minority, led by Trotsky, was

fighting against the stream. On the other hand, the upstart bureaucracy became more arrogant with every step backwards which was forced upon the revolution in

Russia and internationally. Leaning upon the most backward classes and strata of society, the Kulaks, the NEP speculators and small capitalists, the Stalin-Bukharin

clique struck blows against the very basis of the October Revolution. Apart from the fostering of capitalist elements inside Russia, the right-wing policies of the

leadership led to a series of fresh reversals on an international scale, culminating in the horrific slaughter of the Chinese Revolution in 1927.

It is not possible here to go into the international events of this period. Suffice it to remark that in China, in the period of 1925-7, the Stalin-Bukharin clique carried

out the dissolution of the Chinese Communist Party into the Kuomintang. Chiang Kai-Shek, the butcher of the Chinese workers, was hailed as the great leader of the

Chinese Revolution. The Kuomintang was enrolled as sympathetic section of the Communist International - with only one vote of the leadership cast against - that of

Leon Trotsky. Throughout this period, Trotsky and the Left Opposition struggled against the disastrous policies of the Stalinists: for workers' democracy, five-year

plans and collectivisation by example; against unprincipled deals with foreign "democrats" of the Chiang Kai-Shek camp; for continued support for the revolutionary

movements of the working class internationally as the only real guarantee for the future of the Soviet state. Of all this, Monty Johnstone has nothing to say, beyond

the assertion that Stalin's slanderous attacks on Trotsky "rang a bell" with the workers, and that the Left Opposition was defeated by 724,000 votes to 4,000 "after a

nation-wide Party discussion".

The "nation-wide Party discussion" to which Comrade Johnstone refers consisted of such friendly means of persuasion as the sacking of Opposition workers from their jobs, the breaking-up of meetings by Stalinist hooligans, a vicious campaign of lies and slander in the official press, the persecution of Trotsky's friends and supporters which led to the deaths of numbers of prominent Bolsheviki such as Glazman (driven to suicide by blackmail) and Joffe, the famous Soviet diplomat (denied access to necessary medical treatment, committed suicide).

At Party meetings, Oppositionist speakers were subject to the systematic hooliganism of gangs of quasi-fascist thugs organised by the Stalinist apparatus to intimidate the opposition. The French Communist paper, *Contre le Courant* in the twenties reported the methods whereby the Stalinists conducted their "nation-wide Party discussion":

"The bureaucrats of the Russian party have formed all over the country gangs of whistlers. Every time a party worker belonging to the Opposition is to take the floor, they post around the hall a veritable framework of men armed with police-whistles. With the first words of the Opposition speaker, the whistles begin. The charivari last until the Opposition speaker yields the floor to another." (The Real Situation in Russia, page 14 footnote)

Johnstone does not find it necessary to look too closely into the conditions under which the final "debate" took place at the 1927 Party Congress, when Stalin's henchmen, who packed the audience, made it impossible for the Opposition to make themselves heard. Contrast this crude gangsterism with the methods adopted by Lenin in relation to political opponents and you see to what an extent, by 1921, Stalinist reaction had stamped out the last vestiges of the traditions of Bolshevism.

Monty Johnstone trots through the history of the Left Opposition with the assured air of a tired old history master rattling off dates and "facts". His composure is not

even ruffled by the last "detail" which he just mentions "in passing":

"From his successive places of exile - Turkey, Norway, France, and finally Mexico where he was murdered in 1940 - Trotsky wrote many books,

pamphlets and articles and continued to try to build up a left opposition to Stalin."

But hold on, Mr. Schoolmaster, how does the calm, comradely "nation-wide discussion" lead to the exile and murder of the leader of the minority? Trotsky's murder,

and that of hundreds of thousands of Oppositionists in Russia does that seem like a product of the rational "debate" and political argument you portray? Around this

question, the schoolmaster shuffles warily:

"The evidence," writes Johnstone in a typically "balanced" footnote, "points strongly to the assassin, Mercader or "Jacson", who posed as a disillusioned

follower of Trotsky, having in fact acted on behalf of Stalin and the GPU. After completing his 20-year jail sentence he left Mexico on a Czechoslovak

plane [!] for an undisclosed [!] destination." (Cogito, page 94)

Yet another gratuitous "concession" from Comrade Johnstone! Everyone these days is well aware of the bloody record of Stalin's GPU. Every Communist Party

member knows full well that these hired killers were responsible for the murder of Trotsky and countless other revolutionaries in Russia, Spain and elsewhere.

Comrade Johnstone magnanimously admits what he cannot deny: and only what he cannot deny! But merely to "admit" a crime is not enough. From a Marxist one

expects an explanation.

Monty Johnstone tries to paint a picture of the differences between Stalinism and Trotskyism as

"political ones", "debates", "arguments" etc. But the Russian bureaucracy prefers to argue in the eloquent language of bullets, concentration camps, or, in the case of

Czechoslovakia and Hungary, tanks, planes and rockets. Lenin "murdered" his opponents in polemics, but not in cold blood. Yet Monty Johnstone, with all the

innocence of a new-born babe, pretends that this is all a "mistake". Trotsky's murderer is flown away in a Czech plane "to an unknown destination". The bureaucracy

do not forget their old friends, it seems, even after the Twentieth Congress.

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Chapter Seven - Lenin's Struggle against Bureaucracy

"In the last period of his life Lenin was desperately concerned about the growth of bureaucracy in the Soviet state and in the Party." (Cogito, page 22)

Monty Johnstone, having given one paragraph to the Russian Revolution, and one paragraph to the Civil War, maintains his "balance" by granting an equal amount of

space to Lenin's struggle against the forces of internal reaction in the Soviet state and party.

How did Lenin deal with the question of the Soviet bureaucracy? Did he simply remain "desperately concerned" about it? Or did he attempt something which our

"theoreticians" of the Communist Parties today persistently avoid, namely an analysis of the causes of bureaucracy in order to wage an implacable struggle

against it?

Monty Johnstone refers to "bureaucracy" as if it were simply a matter of "bureaucratic behaviour", excessive red-tape, officialdom, etc. Such an approach has

nothing in common with the Marxist method, which explains bureaucracy as a social phenomenon, which arises for definite reasons. Lenin, approaching the question

as a Marxist, explained the rise of bureaucracy as a parasitic, capitalist growth on the organism of the workers' state, which arose out of the isolation of the

revolution in a backward, illiterate peasant country.

In one of his last articles, *Better Fewer But Better*, Lenin wrote:

"Our state apparatus is so deplorable, not to say wretched, that we must first think very carefully how to combat its defects, bearing in mind that these

defects are rooted in the past, which, although it has been overthrown, has not yet been overcome, not yet reached the stage of a culture that has

receded into the past." (Works, vol. 33, page 487)

The October revolution had overthrown the old order, ruthlessly suppressed and purged the Tsarist state; but in conditions of chronic economic and cultural

backwardness, the elements of the old order were everywhere creeping back into positions of privilege and power in the measure that the revolutionary wave ebbed

back with the defeats of the international revolution. Engels explained that in every society where art, science and government are the exclusive of a

privileged minority, then that minority will always use and abuse its positions in its own interests. And this state of affairs is inevitable, so long as the vast

majority of the people are forced to toil for long hours in industry and agriculture for the bare necessities of life.

After the revolution, with the ruined condition of industry, the working day was not reduced, but lengthened. Workers toiled ten, twelve hours and more a day on

subsistence rations; many worked weekends without pay voluntarily. But, as Trotsky explained, the masses can only sacrifice their "today" for their "tomorrow" up to

a very definite limit. Inevitably, the strain of war, of revolution, of four years of bloody Civil War, of a famine in which five million perished, all served to undermine

the working class in terms of both numbers and morale.

The NEP stabilised the economy, but created new dangers by encouraging the growth of small capitalism, especially in the countryside where the rich "kulaks"

gained ground at the expense of the poor peasants. Industry revived, but, being tied to the demand of the peasantry, especially the rich peasants, the revival was

confined almost entirely to light industry (consumer goods). Heavy industry, the key to socialist construction, stagnated. By 1922 there were two million unemployed

in the towns. At the Ninth Congress of Soviets in December, 1921, Lenin remarked:

"Excuse me, but what do you describe as the proletariat? That class of labourers which is employed by large-scale industry. But where is this

large-scale industry? What sort of proletariat is this? Where is your industry? Why is it idle?" (Works, vol. 33, page 174)

In a speech at the Eleventh Party Congress in March, 1922, Lenin pointed out that the class nature of many who worked in the factories at this time was

non-proletarian; that many were dodgers from military service, peasants and de-classed elements:

"During the war people who were by no means proletarians went into the factories; they went into the factories to dodge war. And are the social and

economic conditions in our country today such as to induce real proletarians to go into the factories? No. It would be true according to Marx; but Marx

did not write about Russia; he wrote about capitalism as a whole, beginning with the fifteenth century. It held true over a period of six hundred years,

but it is not true for present-day Russia. Very often those who go into the factories are not proletarians; they are casual elements of every description."

(Works, vol. 33, page 299)

The disintegration of the working class, the loss of many of the most advanced elements in the Civil War, the influx of backward elements from the countryside, and

the demoralisation and exhaustion of the masses was one side of the picture. On the other side, the forces of reaction, those petty bourgeois and bourgeois elements

who had been temporarily demoralised and driven underground by the success of the revolution in Russia and internationally, everywhere began to recover their

nerve, thrust themselves to the fore, taking advantage of the situation to insinuate themselves into every nook and cranny of the ruling bodies of industry, of the state

and even of the Party.

Immediately after the seizure of power, the only political party which was suppressed by the Bolsheviks was the fascist Black Hundreds. Even the bourgeois Cadet

Party was not immediately illegalised. The government itself was a coalition of Bolsheviks and Left Social-Revolutionaries. But, under the pressure of the Civil War,

a sharp polarisation of class forces took place in which the Mensheviks, SRs and "Left SRs" came out on the side of the counter-revolution. Contrary to their own

intention, the Bolsheviks were forced to introduce a monopoly of political power. This monopoly, which was regarded as an extraordinary and temporary state of

affairs, created enormous dangers in the situation where the proletarian vanguard was coming under increasing pressure from alien classes.

In February, 1917, the Bolshevik Party had no more than 23,000 members in the whole of Russia. At the height of the Civil War, when party membership involved

personal risk, the ranks were thrown open to the workers, who pushed the membership to 200,000. But as the war grew to a close, the party membership actually

trebled reflecting an influx of careerists and elements from hostile classes and parties.

Lenin at this time repeatedly emphasised the danger of the Party succumbing to the pressures and moods of the petty-bourgeois masses; that the main enemy of the

revolution was:

"everyday economics in a small-peasant country with a ruined large industry. He is the petty-bourgeois element which surrounds us like the air, and

penetrates deep into the ranks of the proletariat. And the proletariat is de-classed, i.e. dislodged from its class groove. The factories and mills are idle -

the proletariat is weak, scattered, enfeebled. On the other hand the petty-bourgeois element within the country is backed by the whole international

bourgeoisie, which retains its power throughout the world." (Works, vol. 33, page 23)

The "purge" initiated by Lenin in 1921 had nothing in common with the monstrous frame-up trials of Stalin; there was no police, no trials, no prison-camps; merely

the ruthless weeding out of petty-bourgeois and Menshevik elements from the ranks of the Party, in order to preserve the ideas and traditions of October from

the poisonous effects of petty-bourgeois reaction. By early 1922, some 200,000 members (one-third of the membership) had been expelled.

Lenin's correspondence and writings of this period, when illness was increasingly preventing him from intervene in the struggle; clearly indicate his alarm at the

encroachment of the Soviet bureaucracy, the insolent parvenus in every corner of the state apparatus. Thus, in a letter to Sheinman in February, 1922:

"At present the State Bank is a bureaucratic power game. There is the truth for you, if you want to hear not the sweet communist-official lies (with

which everyone feeds you as a high mandarin), but the truth. And if you do not want to look at this truth with open eyes, through all the communist

lying, you are a man who has perished in the prime of life in a swamp of official lying. Now that is an unpleasant truth, but it is the truth." (Works, vol.

36, page 567)

Contrast this fearless honesty of Lenin with all the saccharine falsehoods with which all the Communist Party leaders and "theoreticians" fed the international

communist movement about the Soviet Union for generations, and judge for yourself the depths of degradation in which the self-styled "Friends of the Soviet Union"

have plunged the ideas and traditions of Lenin! Again, in a letter dated April 12, 1922:

"The more such work is done, the deeper we go into living practice, distracting the attention of both ourselves and our readers from the stinking

bureaucratic and stinking intellectual Moscow (and, in general, Soviet bourgeois) atmospheres, the greater will be our success in improving both our

press and all our constructive work." (Works, vol. 36, page 579)

At the Eleventh Congress, Lenin placed before the Party a searing indictment of bureaucratisation of the state apparatus:

"If we take Moscow," he said, "with its 4,700 Communists in responsible positions, and if we take the huge bureaucratic machine, that gigantic heap,

we must ask: who is directing whom? I doubt very much whether it can be truthfully said that the Communists are directing that heap. To tell the truth,

they are not directing, they are being directed." (Works, vol. 33, page 288, our emphasis)

To carry out the work of weeding bureaucrats and careerists out of the state and party apparatus, Lenin initiated the setting up of RABKRIN (the Workers' and

Peasants' Inspectorate) with Stalin in charge. Lenin saw the need for a strong organiser to see that this work was carried out thoroughly; Stalin's record as a party

organiser appeared to qualify him for the post. Within in a few years, Stalin occupied a number of organisational posts in the Party: head of RABKRIN, member of

the Central Committee and Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat. But his narrow, organisational outlook and personal ambition led Stalin to occupy the post, in a short

space of time, as the chief spokesman of bureaucracy in the party leadership, not as its opponent.

As early as 1920, Trotsky criticised the working of RABKRIN, which from a tool in the struggle against bureaucracy was becoming itself a hotbed of bureaucracy.

Initially, Lenin defended RABKRIN against Trotsky. His illness prevented him from realising what was going on behind his back in the state and party. Stalin used

his position, which enabled him to select personnel to leading posts in the state and party to quietly gather round himself a bloc of allies and yes-men, political

nonentities who were grateful to him for their advancement. In his hands, RABKRIN became an instrument for building up his own position and eliminating his

political rivals.

Lenin only became aware of the terrible situation when he discovered the truth about Stalin's handling of relations with Georgia. Without the knowledge of Lenin or

the Politburo, Stalin, together with his henchmen Dzerzhinsky and Ordzhonikidze, had carried out a coup d'etat in Georgia. The finest cadres of Georgian

Bolshevism were purged, and the party leaders denied access to Lenin, who was fed a string of lies by Stalin. When he finally found out what was happening, Lenin

was furious. From his sick-bed late in 1922 he dictated a series of notes to his stenographer on "the notorious questions of autonomisation, which, it appears, is officially called the question of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics".

Lenin's notes are a crushing indictment of the bureaucratic and chauvinist arrogance of Stalin and his clique. But Lenin does not treat this incident as an accidental

phenomenon - a "regrettable mistake", like the invasion of Czechoslovakia, or a "tragedy", like the crushing of the Hungarian worker's commune, but the expression

of the rotten, reactionary nationalism of the Soviet bureaucracy. It is worth quoting Lenin's words on the state apparatus at length.

"It is said that a united state apparatus was needed. Where did that assurance come from? Did it not come from the same Russian apparatus, which, as

I pointed out in one of the preceding sections of my diary, we took over from Tsarism and slightly anointed with Soviet oil?

"There is no doubt that that measure should have been delayed until we could say, that we vouched for our apparatus as our own. But now, we must, in

all conscience, admit the contrary; the state apparatus we call ours is, in fact, still quite alien to us; it is a bourgeois and Tsarist hotchpotch and

there has been no possibility of getting rid of it in the past five years without the help of other countries and because we have been "busy"

most of the time with military engagements and the fight against famine.

"It is quite natural that in such circumstances the 'freedom to secede from the union' by which we justify ourselves will be a mere scrap of paper, unable

to defend the non-Russians from the onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great-Russian chauvinist, in substance a rascal and a tyrant, such as the

typical Russian bureaucrat is. There is no doubt that the infinitesimal percentage of Soviet and sovietised workers will drown in that tide of

chauvinistic Great-Russian riff-raff like a fly in milk." (Works, vol. 36, page 605, our emphasis)

After the Georgian affair, Lenin threw the whole weight of his authority behind the struggle to remove Stalin from the post of General Secretary of the party which he

occupied in 1922, after the death of Sverdlov. However, Lenin's main fear now more than ever was that an open split in the leadership, under prevailing conditions,

might lead to the break-up of the party along class lines. He therefore attempted to keep the struggle confined to the leadership, and the notes and other material

were not made public. Lenin wrote secretly to the Georgian Bolshevik-Leninists (sending copies to Trotsky and Kamenev) taking up their cause against Stalin "with

all my heart". As he was unable to pursue the affair in person, he wrote to Trotsky requesting him to undertake the defence of the Georgians in the Central

Committee.

Needless to say, the documentary evidence of Lenin's last fight against Stalin and the bureaucracy has been suppressed for decades. Lenin's last writings were

hidden from the Communist Party rank-and-file in Russia and internationally. Lenin's last letter to the Party Congress, despite the protests of his widow, was not read

out at the Congress and remained under lock and key until 1956 when Khrushchev and Co. published it. along with a few other items (including the letters on

Georgia) as part of their campaign to throw the blame for all that had happened in the past thirty years on to Stalin's shoulders.

Monty Johnstone and his like sneer at the material of Lenin - letters, minutes, etc - suppressed by the Soviet bureaucracy, which has been published in the West "on

Trotsky's authority". But the same wretched Jesuits of Stalinism also dismissed as "forgeries" the Suppressed Testament and Lenin's last letters, published by

Trotskyists, not after the Twentieth Congress (of blessed memory) but thirty years before the Communist Party leaders were prepared to admit their

existence. Communist Party members and Young Communist Leaguers must ask themselves honestly whose word they prefer to take: that of Trotsky and his

followers who told the truth about Lenin's struggle against Stalinist bureaucracy and published works which the Communist Party leaders had denied to their

rank-and-file for a whole historical period, or that of Monty Johnstone and his friends whose entire political past indicates their complete dishonesty in regard to the

heritage of Lenin and the history of the Russian revolution.

Monty Johnstone quotes odd passages from Lenin's Suppressed Testament, but nowhere does he make clear what the content of that letter was. Lenin warns of the

danger of a split in the Party, because "our party rests upon two classes, and for that reason its instability is possible..." Lenin did not see the disagreement between

Trotsky and Stalin as accidental, or flowing from "personalities" (although he gives a series of penetrating sketches of the personal characteristics of the leading

members of the Party).

Lenin's last letter must be seen in the context of his other writings of the previous few months, his attacks on bureaucracy and the bloc which he formed with Trotsky

against Stalin. Lenin worded his letter very cautiously (he had originally intended to be present at the Congress for which according to his stenographer Fotieva, he

had "prepared a bombshell for Stalin"). For each of the leading members, he gives both the positive and negative features of their character: in Trotsky's case, he

refers to his "exceptional abilities" ("the most able man on the Central Committee at the present time") but criticises him for his "far-reaching self-confidence" and "a

tendency to be too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs" - faults which, however serious they may be in themselves, have nothing whatsoever to

do with the Permanent Revolution, "Socialism in one Country", or any of the other canards invented by the Stalinists.

In relation to Stalin, Lenin writes that "Comrade Stalin having become General Secretary, has concentrated enormous power in his hands, and I am not sure that he

always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution."

That is already a political question, and linked up with Lenin's struggle against the bureaucracy in the Party. In *Better Fewer, But Better*, written shortly before,

Lenin commented: "Let it be said in parentheses that we have bureaucrats in our Party offices as well as in Soviet offices." In the same work, he launched a

sharp attack on RABKRIN, which was clearly meant for Stalin:

"Let us say frankly that the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection does not at present enjoy the slightest authority.

Everybody knows that no other institutions are worse organised than those of our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and that under present conditions

nothing can be expected from this Peoples' Commissariat." (Works, vol. 33, page 490)

In a postscript to his letter, Lenin advocated the removal of Stalin from the post of General Secretary, ostensibly on grounds of "rudeness" - but advocating his

replacement with a man "who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority - namely, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious,

etc." The diplomatic mode of expression does not conceal the indirect accusation, very clear in the light of the Georgian events, of Stalin's rudeness, capriciousness

and disloyalty.

In presenting Lenin's Testament as a document merely concerned with the "personalities" of the leaders, the Communist Party "theoreticians" fall into a completely

vulgar misrepresentation of Lenin. Even if the "Testament" leaves room for ambiguity (it does not, except for slovenly minds) the whole body of Lenin's last writings

provide a clear programmatic statement of his position, which cannot be distorted.

Repeatedly, Lenin characterised the bureaucracy as a parasitic, bourgeois growth on the workers' state, and an expression of the petty-bourgeois outlook - which

penetrated the State and even the Party.

The petty-bourgeois reaction against October was all the more difficult to combat because of the exhausted state of the proletariat, sections of which were also

becoming demoralised. Nonetheless, Lenin and Trotsky saw the working class as the only basis for a struggle against bureaucracy, and the maintenance of a healthy

workers' democracy as the only check on it. Thus, in one article *Purging the Party* Lenin wrote:

"Naturally, we shall not submit to everything the masses say because the masses, too, sometimes - particularly in time of exceptional weariness and

exhaustion resulting from excessive hardship and suffering - yield to sentiments that are in no way advanced. But in appraising persons, in the negative

attitude to those who have "attached" themselves to us for selfish motives, to those who have become "puffed-up commissars" and "bureaucrats", the

suggestions of the non-Party proletarian masses and, in many cases, of the non-Party peasant masses, are extremely valuable." (*Works*, vol. 33, page

39)

The rise of bureaucracy was understood by Lenin as the product of economic and cultural backwardness which was the result of the isolation of the revolution. The

means of combating this were linked, on the one hand, with the struggle for economic progress and the gradual elimination of illiteracy, which was linked

inseparably with the struggle to involve the working masses in the running of industry and the state. Lenin and Trotsky always relied upon the masses in the

fight against the "puffed-up commissars". Only by the conscious self-activity of the working people themselves could the transition to socialism be assured.

On the other hand, Lenin repeatedly explained that the terrible strains imposed upon the working class by the isolation of the revolution in a backward country put

immense difficulties in the way of the creation of a really cultured, and harmonious, classless society. Time and again Lenin stressed the problems that arose from the

isolation of the revolution. Monty Johnstone asserts that Lenin, towards the end of his life, was coming to accept the position of "Socialism in One Country", citing as

proof of this the statement in On Co-operation that "NEP Russia will be transformed into socialist Russia" since it possessed "all that is necessary and sufficient" for

building a socialist society. (Cogito, page 29)

Comrade Johnstone, after a desperate search through Lenin's Selected Works, can find only one quotation which can be even vaguely interpreted as implying the

acceptance of the idea of "Socialism in One Country". Alas! the vagueness is dispelled by even a cursory glance at the text of this rough, uncorrected document

which the Stalinists attempted, after Lenin's death, to summon to their aid. What Lenin is referring to in this article is not the "building of socialism" within the frontiers

of the Tsarist empire, but the social forms which are necessary to carry out the gradual elimination of the elements of "state capitalism" (NEP) and then begin the

tasks of socialist construction (electrification, industrialisation, etc). Lenin's careful qualifications, which emphasise the absence of the material basis for socialism,

leave no doubt as to his position. Thus, referring to the need for a "cultural revolution" for the overcoming of material backwardness (and therefore of class conflicts

in society) Lenin wrote:

"This cultural revolution would now suffice to make our country a completely socialist country; but it presents immense difficulties of a purely cultural

(for we are illiterate) and material character (for to be cultured we must achieve a certain development of the material means of production, must have a

certain material base)." (On Co-operation, Works, vol. 33, page 475)

To cover himself against possible misrepresentation, Lenin, in any case, explains that he is dealing with the question of education in abstraction from the problem

of the international position of the revolution:

"I should say that emphasis is shifting to educational work...were it not for the fact that we have to fight for our position on a world scale. If we

leave that aside, however and confine ourselves to internal economic relations, the emphasis is shifting to education." (ibid, page 474)

Far from Lenin "in the last period of his working life coming more and more in practice" to adopt the perspectives of Socialism in One Country, Lenin resolutely

explained that the difficulties of the revolution: the problems of backwardness, of illiteracy, of bureaucracy could only finally be overcome by the victory of the

socialist revolution in one or several advanced countries. This perspective, which was hammered home by Lenin hundreds of times from 1904-5 onwards, was

accepted as a truism by the entire Bolshevik Party up to 1924. In the last months of his life, Lenin never lost sight of this fact. Among his last writings are a series of

notes which made his position abundantly clear:

"We have created a Soviet type of state," he wrote, "and by that we have ushered in a new era in world history" the era of the political rule of the

proletariat, which is to supersede the era of bourgeois rule. Nobody can deprive us of this, either, although the Soviet type of state will have the finishing

touches put to it only with the aid of the practical experience of the working class of several countries.

"But we have not finished building even the foundations of socialist economy and the hostile power of moribund capitalism can still deprive us of that.

We must clearly appreciate this and frankly admit it; for there is nothing more dangerous than illusions (and vertigo, particularly at high altitudes). And

there is absolutely nothing terrible, nothing that should give legitimate grounds for the slightest despondency, in admitting this bitter truth; we have

always urged and reiterated the elementary truth of Marxism - that the joint efforts of the workers of several advanced countries are needed

for the victory of socialism." (Works, vol. 33, page 206, our emphasis)

In these lines of Lenin there is not an ounce of "pessimism" or of "underestimation" of the creative capacities of the Soviet working class. In all the writings of Lenin,

and especially of this period, there is at once a burning faith in the ability of the working people to change society and a fearless honesty in dealing with difficulties.

The difference in the attitudes of Stalinism and Leninism towards the working class lies precisely in this: that the former seeks to deceive the masses with "official" lies

and smug illusions about the building of "Socialism in One Country" in order to lull them into passive acceptance of the leadership of the bureaucracy, while the latter

strives to develop the consciousness of the working class, never patronising it with lies and fairy-stories, but always revealing unpalatable truths, in the full confidence

that the working class will understand and accept the need for the greatest sacrifices, provided the reasons for them are explained honestly and truthfully.

The arguments of Lenin were designed, not to stupefy the Soviet workers with "socialist opium", but to steel them for the struggles ahead - for the struggle against

backwardness and bureaucracy in Russia and for the struggle against capitalism and for the socialist revolution on a world scale. It was the sympathy of the working

people of the world, Lenin explained, that prevented the imperialists from strangling the Russian Revolution in 1917-20. But the only real safeguard for the future

of the Soviet Republic was the extension of the Revolution to the capitalist countries of the West.

At the Eleventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party - the last which Lenin attended - he emphasised repeatedly the dangers to the State and Party arising out

of the pressures of backwardness and bureaucracy. Commenting on the direction of the State, Lenin warned:

"Well, we have lived through a year, the state is in our hands, but has it operated the New Economic Policy in the way we wanted in the past year? No.

But we refuse to admit that it did not operate in the way we wanted. How did it operate? The machine refused to obey the hand that guided it. It was

like a car that was going not in the direction the driver desired but in the direction someone else desired; as if it were being driven by some mysterious,

lawless hand, God knows whose, perhaps of a profiteer, or of a private capitalist, or of both. Be that as it may, the car is not going quite in the

direction the man at the wheel imagines, and often it goes in an altogether different direction." (Works, vol. 33, page 179, our emphasis)

At the same Congress Lenin explained, in a very clear and unambiguous language, the possibility of the degeneration of the revolution as a result of the pressure of

alien classes. Already the most farsighted sections of the émigré bourgeoisie, the Smena Vekh group of Ustryalov, were openly placing their hopes upon the

bureaucratic-bourgeois tendencies manifesting themselves in Soviet society, as a step in the direction of capitalist restoration. The same group was later to applaud

and encourage the Stalinists in their struggle against "Trotskyism". The Smena Vekh group, which Lenin gave credit for its class insight, correctly understood the

struggle of Stalin against Trotsky, not in terms of "personalities" but as a class question, as a step away from the revolutionary traditions of October.

"The machine no longer obeyed the driver" - the State was no longer under the control of the Communists, of the workers, but was increasingly raising itself above

society. Referring to the views of Smena Vekh, Lenin said:

"We must say frankly that the things Ustryalov speaks about are possible, history knows all sorts of metamorphoses. Relying on firmness of convictions,

loyalty, and other splendid moral qualities is anything but a serious attitude in politics. A few people may be endowed with splendid moral qualities, but

historical issues are decided by vast masses, which, if the few do not suit them, may at times treat them none too politely." (Works, vol. 33, page 287)

In these words of Lenin we find the defeat of the Left Opposition explained in advance with a million times more clarity than in all the pretentious theorising of the

"intellectuals" about the relative psychological, moral and personal attributes of Trotsky and Stalin. The State power was slipping out of the hands of the Communists,

not because of their personal failings or psychological peculiarities, but because of the enormous pressures of backwardness, of bureaucracy, of alien e/ass

forces, which weighed down upon the tiny handful of advanced, socialist workers and crushed them.

Lenin likened the relationship of the Soviet workers and their advanced guard to the bureaucracy and the petty-bourgeois end capitalist elements to that of a

conquering and conquered nation. History has shown repeatedly that for one nation to defeat another by force of arms is not of itself, a sufficient guarantee of

victory. In the event of the cultural level of the victors being lower than that of the vanquished, the latter will impose its culture upon the conquerors.

Given the low level of culture of the weak Soviet working class, surrounded by a sea of small property owners, the pressures were enormous. They reflected

themselves not only in the State, but inevitably in the Party itself, which became the centre of the struggle of conflicting class interests.

Only in the light of all this can we understand Lenin's position in the struggle against bureaucracy, his attitude to Stalin, and the contents of his Suppressed

Testament. That document expresses his conviction that the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin is "not a detail, or is a detail which can acquire a decisive

significance", in the light of the fact that "Our party is based upon two classes." In a letter written shortly before the Eleventh Party Congress, Lenin explained the

significance of conflicts and splits in the leadership in these words:

"If we do not close our eyes to reality we must admit that at the present time the proletarian policy of the Party is not determined by the character of its

membership, but by the enormous undivided prestige enjoyed by the small group which might be called the Old Guard of the Party. A slight conflict

within this group will be enough, if not to destroy this prestige, at all events to weaken the group to such a degree as to rob it of its power to determine

policy." (Works, vol. 33, page 257)

What determined Lenin's bitter struggle against Stalin was not his personal foibles ("rudeness") but the role he played in introducing the methods and ideology

of alien social classes and strata into the very Party leadership which should have been a bulwark against those things. In the last months of his life,

weakened by illness, Lenin turned more and more frequently to Trotsky, for support in his struggle against the bureaucracy and its creature, Stalin. On the question

of the monopoly of foreign trade, on the question of Georgia, and finally, in the struggle to oust Stalin from the leadership, Lenin formed a bloc with Trotsky, the

only man in the leadership he could trust.

Throughout this entire last period of his life, in numerous articles, speeches, and above all letters, Lenin repeatedly expressed his solidarity with Trotsky. On all the

important issues we have mentioned, it was Trotsky whom he singled out to defend his point of view in the leading bodies of the party. Lenin's appraisal of Trotsky in

the Suppressed Testament can only be understood in the light of these facts. Needless to say, all the evidence for the existence of this bloc between Lenin and

Trotsky against the Stalin clique was kept under lock and key, for many years. But truth will out. The letters to Trotsky published in Volume 54, of the latest Russian

edition of Lenin's Collected Works, although even now not complete, are irrefutable proof of the bloc that existed between Lenin and Trotsky.

Those very letters, along with other material were long ago published by Trotsky in the West - as early as 1928 in *The Real Situation in Russia*. Even now the

bureaucracy dare not publish all the material in their possession. To stall the growing suspicions of the Communist Party rank-and-file abroad they utilise the services

of the Monty Johnstones to sneer at the writings of Lenin published "on Trotsky's authority". They will have need of such friends, precisely because their own

"authority" is rapidly disappearing in the eyes of honest Communist Party militants everywhere.

Trotsky and the Struggle Against Bureaucracy

"In 1923, as he [Lenin] lay incapacitated on his deathbed...this question was discussed in the Party leadership which, with Trotsky's participation, drew

up a resolution - unanimously adopted on 5th December, 1923 - spotlighting the bureaucratisation of the Party apparatus and the danger arising from it

of the detachment of the masses from the Party, and calling for the development of freedom for open party debate and discussion." (Cogito, page 22)

Comrade Johnstone poses the question as though the Party leadership unanimously took up Lenin's position on the question of bureaucracy - in which case it is hard

to see what the difference was between Trotsky and Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev, the leading "triumvirate". Alas! One resolution does not make a struggle against

bureaucracy. Stalin, in his day, also frequently denounced the "evils of bureaucracy". Khrushchev, Kosygin and others have sponsored not a few resolutions on this

subject. For a Marxist, however, a resolution is a guide to action; but for a cynical bureaucrat, there is nothing better than a "unanimous", "anti-bureaucratic"

proclamation to throw dust in the eyes of the masses.

Monty Johnstone's appeal to this resolution sounds all the more hollow in the light of what subsequently happened. Exactly how the transition was made from

"unanimous, anti-bureaucratic" resolutions to the police-terror, concentration camps and all the other horrors of Stalinist totalitarianism, Johnstone doesn't explain.

The behaviour of the dominant Kamenev-Zinoviev-Stalin faction on the Central Committee was a strange way of manifesting their loyalty to Lenin. Despite the

protests of Krupskaya, Lenin's "testament" was suppressed. Despite his clear directive, Stalin was not removed. Lenin's advice about increasing the working class

composition of the party and its organisations was cynically used to justify the drafting into the party of large numbers of inexperienced and politically backward

elements, who were putty in the hands of the apparatus-men, hand-picked by Stalin's machine.

Simultaneously, a campaign of calumny and falsification was opened up against Trotsky. It was at this time that all the old smears about Trotsky's non-Bolshevik past

(which Lenin had written off in his "testament"), about the "permanent revolution", Brest-Litovsk, and the rest, were dragged up by the ruling clique to discredit

Trotsky and oust him from the leadership. Zinoviev, when he subsequently broke with Stalin and went over to the Opposition, later admitted that the myth of

"Trotskyism" was deliberately invented at this time.

Kamenev, Zinoviev and Stalin were not, at this stage, consciously aware of the processes which were taking place in the Soviet state and which they were

unwittingly abetting. They did not realise in what direction their attacks on Trotsky and "Trotskyism" would lead them. But in attempting to drive a wedge between

"Trotskyism" and Leninism, they set in motion all the machinery of historical falsification and bureaucratic harassment which marked the first decisive step away from

the ideas and traditions of October towards the monstrous bureaucratic police state of Stalin and Brezhnev.

Referring to Trotsky's criticism of bureaucracy in *The New Course*, Monty Johnstone states:

"Although its overall approach is rather negative, there is much that can be seen to have been right in its attacks on the growth and power of the Party

apparatus under Stalin's control especially of what we now know of the gross abuses, violating the very essence of Socialist democracy and legality in

which this was to result...*The New Course*...contains trenchant Marxist criticisms of the methods of Stalinist bureaucracy..." (Cogito, page 22)

The reader will not fail to note, this new and startling "concession" of Comrade Johnstone's. With all the wisdom of hindsight, and with a truly schoolmasterly air,

Monty Johnstone gives Trotsky's analysis of Stalinist bureaucracy a neat tick - with marks deducted for a "rather negative" overall approach. In the meantime,

concealed behind the nebulous formula "violation of Socialist democracy" lie thirty years of bloody reaction against October; the extermination of the entire Old

Bolshevik leadership; the liquidation of entire Soviet peoples; the destruction of millions in slave-labour camps, and the destruction of revolutions abroad. These

minor "episodes" find no place in Monty Johnstone's "balanced" analysis. No, far better to write them of as "mistakes" of the past, which still "await analysis". Monty

Johnstone, who shows himself to be such a diligent researcher into the minutiae of the archives of Bolshevism, modestly declines the task of analysing and explaining

the bloody crimes of Stalinism over the past three or four decades.

Marxism, is first and foremost, a method of historical analysis, which provides the advanced guard of the working class with the perspectives which are the essential

pre-requisites of a successful struggle for power. Marxists do not stumble about blindly in the wake of the historical process, mumbling about "mistakes" and

"accidents" or weeping crocodile tears over "tragedies". The task of a Marxist is to analyse and understand in advance the general tendencies and processes in

society. Of course, such an analysis cannot provide a blueprint, accurately predicting every little detail. That is unnecessary. It is sufficient to have understood the

general process, in order not to be taken by surprise by history.

Trotsky explained the development of Stalinism in advance as the expression of a petty-bourgeois reaction against October. He explained, as Lenin had done, the

tremendous threat of internal degeneration of the Party in which the bureaucracy - that caste of upstart officials who had done well out of the revolution and saw no

need to disturb their comfortable office routine by continuing the revolutionary struggles - would act as the transmission belt diffusing the moods of petty-bourgeois

reaction and despair into the party.

The New Course is described by Comrade Johnstone as a work containing "trenchant Marxist criticisms" of bureaucracy. The reader may be excused if he feels

somewhat perplexed. We know that beautiful butterflies come from ugly and twisted chrysalises. But how did the Trotsky of the "trenchant Marxist criticisms"

suddenly emerge from the congenital ultra-left, revolutionary phrasemonger and petty-bourgeois individualist of the previous twenty-one pages? Was it an accident,

Comrade Johnstone, that Trotsky and the Left Opposition alone, after Lenin's death could produce such "trenchant Marxist criticism" of the Stalinist bureaucracy?

Where was the criticism of the Pollitts and Dutts, the Khrushchevs and Kosygins at that time? Is it a fundamental tenet of the Marxist-Leninist outlook that "trenchant

Marxist criticism" always comes only after the event?

Even here, Monty Johnstone distorts Trotsky's position by describing it as a criticism of the methods of Stalinist bureaucracy. That was not at all the position of

Trotsky. That is precisely the type of "anti-bureaucratism" of Stalin, Kosygin, Brezhnev, Gollan. In The New Course, Trotsky does not deal with mannerisms, but

social classes and strata. The leaders of the bureaucracy have always been prepared to rail against "bureaucratic methods", "red tape", etc. But such an approach

as Trotsky explains, has nothing in common with Marxism:

"It is unworthy of a Marxist to consider that bureaucratism is only the aggregate of the bad habits of office holders. Bureaucratism is a social

phenomenon in that it is a definite system of administration of men and things. Its profound causes lie in the heterogeneity of society, the difference

between the daily and the fundamental interests of various groups of the population."
(The New Course, page 41)

Far from the idea of bureaucracy as a "state of mind" or merely a remnant of capitalism which automatically "wither away" with the approach of the higher order of

socialism, Trotsky warned that the emergence of a privileged stratum of officials was inevitable under the prevailing conditions of economic and cultural

backwardness in Russia, would create enormous dangers for the revolution itself. Under certain conditions (a split in the party, the combination of the peasantry,

petty capitalists and a section of the bureaucracy on a restorationist platform) an actual counter-revolution was possible, as Lenin had repeatedly warned.

Trotsky pointed to the example of the degeneration of the German Social Democracy, which prior to 1914 was regarded as the leading body of the world Marxist

movement. This degeneration was explained by Lenin and Trotsky, not by the personal failings or betrayal of individual leaders (although these, too, played a fatal

role), but first and foremost by the objective conditions in which the German party had functioned before the War; the absence of great social upheavals and

revolutionary struggles, the stagnant parliamentary milieu which created "a generation of bureaucrats, of philistines, of dullards whose political physiognomy was

completely revealed in the first hours of the imperialist war."

In the years following the Civil War, there crystallised a new social stratum of Soviet officials, in part drawn from the old Tsarist bureaucracy, in part from the

bourgeois specialists and also from former workers and Communists who had been absorbed into the machinery of state and party and had lost touch with the

masses. It was this stratum of conservative bureaucrats, self-satisfied and narrow-minded jacks-in-office, from which Stalin's faction in the Party derived its support.

These were the elements who, after 1921 shouted loudest against the "Permanent Revolution" and "Trotskyism". By that they understood not Trotsky's writings of

1905, not the obscure polemics of the past, but the storm and stress of October and the Civil War. The bureaucrat wishes nothing better than peace and quiet to

get on with his orderly job of organising those "beneath" him. The slogans advanced by Stalin-Bukharin clique "socialism at a snail's pace" and "socialism in one

country" were precisely what the bureaucracy wanted to hear.

The years of revolution and Civil War had exhausted the masses and partly undermined their morale. The defeat of a series of revolutions internationally weakened

the appeal of the Bolshevik ideas among the more backward and petty-bourgeois strata. From the outset, the Bolshevik-Leninist minority, led by Trotsky, was

fighting against the stream. On the other hand, the upstart bureaucracy became more arrogant with every step backwards which was forced upon the revolution in

Russia and internationally. Leaning upon the most backward classes and strata of society, the Kulaks, the NEP speculators and small capitalists, the Stalin-Bukharin

clique struck blows against the very basis of the October Revolution. Apart from the fostering of capitalist elements inside Russia, the right-wing policies of the

leadership led to a series of fresh reversals on an international scale, culminating in the horrific slaughter of the Chinese Revolution in 1927.

It is not possible here to go into the international events of this period. Suffice it to remark that in China, in the period of 1925-7, the Stalin-Bukharin clique carried

out the dissolution of the Chinese Communist Party into the Kuomintang. Chiang Kai-Shek, the butcher of the Chinese workers, was hailed as the great leader of the

Chinese Revolution. The Kuomintang was enrolled as sympathetic section of the Communist International - with only one vote of the leadership cast against - that of

Leon Trotsky. Throughout this period, Trotsky and the Left Opposition struggled against the disastrous policies of the Stalinists: for workers' democracy, five-year

plans and collectivisation by example; against unprincipled deals with foreign "democrats" of the Chiang Kai-Shek camp; for continued support for the revolutionary

movements of the working class internationally as the only real guarantee for the future of the Soviet state. Of all this, Monty Johnstone has nothing to say, beyond

the assertion that Stalin's slanderous attacks on Trotsky "rang a bell" with the workers, and that the Left Opposition was defeated by 724,000 votes to 4,000 "after a

nation-wide Party discussion".

The "nation-wide Party discussion" to which Comrade Johnstone refers consisted of such friendly means of persuasion as the sacking of Opposition workers from their jobs, the breaking-up of meetings by Stalinist hooligans, a vicious campaign of lies and slander in the official press, the persecution of Trotsky's friends and supporters which led to the deaths of numbers of prominent Bolsheviks such as Glazman (driven to suicide by blackmail) and Joffe, the famous Soviet diplomat (denied access to necessary medical treatment, committed suicide).

At Party meetings, Oppositionist speakers were subject to the systematic hooliganism of gangs of quasi-fascist thugs organised by the Stalinist apparatus to intimidate the opposition. The French Communist paper, *Contre le Courant* in the twenties reported the methods whereby the Stalinists conducted their "nation-wide Party discussion":

"The bureaucrats of the Russian party have formed all over the country gangs of whistlers. Every time a party worker belonging to the Opposition is to take the floor, they post around the hall a veritable framework of men armed with police-whistles. With the first words of the Opposition speaker, the whistles begin. The charivari last until the Opposition speaker yields the floor to another." (The Real Situation in Russia, page 14 footnote)

Johnstone does not find it necessary to look too closely into the conditions under which the final "debate" took place at the 1927 Party Congress, when Stalin's henchmen, who packed the audience, made it impossible for the Opposition to make themselves heard. Contrast this crude gangsterism with the methods adopted by Lenin in relation to political opponents and you see to what an extent, by 1921, Stalinist reaction had stamped out the last vestiges of the traditions of Bolshevism.

Monty Johnstone trots through the history of the Left Opposition with the assured air of a tired old history master rattling off dates and "facts". His composure is not

even ruffled by the last "detail" which he just mentions "in passing":

"From his successive places of exile - Turkey, Norway, France, and finally Mexico where he was murdered in 1940 - Trotsky wrote many books,

pamphlets and articles and continued to try to build up a left opposition to Stalin."

But hold on, Mr. Schoolmaster, how does the calm, comradely "nation-wide discussion" lead to the exile and murder of the leader of the minority? Trotsky's murder,

and that of hundreds of thousands of Oppositionists in Russia does that seem like a product of the rational "debate" and political argument you portray? Around this

question, the schoolmaster shuffles warily:

"The evidence," writes Johnstone in a typically "balanced" footnote, "points strongly to the assassin, Mercader or "Jacson", who posed as a disillusioned

follower of Trotsky, having in fact acted on behalf of Stalin and the GPU. After completing his 20-year jail sentence he left Mexico on a Czechoslovak

plane [!] for an undisclosed [!] destination." (Cogito, page 94)

Yet another gratuitous "concession" from Comrade Johnstone! Everyone these days is well aware of the bloody record of Stalin's GPU. Every Communist Party

member knows full well that these hired killers were responsible for the murder of Trotsky and countless other revolutionaries in Russia, Spain and elsewhere.

Comrade Johnstone magnanimously admits what he cannot deny: and only what he cannot deny! But merely to "admit" a crime is not enough. From a Marxist one

expects an explanation.

Monty Johnstone tries to paint a picture of the differences between Stalinism and Trotskyism as

"political ones", "debates", "arguments" etc. But the Russian bureaucracy prefers to argue in the eloquent language of bullets, concentration camps, or, in the case of

Czechoslovakia and Hungary, tanks, planes and rockets. Lenin "murdered" his opponents in polemics, but not in cold blood. Yet Monty Johnstone, with all the

innocence of a new-born babe, pretends that this is all a "mistake". Trotsky's murderer is flown away in a Czech plane "to an unknown destination". The bureaucracy

do not forget their old friends, it seems, even after the Twentieth Congress.

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Chapter Nine - Conclusion

It is easier to write distortions than to answer them. In the present work, we have only managed to deal with the most blatant falsehoods and misrepresentations. But,

in fact, the entire method of Monty Johnstone's Cogito article is alien to Marxism. It is not designed to make clear the position of Trotsky, in order to answer it. It

falsifies Trotsky's ideas, in order to subject them to surreptitious ridicule. Such an approach has nothing to do with the method of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky,

who always gave a clear and honest characterisation of the ideas of their opponents, in order to answer them.

But the final bankruptcy of Monty Johnstone's position is revealed by a phrase which slips, almost unnoticed, from his pen:

"A fundamental Marxist criticism of Stalinism," he writes on page 33, "which still remains to be made, will not proceed from Trotsky's premises..."

So there we have it! "The Mountain hath laboured and borne...a mouse!" Sixteen years after the death of Stalin, thirteen years after the Twentieth Congress,

and Monty Johnstone's "fundamental criticism of Stalinism" has yet to be made!

Such is the incredible conclusion which Young Communist Leaguers and Communist Party members are expected to take from the "theoreticians" of their movement.

Trotsky's "model" is "fundamentally false", but as for our model - well, we are still waiting for that to materialise!

For our part, we invite members of the Communist Party and Young Communist League to draw their own conclusions from the lame excuses of the Monty

Johnstones. Put the question to the leadership: Why can't you provide us with an analysis and explanation of Stalinism? Why don't the Soviet leaders produce an

analysis? Alas! No reply will be forthcoming. At this very moment, the Soviet "comrades" are busily resurrecting Stalin, and taking back even those meagre

concessions that were wrested from their grasp in the fifties. Of course, tomorrow, Brezhnev will be ousted and some "progressive" bureaucrat will again grant

concessions, to prevent the workers from moving into struggle. In fact, the bureaucracy will do anything for the workers, anything, except get off their backs!

It is clear that the present discussion was not welcomed by the Communist Party leadership. They tried to put it off as long as possible. But with their new,

"independent", "democratic", "respectable" image at stake, they dared not continue to veto it. The events which have rocked World Stalinism in recent years have

opened up broad discussions in the ranks of the Communist Parties. Any attempt on the part of the bureaucracy to clamp down on, say, the discussion on

Czechoslovakia, would have led to a debacle on the lines of 1956. Their hand has been forced by events.

The sell-out of the movement of the French workers by the Stalinist leadership gave rise to widespread protest and opposition among the Communist Party rank and

file, who, unlike the leaders, have not lost their class-consciousness and their desire to change society. Likewise in Britain, the events in France and Czechoslovakia

have set the most conscious members of the Young Communist League and Communist Party thinking about the fundamental questions which face the movement.

Similar developments are undoubtedly taking place in the Italian and other Communist Parties.

Yesterday, Stalinism was shaken by Hungary and Czechoslovakia, by France and the Sino-Soviet split. What will come tomorrow? The coming period opens up the

prospect of new and terrible class battles on an international scale. Under the cover of the post-war boom, new, fresh forces have been prepared which are

untainted by the despair and cynicism of the older generation. The magnificent struggles of the Italian and French working class provide an auger of things to come.

The question now is only which will come first - the socialist revolution in the West, or the political revolution in the East?

In the white-heat of great events, the new forces of the revolution will be formed and tested. A large part of these forces, especially in France and Italy, but also in

Britain, will come from the Communist Parties and the Young Communist Leagues. It is the duty of all comrades in these organisations to prepare themselves

theoretically for the great tasks which face us. Theory is not something which the Party "intellectuals" hand down on a plate. All real Marxists must struggle to train

and educate themselves in the basic ideas, methods, and traditions of Marxism. The writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky are not dry, academic, and

irrelevant, but contain the living lessons of the experience of the working class movement of all countries over a century and a half. If members of the Communist

Party and Young Communist League desire to play a role in building the movement which will change society on socialist lines, they must take this task seriously.

On the basis of events, and the creation of Marxist, of Bolshevik cadres, to participate in the inevitable movements of the working class in Britain and internationally,

victory is, in the last analysis, assured in the struggle for a united, harmonious Socialist World Federation. The nightmare of Stalinism and capitalism will become bad

memories of the past, and the blossoming of the productive forces of the planet, integrated under a system of democratic control and planning, will enable art, culture

and science to rise to unheard of levels. For the first time, Man will be able to draw himself up to his true stature in a world freed from wars, poverty and oppression.

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