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## **The New Policy.**

Letter addressed by

# **Comrade Trotzky**

**to the Session of the enlarged C. C. of the R. C. P.**

Moscow, 8th December, 1924.

Dear Comrades!

I had firmly hoped that I should be able to take part in the discussion on the inner situation and the new tasks of the Party, if not to-day, at least to-morrow. But my illness occurred, this time, at a most inconvenient moment and it has proved to be of a longer duration than the physicians had at first anticipated. I am, therefore, compelled to express my views by the present letter.

The resolution of the Political Bureau on the question of the Party Structure is of exceptional significance. It shows that the Party has arrived at an important turning point in its historical development. Such turning points, as has been pointed out quite justly in many meetings, require prudence; but in addition to prudence, firmness and resoluteness are also required. A waiting attitude, an irresolution at such a juncture, would be the worst form of imprudence.

Some comrades of a conservative disposition who show themselves inclined to over-estimate the role of the apparatus and to under-estimate the initiative of the Party, criticise the resolution of the Political Bureau. According to their statements, the C. C. takes upon itself obligations which cannot be carried out; the resolution would only create illusions and negative results.

It is clear, that this kind of view is inspired by a thoroughly bureaucratic mistrust of the Party. The new policy proclaimed by the resolution of the Central, denotes precisely, that the centre of gravity, which during the old policy had been erroneously inclined towards the apparatus, is now, during the new policy, to be inclined towards the activity, the critical initiative and the self-government of the Party, the organized vanguard of the proletariat. The new policy does not all mean that the apparatus of the Party is instructed to decree, to create or to establish the regime of democracy within a certain term. Nay, this regime can be created by the Party itself. The task is briefly the following: the Party must subordinate to itself its own

apparatus, without ceasing even for a moment, to be a centralized organisation.

In recent discussions and articles it was pointed out very frequently that the "pure", the "entire", the "ideal" democracy is unattainable, and that for us democracy in general is not an end in itself. This cannot be in any way disputed. But with the same right and with as much reason one can say, that pure or absolute centralism is unattainable and incompatible with the character of a mass party, and the centralism as well as the party apparatus are in no way ends in themselves. Democracy and Centralism are two faces of the party structure. The task is to equilibrate them in a proper manner, i. e. in that manner which best corresponds with the situation. In the past period, this equilibrium did not exist. The centre of gravity had been erroneously inclined towards the apparatus. The initiative of the Party had been reduced to a minimum. This involved methods and habits in the leadership which are diametrically opposed to the spirit of the revolutionary Party of the proletariat. The excessive centralization of the apparatus, at the expense of the initiative of the Party, has created within the Party the feeling of its insufficiency. On the extreme wings, it has assumed an extraordinary morbid form, right up to the formation of illegal groupments under the leadership of elements undoubtedly hostile to Communism. At the same time, within the Party, the critical attitude towards the mechanical methods adopted for the solution of questions, has increased. The perception, or at least the sentiment, that the Party bureaucratism threatens to lead the Party into an impasse, has become almost general. Warning voices have been raised against this danger. The resolution on the new policy is the first official and extremely important form of expression of this turn within the Party. It will be carried out to the extent to which the Party, i. e. its four hundred thousand members, will be ready and able to do.

In a number of articles, it is obstinately sought to prove, that the fundamental means for reviving the Party, consists in raising the cultural level of its rank and file, whereupon the

rest, i. e. the workers democracy, would grow of itself. It cannot be denied that we must raise the intellectual and cultural level of the Party with a view to the tasks which are confronting it; but precisely for this reason, this purely pedagogical method is insufficient and, consequently, false; and if we insist upon it, we cannot but provoke an aggravation of the crisis. The Party cannot otherwise raise its level as a Party than by completely carrying out its fundamental tasks by means of the collective leadership of the working class — and with the initiative of all Party members — and of the proletarian state. We must deal with this question not with a pedagogic, but with a political method. The application of Party democracy must not be rendered dependent upon the degree of "schooling" of the Party members for Party democracy. Our Party is a Party. We have the right to be very strict towards everybody, who wants to enter our Party and to remain in it, but once anybody has become member, it is by this fact alone that he takes an active part in the entire Party work.

It is precisely by killing initiative, that bureaucratism hampers the raising of the general level of the Party. And in this consists its main fault. Since the Party apparatus is unavoidably constituted out of the most experienced and proved comrades, the worst consequences of the bureaucratism of the apparatus will be its influence on the ideological-political formation of the young generation of the Party. It is precisely owing to this circumstance that the youth — the surest barometer of the Party — reacts against the Party bureaucratism in the most energetic manner.

It would be a mistake, however, to believe, that the excess of mechanical solutions of Party questions should remain without influence on the old generation which embodies the political experience and the revolutionary traditions of the Party. Nay, the danger is also very great in this sphere. It is not necessary to speak of the immense authority of the older generation of our Party, not only within Russia, but also in the International: it is known and recognised everywhere. But it would be a crude error to estimate this authority as sufficient in itself. It is only by continual mutual influence of the younger and the older generation within the frame of Party democracy, that the old guard can be maintained as a revolutionary factor. Otherwise, the old ones would be easily become ossified and, without realizing it, become the most perfect expression of the bureaucratism of the apparatus.

A degeneration of the "old guard" is to be observed several times in the development of history. Let us take the most recent and most striking historical example: the leaders and the parties of the Second International. We know perfectly well that Wilhelm Liebknecht, Bebel, Singer, Victor Adler, Kautsky, Bernstein, Lafargue, Guesde and others have been direct and immediate disciples of Marx and Engels. We know, however, that all these leaders — some partially, others totally — have in the atmosphere of parliamentary reform and of the strong growth of the party and trade unions apparatus, degenerated towards opportunism. On the eve of the imperialist war, we saw with remarkable distinctness, how the formidable social democratic apparatus, protected by the authority of the old generation, became the most powerful hindrance to the revolutionary development. And we must say, — we, "the old ones", — that our generation which, of course plays the leading role in the Party, does not by itself conclude any guarantee sufficient in itself, against a gradual and imperceptible weakening of the proletarian and revolutionary spirit, if the Party tolerates the further development of the bureaucratic methods of the apparatus, which transform the young generation into a passive object of education, and unavoidably confirm the alienation between the apparatus and the mass, between the old and the young. Against this undoubted danger, there is no other means than a serious, profound and fundamental new orientation towards Party Democracy with a continually increasing attraction of the proletarians from the workshops to the Party.

I shall not go into full details on the juridical interpretations of Party Democracy and its limitations prescribed by the statute. No matter how important these questions are, they are but secondary questions. We shall examine them in the light of the experience at our disposal and shall modify that which can be modified. But, before all, it is the spirit prevailing in our organizations, which must be modified. The Party, through its nuclei and unions, must again acquire the collective initiative, the right for a free and comrade-like criticism without anxiety and fear, the right of organizatory self-government. The Party

apparatus must be absolutely regenerated and renewed by means of compelling it to understand that it is the executive mechanism of the great collective body.

In the Party press, a great number of examples have recently been adduced characterizing the far-developed bureaucratic degeneration of Party practices and conditions. In response to critical voices, one met with the retort: "What is the date of your membership book?" Before the resolution of the C. C. regarding the new policy had been published, the bureaucratized representatives of the apparatus had considered all mention of the necessity of the modifying the inner Party policy as heresy, as formation of factions and undermining of discipline. And now they are in the same way formally prepared to "take note" of the new policy, i. e. in practice to stow it away in a pigeon-hole. The renewal of the Party apparatus — of course strictly within the frame of the Statute — must have as its aim the substitution of the fossilized bureaucrats by fresh elements who are closely connected with the life of the whole Party or who are able to guarantee a suitable leadership. And before all there must be eliminated from the leading Party posts those elements who, at the first sign of criticism, of protestation or of objection, seek to silence it by demanding production of the membership book. The new policy must have as its first result, that all members of the apparatus from the bottom right up to the top, realize that nobody is allowed to terrorize the Party.

It is by no means sufficient for our Youth merely to repeat our formulas. It must make the revolutionary formulas their own by fight, fill them with life, it must form its proper opinion, its proper features and become capable of fighting for its views with the courage which is furnished by a profound conviction and an entire independence of character. We must rid the Party of that passive obedience which leads to doing everything with eyes mechanically fixed on the superiors; we must rid the Party of all spineless, servile and career-hunting elements. The Bolshevik is not only a disciplined man: no, he is a man who goes deeply into the matter and who, in every case, forms a well-founded opinion and courageously defends it in the struggle, not only against the enemies, but also within his own Party. Perhaps to-day he is in the minority in his organization. He subordinates himself, since it is his Party. But that does not, of course, always mean, that he is wrong. It is perhaps only, that he has perceived and understood earlier than others, the new task on the necessity of a change of policy. He will pertinaciously raise the question a second, a third and, if necessary, a tenth time. By so doing he will render a service to his Party, as he will help it to prepare itself for the new task, or to accomplish the necessary change without organic tremors and without fractionary convulsions.

Yes, our Party could not fulfil its historical mission, if it became decomposed into fraction groupings. This must not and will not be done. The Party as a whole, as an autonomous collectivity, will prevent this. But the Party will successfully combat the dangers of the formation of fractions only when developing, confirming and strengthening the new policy towards workers' democracy. It is precisely the bureaucratism of the apparatus, which is one of the principal sources of fraction-formation. It suppresses criticism and enables discontent to penetrate the organization. It is inclined to label any individual or collective, critical or warning, voice as factionism. Mechanical centralism is unavoidably complemented by factionism, a caricature of democracy and a formidable political danger.

With a clear understanding of the entire situation, the Party will accomplish the necessary change with all the firmness and resoluteness which the importance of the tasks confronting us require. It is precisely by this means, that the Party will raise its revolutionary unity to a higher level as a guarantee for the successful accomplishment of the immensely important tasks, both in the political and in the economic sphere and on a national as well as on an international scale.

I am far from having exhausted the question. I have, intentionally, refrained from examining many of its essential aspects, in order not to occupy too much of your time. But I hope, that I shall soon succeed in getting rid of the malaria, which — in my opinion — is obviously in opposition to the new policy of the Party, and then I shall try to expound in free speech more precisely that which I have not expounded in this letter.

Fraternal greetings

Leon Trotsky.

Moscow, 10th December 1923.

P. S. I take advantage of the fact that my letter is published in the "Pravda" with a delay of two days, to make some supplementary remarks.

I understand, that, when my letter was communicated to the ward meetings, certain comrades gave expression to the fear that my observations on the relations between the "old guard" and the young generation might be exploited for opposing the young to the old (!). It is obvious that such apprehensions would only confront those comrades, who, only two or three months ago, repudiated with horror the mere idea of bringing the question regarding the necessity of a change of policy up for discussion. In any event, the expression of similar apprehensions, at the present moment and in the present situation, can only be the result of a false valuation of the dangers and of their importance. The present state of mind of the Youth which, as is quite clear to every reflecting Party member, is largely symptomatic, has been precisely promoted by these methods employed for the sake of "absolute tranquility", which are condemned by the resolution unanimously adopted by the Political Bureau. In other words, the "absolute tranquility" has itself promoted the danger of an increasing alienation between the leading Party stratum and the younger members of the Party, i. e. of its overwhelming majority. The tendency of the apparatus to think and to decide for the whole Party, is apt to lead to the authority of the leading circles becoming based solely upon tradition. The respect towards the tradition of the Party is undoubtedly a very necessary element of the Party education and cohesion; but it can be a vital and resistant factor only, if it is constantly nourished and strengthened by means of an independent and active control of the Party tradition, i. e. by the collective elaboration of the policy of the Party at the given moment. Without this activity and initiative, the respect towards the tradition might degenerate into a stage-managed of an independent and active control of the Party tradition, i. e. into a form without contents. It is quite obvious that such a kind of contact between the generations would be entirely insufficient and unreliable. It could retain a solid exterior, right up to the very moment at which the threatening rifts are revealed. Precisely in this lies the danger of a policy of the apparatus based on "absolute tranquility" within the Party. And, as far as those representatives of the older generation who have remained revolutionary and have not become bureaucratized (and this, as we are convinced, applies to the immense majority) will see quite clearly the perspectives characterized above, and, on the basis of the resolution of the Political Bureau, will do their utmost in order to aid the Party to carry out the resolution, just so far will the main possibility of opposing the various generations against one another, disappear. It will then be relatively easy to overcome these or those "excesses" or exaggerations on the part of the Youth. But before all, it is necessary to create the safeguard against the concentration of the Party traditions in the apparatus, and thereby ensure its remaining vital and renewing itself in the daily practice of the Party. It is only by this, that also another danger can be avoided: that of splitting of the old generations into "apparatusmen" charged to maintain the "absolute tranquility", and into

those, who have nothing in common with that. It need not be said that the apparatus of the Party, i. e. its organizatory skeleton, will not be weakened, but strengthened by abandoning its aloofness. But there will be no doubt within our Party that we need a powerful centralized apparatus.

Perhaps it could still be objected, that the example of degeneration of Social Democracy through its apparatus in the reformist epoch, which I cited in my letter, is not appropriate in view of the profound difference between the epochs: the former stagnating reformist one, and the present revolutionary one. It is, of course, understood that an example is but an example and in no way an identification. However, the revolutionary character of our epoch is no guarantee in itself. It is not for nothing that we point out the dangers of the NEP, which are closely connected with the present moderate tempo of the international revolution. Our daily practical work in the administration of the state, which becomes continually more detailed and specialized, involves, as is emphasized in the resolution of the Political Bureau, the danger of a narrowing of the horizon, i. e. of opportunist degeneration. It is evident that these dangers become the more serious, the more a monopoly of authority in the hands of secretaries tends to substitute the Party leadership. We should be bad revolutionaries, if we were to rely upon the "revolutionary character of the epoch", to help us in overcoming all difficulties, in particular all the inner difficulties. It is the "epoch" which must be helped in a proper manner, by a rational carrying out of the new Party policy proclaimed unanimously by the Political Bureau of the C. C.

A further remark in conclusion. Two or three months ago, when the questions forming the object of the present discussion, were only beginning to engage the attention of the Party, some responsible comrades of the provinces were inclined to treat the matter in an off-hand manner; it was, they declared, merely a brain wave on the part of Moscow, in the provinces, however, everything was at its best.

And now also we observe this attitude of mind in one or the other reports from the provinces: infected or excited Moscow is opposed to the "quiet and reasonable province". This means nothing else than a violent expression of the same bureaucratism, though in a provincial edition. As a matter of fact, the Moscow organization of our Party is the largest, most vital and the best equipped with forces. Even in the moments of the greatest stagnation, the activity and the initiative of the Moscow organization were, in spite of everything, more intensive than anywhere else. If Moscow at present differs from other localities over something, it is only due to the fact, that it has taken the initiative for the revision of the policy of our Party. This is not a defect, but a merit. The whole Party will follow Moscow in passing through the necessary period of the transvaluation of certain values of the past period. The less the provincial Party apparatus opposes itself to this, the more systematically the provincial organizations will win through the unavoidable period of criticism and self-criticism. The Party will garner the result in the form of an increased inner firmness and a raising of the level of the Party culture.

L. T.

# Comrade Stalin

## Reply to Discussion.

### I. How the Opposition seems to be gradually disappearing.

The discussion which has been proceeding for several weeks on the situation of the Party is evidently drawing to a close. At least this is the case with Petrograd and Moscow. As is known, Petrograd has declared in favour of the line of the C. C. The principal districts of the town of Moscow have likewise adopted the platform of the C. C. The conference of the Moscow Party functionaries, which was held on the 11th December, has fully approved of the organizational and political line of the C. C. Without doubt the forthcoming general Party Conference of the Moscow organizations will follow the example of the districts. The opposition, composed of the Block between a part of the left Communists (Preobrajensky, Stokov, Pyatakov and others) and the so-called Democratic Centralists (Rafael, Sapronov and others), has been annihilated.

The phases of the discussion, and the transformations which the theses of the opposition have undergone during the same, are of the highest degree of interest.

The opposition commenced by demanding nothing less than the revision of the principles of organization of the Party and of its inner policy which had been laid down two years ago and had been followed during the whole period of the New Economic Policy. The opposition demanded the entire carrying out of the resolution of the X. Congress regarding democracy within the Party and, at the same time, insisted upon the abolition of the restrictions adopted by the X., XI. and XII. Congresses (prohibition of group-forming etc.). But the opposition has gone much further. Claiming that the Party had, in its very essence, been transformed into an organization of a military character, and that the Party discipline had been transformed into a military discipline, the opposition demanded that the entire staff of the administrative apparatus be overhauled from top to bottom and that the most important functionaries be recalled etc. The campaign of the opposition included the most violent attacks and reproaches directed against the C. C.

The C. C., as such, did not during this period, participate in the discussion carried on in the columns of the „Pravda“, as it wished to allow full liberty of criticism to all Party members. It did not even deem it necessary to refute the absurd accusations levelled against it, as it considered that the Party members possessed enough independent judgment to be able to decide the questions at issue for themselves.

This was, so to speak, the first period of the discussion. The second began when the Party members grew tired of this campaign of accusations and demanded the objective discussion of the questions at issue. This period was opened by the publication of the resolution of the C. C. on the Party structure\*). From this moment it was no longer possible to confine the criticism to mere generalizations. The concrete scheme presented by the C. C. and the C. C. C. faced the opposition with the alternative, either to assent to this scheme, or to come forward with another scheme of a concrete character regarding the realization of democracy within the Party. From this point it became clear that the opposition was incapable of opposing to the C. C. scheme its own concrete one which would have corresponded to the requirements of the Party organizations. Thereupon the opposition began to beat a retreat. It no longer insisted upon its demands for the modification of the principles of Party structure followed during the last two years. The demand of the opposition regarding the abolition of the restrictions upon democracy, which were imposed by the decisions of the X., XI. and XII. Congresses, was likewise promulgated with less vigour. The demand for the overhauling of the apparatus from top to bottom took on a more feeble note and was relegated to the background. The opposition considered it expedient to substitute all their demands by proposals calling attention to the necessity of „a precise formulation of the question of fractionism“, „proceeding to the re-election of all the organs of the Party“ and „abolition of the system of nomination from above“. It is

characteristic that even these proposals of the opposition which had taken on a very feeble note, have been rejected by the workers' organizations of Krasnaya Presnaya and of Zamoskvaryetshye (districts of the town of Moscow), both of which have, by an overwhelming majority, adopted the resolution of the C. C.

This was, so to speak, the second period of the discussion. At present, the third period has commenced. Characteristic for this period is the further retreat, I venture to say, the wild flight of the opposition. This time, in the resolution of the opposition, there are not even the greatly toned down demands. The last resolution of Comrade Preobrajensky (which for the moment is the third one to be enumerated) which has been presented to the meeting of the responsible comrades of the Moscow organization attended by more than a thousand comrades, runs as follows:

“It is solely by the rapid, general and sincere carrying out of the resolutions of the Political Bureau, in particular by the renewal of the Party apparatus by means of re-elections, that our Party will be able to enter the new period of its development without interior struggles, which would distort its structure; it is only by this, that the cohesion and the unity of the Party can be confirmed in the true sense of the word.”

It is certainly not a mere chance that the meeting has rejected even this absolutely harmless proposal. It is equally no mere chance that it has, by an overwhelming majority, adopted the resolution on the “approval of the political and organizational policy of the C. C.”.

### II. Comrade Trotzky's Letter.

The resolution passed by the C. C. and the C. C. C. (Central Control Commission) on the inner Party democracy, published in December, was unanimously accepted. Comrade Trotzky voted for this resolution. It might therefore be assumed that the members of the Central Committee, including Comrade Trotzky, would apply unitedly to all members of the Party and call upon these to support the C. C. and its resolutions unanimously. This assumption has, however, not been realized. Comrade Trotzky has just published a letter to all Party corporations, which can only be regarded as an attempt to weaken the will to unity among the Party members, with respect to support of the C. C. and its decisions.

The reader may judge for himself.

Comrade Trotzky mentions the bureaucracy of the Party apparatus and the danger of degeneration threatening the old guard, that is, the Leninians, the fundament of our Party, and goes on to say:

“A degeneration of the ‘old guard’ is to be observed several times in the development of history. Let us take the most recent and most striking historical example; the Leaders and parties of the Second International. We know perfectly well that Wilhelm Liebknecht, Bebel, Singer, Victor Adler, Kautsky, Bernstein, Lafargue, Guesde and others have been direct and immediate disciples of Marx and Engels. We know, however, that all these leaders — some partially, others totally — degenerated towards opportunism... And we must say — we, the ‘old guard’, — that our generation, which, of course, plays the leading role in the Party, does not by itself include any guarantee sufficient in itself, against a gradual and imperceptible weakening of the proletarian and revolutionary spirit, if the Party tolerates the further development of the bureaucratic methods of the apparatus, which transform the young generation into a passive object of education and unavoidably confirm the alienation between the apparatus and the mass, between the old and the young...”

.... “The youth is the Party's surest barometer, it reacts against Party bureaucratism in the most energetic manner...” “The youth must make the revolutionary formulas their own by fight...”

I must in the first place dispel a possible misunderstanding. It may be seen from comrade Trotzky's letter that he counts himself among the old guard of the Bolsheviks, thus declaring himself prepared to take upon himself all accusations which may pos-

\*) This was published in our Special Number Russian Party Discussions 1 Vol. 4 No. 7 of 29th January last.

sibly be brought against the old guard, should this really pursue the path of degeneration. It must be admitted that this readiness for self-sacrifice is doubtless a proof of nobility. But I must defend comrade Trotzky against comrade Trotzky himself, for he cannot and must not, for comprehensible reasons, take upon himself the responsibility for a degeneration in the fundamental core of the old Bolshevik guard. Self-sacrifice is naturally admirable, but do the old Bolsheviks require it? I am of the opinion that they do not require it.

In the second place, it is quite incomprehensible that such opportunists and Mensheviki as Bernstein, Adler, Kautsky, Guesde and others, can be named in the same breath as the old Bolshevik guard, which has been fighting honorably all this time against opportunism, Menshevism, and the Second International, and will, I hope, continue to fight them in future. What is the cause of this error, of this confusion; what need is there for it, if nothing but the interests of the Party is held in view, if there are no ulterior motives behind it, aiming by no means at the defence of the old guard? How are we to understand these insinuations as to opportunism with regard to the old Bolsheviks, who have been reared in the midst of a fight against opportunism?

In the third place, I am by no means convinced that the old Bolsheviks are absolutely immune against the danger of degeneration, any more than I can reasonably maintain that we are for instance immune against earthquake. Such a danger can and must be admitted as a possibility. But is this intended to signify that this danger is actual and present? I do not believe it. Neither has comrade Trotzky mentioned any signs indicating that the danger of degeneration is an actual danger. However, there does exist a number of elements within our Party who are likely to bring about real danger of degeneration among a section of the Party. I am thinking here of those Mensheviki who got into the Party against their own will, and who have not yet abandoned their old habits. At the time when our Party was being purged, comrade Lenin wrote as follows about these Mensheviki and the danger threatened through them:

"Every opportunist is distinguished by a capacity for adaptation, and the Mensheviki, as opportunists, accommodate themselves in a certain sense on principle to the prevailing trends among the workers; they take on protective colors, as the hare takes to a white fur in winter. It is necessary to be aware of this peculiarity of the Mensheviki and to reckon with it. But to reckon with it means to purge the Party of 99% of the total number of

Mensheviki who joined the Party after the year 1918, that is, after the victory of the Bolsheviks had first become probable, and then certain."

How could it happen that comrade Trotzky could disregard this and other actually existent dangers, and place a possible danger in the foreground, the danger of degeneration in the old Bolshevik guard? How is it possible for anyone to shut his eyes to real danger, and to drag into the foreground a possible danger, one really not existing at all, if he is anxious to preserve the interests of the Party, and not to undermine the authority of the majority of the CC., the leading core of the old Bolshevik guard? Is it not perfectly obvious that such methods of procedure are simply grist to the will of the opposition?

In the fourth place, why does comrade Trotzky oppose the "old", thus liable to degeneration, to the "youth", "the Party's surest barometer"; the "old guard" which may become bureaucratized, to the "young guard", "which has to make the revolutionary formulas their own by fight"? Why this placing in opposition, and what purpose does it serve? Have the youth and the old guard then not always marched in one united front against internal and external enemies? Is the unity between "old" and "young" not the main source of strength in our Party? Then why this attempt to deprive the old guard of its glory, and to bring about a demagogic incitement of the vanity of the youth, so that the slight cleft between these two main groups of our Party may be widened? Why is all this being done, if the interests and unity of the Party are being pursued, and no attempt is being made to shake this unity in the interests of the opposition?

Is this the way to defend the CC. and its resolution on inner Party democracy, which, it must not be forgotten, was passed unanimously?

It is probable that comrade Trotzky did not set himself any such task when he laid his views before the public in his letter to the Party organizations. Probably he had another object in view, the intention of using the defence of the resolution passed by the CC. as a cloak enabling him to lend diplomatic support to the opposition in its contest with the CC. of the Party.

If we go to the bottom of the matter, this also explains the ambiguity permeating comrade Trotzky's letter.

Comrade Trotzky forms one of the block of the "democratic centralists" and a section of the "left communists" — this is the political meaning of this letter from comrade Trotzky.

# The Struggle for the Party.

Report given by

## Comrade Zinoviev

at the City Meeting of the Collective Bureaus of the Petrograd Organization,  
on the 15<sup>th</sup> December.

### I. Our Discussion and its History.

At the plenary session of the Central Committee of our Party, held in October of this year after the return of a large number of comrades after leave of absence, one of the questions raised was that of the workers' democracy, and the Political Bureau was commissioned to take a number of measures towards infusing fresh life into the inner life of the Party, etc.

At this plenary session I had to make a speech in which I stated all the views contained in my article of 7. November, which gave the external impetus to this storm in a tea-cup. It need scarcely be said that it was quite accidentally that this article came to be the central point of the contest. If the article had never been written, we should none the less have had our present debates, for the questions raised in the article were taken from life, and it was not possible to escape them.

The plenary session of the Central Committee passed a resolution approving the initiative taken by the Political Bureau of the CC, and commissioning it to realize this initiative for the extension of the workers' democracy. A resolution was then passed, the result of continuous preparatory work, and published on 7. December, about a month after the publication of my article, and was unanimously accepted by the Political Bureau of the Party, and by the presidium of the Central Control Commission.

### II. Why have we raised the Question of the Workers' Democracy again?

At the present time the main question being raised by the opposition is: why has the question of the workers' democracy been brought up precisely now, in December? And search is made for the possible causes which may have induced the Central Committee of the Party to bring up this question. There are quite a number of stories in circulation among the members of the opposition. I was told, for instance, that comrade Nevsky, one of our old workers, but one who has long since lost his sense of direction and commits one mistake after another, now joining the workers' opposition, now other anti-Party groups, has arrived in Petrograd. With reference to his arrival a report was spread abroad that the decision of the Central Committee — a "manifest of 7. December" — had been come to under some pressure or other, that the Central Committee had done this in order to soft-soap the Party, etc. And this is by no means the worst anecdote. There are people in the Party who crack even more despicable jokes at the expense of their Party.

Thus the main question is: why has this question been brought up just now? These same questions were discussed at the X. Party Congress, and that was only in 1921. Why do we renew the same discussion in the year 1923? Comrades, when replying to this question at one of the municipal meetings at Moscow, I stated that comrade Lenin himself had already given the best answer to the question.

At the X. Congress of our Party, he replied to this question, so to speak in advance. The X. Party Congress was occupied with the settlement of three great questions: First, the question of the new economic policy, secondly with the question of the workers' democracy, and thirdly with the formation of fractional groups. The question of the new economic policy I set entirely aside, for it belongs to an entirely different category: it is a great question, one upon which we shall probably debate again,

but is not at the moment on the agenda. But the questions of the workers' democracy and of the formation of groups within the Party are closely interwoven with one another. At the X. Party congress comrade Bucharin was our general speaker on the subject of the workers' democracy, whilst the speaker on the subject of Party fractions was comrade Lenin. These two addresses were closely connected with one another. Both speakers spoke on behalf of the Central Committee of the Party, and represented its views. Thus, after the resolution on the workers' democracy had been passed, comrade Lenin spoke as follows in his last speech against the formation of groups within the Party (I quote from the protocols of the X. Congress, and recommend all comrades having an interest in these discussions to accord careful study to the more important speeches held at the X. Congress): "We require one or two years for recuperation, certainly no fewer. Viewed from the standpoint of history, this in an insignificant term, but for our present conditions it is a considerable period". And then further, with italics accentuating the words upon which comrade Lenin desired to lay special emphasis: "One or two years in which we can recover from the famine, one or two years of regular supplies of fuel, so that the factories can work, and we shall receive a hundred times more support from the working class, and much more talent will arise from out of our midst. Nobody doubts this, and nobody can doubt it. At the present time we are not receiving such assistance, and this is not our fault. We are doing everything which can be done for this purpose. No one can maintain that the government, the trade unions, the Central Committee of the Party, have let the slightest opportunity slip by unutilized in this respect; but we know that desperate distress prevails and that hunger and misery reign, and we know that indifference arises everywhere out of this. We shall not shrink from calling the evil by its right name. It is this which is hindering the uplift of the activity of the masses."

Comrades, it seems to me that these words contain the solution of the riddle offered by the whole situation. At the X. Party Congress we passed an excellent resolution on the workers' democracy, and passed it almost unanimously. And upon this the leader and master of the Party stepped forward and said: Let us not forget that we need about two years to set the works and factories going again to any extent, and that then we shall receive a hundred times more support from the workers, then the workers will cease to be indifferent, and new conditions will form in the Party. Comrades, to me this appears to be the sole correct, the sole dignified, and the sole Marxian reply to the question upon which we are engaged — why we have raised the question of the workers' democracy at precisely the present juncture. There are some among us who have lost their faith in the revolution and in their own Party, and who have become a prey to ideas inducing them to suspect some piece of diplomacy behind every decision of the Central Committee of their own Party, instead of seeking the reason for this or that decision of the Party, as a Marxist should, in the objective conditions, in the economic situation, and in the position of the whole working class.

The Party is nothing more nor less than a part of the working class. All events happening in the working class are mirrored in one way or another in our Party. The debates within the Party reflect, in 99 out of a hundred cases, important events occurring among the working class. This applies equally to our present debate.

And comrade Lenin did not make any mistake as to the time required for the development. He said that one or two years would pass. Just slightly over two years have passed since that time. During this period the situation has changed among the working class. Whole strata of non-partisan workers have developed culturally, and our Party has grown as well (here it is not a question of quantity — our working class has not increased much numerically — but of quality). In the year 1921 there were only old men and women left in the factories, there was scarcely any life in the enterprises, the workers were in a state of indifference, they participated but little in Party, Soviet, and trade union life. Let us take the Obuchov undertaking for instance. Two years ago the majority of the workers here were old men, grumblers, who were occupied solely with the manufacture of lighters to be sold in illicit trade. Today the Obuchov workman is a very different man. For a year he has been working at making tractors, he has completely changed as a man and as a workman. That workman who pilfered metal, manufactured lighters, and sold them secretly, was no proletarian in the true sense of the word. It is true that he was very poor, as poor as a church mouse, often enough he had not even his daily bread; but he had not the proletarian psychology either. It was another matter when he began to work on tractors, and when he began to feel that agriculture, that the welfare of his country, required his work. He is now another man; an impulse towards activity is awakening within him. He now takes quite another interest in the affairs of the trade union, the Soviet, and the Party. We may observe the same picture of convalescence in other parts of the country as well. Indifference is vanishing, or beginning to vanish.

This trend of feeling among the masses is having its effect on our Party-masses and leaders, and on the whole of our Party life.

This is the reason why a quite different situation, and quite different conditions, have come to pass, just as foreseen by comrade Lenin. The working class has begun to thaw, so to speak; rank and file are growing and gaining firm foothold. This is the solution of the riddle, the answer to the question as to why the Central Committee of our Party in September of this year, began to think, that the time had come to raise the question of the workers' democracy again. In many respects the conditions are favorable, and the question may well be raised. At times we are obliged to occupy ourselves with diplomacy, as for instance when we have to do with Lord Curzon, when we have matters to settle with reference to international politics. But when we are speaking with our own Party, which has trained us and placed us in responsible positions, and in whose midst we have been reared — then we have nothing to do with diplomacy, then we speak as it is proper for revolutionists to speak, we say what we have to say as Bolsheviks — we say what we think. Should we be in error, the Party may point this out to us.

Thus the first complaint which we have to raise against our opponents is that they fail to examine into the developments going on in the working class, as Marxists should, in order to find in these developments the explanation which they seek, and the inspiration for their policy; instead of doing this, they degrade themselves and our whole Party by probing the hearts of the Central Committee, and trying to discover some despicable diplomacy here.

At the X. Party Conference, the most important questions were dealt with by comrades Lenin and Bucharin, men possessing the full confidence of the Party; and they said precisely the same as we are saying now. We need the workers' democracy as much as we need the air, without which we cannot breathe, for without it it is not possible to create a real proletarian environment for the growth of a proletarian party. And at the time of the X. Congress we stated that the realization of this democracy required certain developments in the working class itself. We said: one or two years will pass before we can reckon upon the needed support from the workers.

It is naturally possible to reproach us with: But you missed the right moment all the same; the question should have been raised in April or August, not in September.

We are, however, of the opinion that we did not miss the right moment, that we took timely action, and were the first to raise the question. The first article supplied on this subject — perhaps a very bad article as asserted by many, but I do

not think it was so very bad — was written, as you know, by me. The whole Party reacted on the article, so that we assume that the moment chosen was not so very unsuitable. There was of course no disagreement as to why the question had been raised in September and not in August, the discussion was on quite another matter — about which I shall speak further on.

### III. The fractions and groups.

The second important question occupying us at present is that of the formation of fraction or groupings. In my opinion this is one and the same question. It is known to you, comrades, that our opponents, comrade Preobrajensky and others, represent the matter somewhat as follows:

"At one time we had full liberty to form fractions within the Party. Although we passed through difficult times at the beginning of the civil war, still we were able to debate freely as to whether we could call upon the military specialists or not, whether the Brest peace should be concluded or not, and so forth. But since the X. Party Congress we have been limited, there is no longer any free expression of opinion in the Party. This shows that our whole inner Party policy has been mistaken since the X. Party Congress, and that the decisions of the X. Congress were thus mistaken in themselves. It is therefore necessary to re-examine the decisions of the X. Party Congress."

I have already pointed out that the decisions of the X. Party Congress were arrived at with the participation of comrade Lenin, and not only this, but that they were his decisions. He drew up the resolution passed by the X. Party Congress, he gave the address, he was the chief speaker of our Party at the Congress on precisely this subject. But let us assume that even comrade Lenin might be in error. Then the comrades should say this straightforwardly, and not make an attack on the disciples of Lenin, an action very much lacking in courage. But let us really look into the matter, comrades, and see if the conditions ruling in the Party at the time of the Brest peace were really so idyllic as to be worthy of being rendered eternal? Our Party is still so young that the majority cannot remember what happened at the time of the conclusion of the Brest peace, about five or six years ago. At that time a fraction had been formed, calling itself the "left communists". The leading theoretical leader of this fraction was comrade Bucharin, and one of its practical organizers was the late Ooritzky. A large number of leading members of our party joined this fraction, at one time almost one half of the Central Committee. This fraction expressed itself as opposed to the conclusion of the Brest peace. Its members violated Party discipline in this same hall and voted against the decisions of the Central Committee in the All Russian Central Executive, when the question of the Brest peace was decided. It issued its own newspaper. In a word, it acted like a party within the Party, like an independent fraction. And such a state of affairs is designated as normal! I should like to relate to you an episode with reference to that time, one which I have just got to know lately. At that time, now held up to us as an ideal period, the left Social Revolutionaries, who were also against the Brest peace, but in reality represented a petty bourgeois and counter-revolutionary party, had become so bold that they applied to the left communists with the official proposition that the Soviet of People's Commissaries, headed by comrade Lenin, should be arrested, and a new Soviet of People's Commissaries be appointed. We did not hear of this until a few days ago, when comrade Bucharin informed a great meeting at Moscow of it. When the debates over the fraction question had reached their present point, comrade Bucharin said to himself: This cannot be kept secret any longer, I shall tell the Party straight out how matters stood at that time. Please notice the following. At that time the fraction of the left communists was headed by excellent workers, old, tried, and tested. It is true that some of them had joined the Party only a short time before, as for instance the late Ooritzky, but there were also such old Party comrades among them as, for instance, Bucharin. They indignantly rejected the proposal of the left Social Revolutionaries. We thank them for not having arrested Vladimir Ilyitsch; but the fact that they did not inform their Central Committee of the matter, and that we did not hear of it until six years later, is an excellent historical illustration of what fractional struggle signifies in a Party governing a state.

When a party is not governing a state, then a fraction is still an evil, but a more or less bearable evil; in such a case the parties quarrel as to whether some newspaper be published or not, whether some secretary be appointed, etc. These disagreements have no reference to the government, to the question of power. But when a party is governing a state, and especially when civil war is raging, then every fraction struggle within the party is transformed into a struggle for power. This struggle is completely disastrous. And where other forces exist as well, hostile to us, as for instance the left social revolutionaries, this petty bourgeoisie gone mad, then we have that third party ready to take advantage of the dissensions of others for its own benefit.

In the resolution passed at our conference, I made use of the expression: the struggle between two fractions within a party which is governing the state contains the germ of two governments. And at the beginning of the year 1918 the germs of two governments existed. At the present time everybody smiles at the idea that Bucharin and Ooritzky could ever have seriously contemplated deposing comrade Lenin and replacing him by Pyatakov. But at that time the situation was such that this plan could be brought up in the party of the left Social Revolutionaries hostile to us. We were a hair's breadth removed from the most appalling disaster. The cause of the revolution hung by a hair. I shall never forget meeting comrade Lenin in the corridors of the Smolny, after we had received the news that the Germans, utilizing our hesitation with regard to the conclusion of the Brest peace, had sent their troops against Pleskau. Comrade Lenin said to me: "Everything seems to be lost. For once in my life I gave way to people who were leading the Party on the wrong path, and now it seems as if the revolution is to be lost through it."

When it is asserted that we should return to the times of the Brest peace, then we say: no, the lesson which we learnt at that time shall not be in vain. It is not such a very great misfortune when the Party commits this or that error, so long as it is made wiser by the experience. The errors committed at the time of the Brest peace have shown us that fractional struggle signifies the decay of the proletarian dictatorship. Comrades, consider more attentively the atmosphere prevailing in Moscow. We hear that Petrograd is provincial. I take the liberty of believing that this is not quite the case: Petrograd is the central, which is developing more and more. Comrades Saprionov and Preobrajensky say: "To be sure, out there in the provinces they are behindhand and have no comprehension for the attractions of freedom of fraction and discussion", etc. Thus we are simply provincial.

And look at what is going on in Moscow. Over every wire, and by wireless as well, in every commissariat and sub-commissariat, of which there are a million and one, the whole of the employees occupied in these commissariats and sub-commissariats are all buzzing with the same idea: there is something wrong in their Party, some rupture is preparing in the Party; let us see what is going to happen; let us wait and see how it will end. The same subject matter is busying bourgeois and "state official" — in inverted commas — Moscow. It is just as I said on the occasion of the Brest peace. As soon as any differences of opinion arise in Party life, these spread at lightning speed over the whole state apparatus, and the state apparatus splits and begins to whisper in corners instead of working. And the first to be delighted at a quarrel within the Party, should a quarrel really come about, would be the bureaucratic section of our state apparatus. Other parties may permit themselves squabbles, they may afford themselves this luxury — they possess neither commissariats nor specialists, nor state officials. But we may not do this. In the course of a discussion at Moscow, a young comrade observed that the whole "mischief" in the Party originated in its having seized power. Comrades, there is a small grain of truth in this. Formerly, before the Party took over power, and no such pressure was put upon it, it was not troubled with any questions of the state apparatus. Thus it would appear that the whole "mischief" arises from our having taken over power. But allow me to say, comrades, that all that is good also arises from our having taken over power. We formed the Party for the special purpose of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and placing the power in the hands of the workers.

About two weeks ago the discussion took such a turn that some of us said: "The resolution passed at the X. Party Congress, prohibiting the formation of fractions, must be cancelled. Unless this is done, no workers' democracy will be

able to accomplish anything". There are some less experienced and less diplomatic comrades who are still saying this. Thus, for instance, today's "Pravda" publishes an article by comrade Krylenko, attorney for the republic. So far as I am aware, comrade Krylenko does not belong to the fraction of "democratic centralism", but speaks solely as a jurist, from the viewpoint of legality, and says: "If you do not allow freedom of fighting from a definite platform, then the whole workers' democracy is abolished. I should like an exact definition of what a fraction or group is. If you do not want fractions, we shall of course agree, as demanded by Party discipline. But we are prepared to say that the workers' democracy is again, as it was after the X. Party Congress, merely a proclamation upon paper." I do not know in which direction comrade Krylenko tends at present, but it seems to me that his profession is leading him astray; he is anxious to have a neatly rounded juridical formulation of what a fraction is, what a group is, and what a workers' democracy is. Instead of taking life as it is, he is looking for some "code", and stumbles over it. But we are confident of being able to come to an agreement with such comrades as comrade Krylenko. We believe that he will comprehend that though it is difficult to draw up a code of criminal law under the conditions imposed by the new economic policy, the working out of a code on groups only requires the good will of a revolutionist who really understands the interests of the revolution, and does not put the question sophistically, asking: "Can I, for instance, join comrade Preobrajensky?" He receives the reply: "Yes, you can". — "Can I speak in the same nucleus?" — "Yes" — "Can one speak in five nuclei?" — "You can do that too". — "Then it seems to me that this is the solution of the riddle, and that you will have to admit freedom of fraction". In my opinion, such a viewpoint is unworthy of a revolutionist. No-one asks that anyone should not join others, or not take part in the nuclei. No, join the nuclei if you please, but do not forget that we are the sole legal Party in this country, that we are surrounded by enemies on all sides, and that we must not allow the formation of groups. Two weeks ago the question was raised as to whether we could cancel the resolution passed by the X. Party Congress, that is, comrade Lenin's resolution. Then we plunged into the fight. When these comrades saw that it would not be so easy to annul the resolution of the Party Congress, that although comrade Lenin is ill and unable to take part in the fight himself, he has schooled a number of other people during the course of thirty years, and these know how to defend his cause when he himself is chained to his bed (applause), then they retired to the positions which they had ready, and put the question as follows: it is possible to manage without fractions, but allow us groupings. To this we replied that we were very well aware that these groupings were nothing more nor less than the same fractions. Why hide behind pseudonyms? It is better to speak candidly on the matter, as comrade Krylenko does.

#### IV. The Composition of our Party.

Why may we not allow the formation of fractions or groups? Besides the reasons already given, we have additional motives for not allowing this. Consider, for instance, the inner situation of our Party, remember the difference in age of its members, the division of work obtaining in the Party, and the numbers of its personnel. Our Party is the largest in the world. It takes the first place among all the Parties in the Comintern. Whatever faults it may have, it was the first to carry out a great revolution, and has now held its position at the head of the victorious working class of Russia for 7 years. However many weak points we may discover in it, it possesses other, and so strong points, that these latter outweigh the former a million times.

Let us look at the Party as it really is. Above all, let us take into consideration the various ages of its members. Before the year 1905 there were 2,517 active members in our Party, between 1905 and 1916 7,914 joined, in the year 1917 35,154, in the year 1918 63,643, in the year 1919 107,840, in the year 1920 121,789, in 1921 40,419; in 1922 there were scarcely any new members admitted. 7,000 members joined without the year of their admittance being noted. This record comprises, after all Party purgings, 360,000 members. Up to the year 1916 we had 10,000 members, in the year 1917 30,000. All other members were admitted later, the overwhelming majority in the years 1919 and 1920. What does it signify when the membership of a party is thus constituted? Every party has its history. Our Party has a very peculiar history. The history of our Party comprises the



brief period of 20 to 25 years, and almost the whole of its membership is terribly young, and has only belonged to the Party for two or three years. This is naturally the result of the fact that we were working, underground for 20 years, under Czarism, at the task of laying the foundations of the Party, and during this time it was impossible for great masses to join the Party. 100,000 persons joined the Party between 1917 and 1918. This was the generation which the party had reared during the period of its illegal activity, during the period of the *Iskra*, the *Pravda*, and the *Svesda*, until October, and a little later than October. These members total one quarter of the membership of the Party, but three quarters are quite new comrades, who have joined since 1919, and who possess splendid qualities, for they have passed through the school of revolution, the school of the civil war. We know that they possess strong points putting any other experience in the shade. But there is something which they do not possess, comrades — and it is their misfortune and not their fault that they do not possess it — and that is the knowledge of the history of the Party, of the whole traditions of the Party, of that holding together which only the long years of underground work under the heavy yoke of Czarism could have brought about.

Further, comrades, you must observe the following circumstance: Until the year 1917 our Party was predominantly a labor party: There were only about 2% peasantry in the Party. Since 1917 and 1918 we have a large number of peasants in our midst — 66,000 Party members who till the soil, whilst at one time we had only a handful of peasants among us.

This is a very considerable stratum of a new class.

Besides this, we have a number of followers who go with us without exactly sharing our convictions. The Mensheviks formerly absorbed the greater part of this description of followers, but now that we are in possession of power, a part of them follow us. Great mass organizations have sprung up around us, as for instance, the Russian Communist Youth Union. This is a magnificent organization, but it too has its faults, and it has members who simply follow the crowd.

Besides this, comrades we must consider the question of division of work in our Party. I shall try to name the most important categories. We have "Party workers" (of these I shall speak in further detail later), that is, workers immediately occupied in the Party apparatus. And then we have Soviet administrators, Party administrators, trade union administrators. Further, economists, specialists, officials — representatives of the People's Commissariats, etc. And then we have military workers, comrades working in workshops, 66,000 comrades following the plough, an extensive group of Party members attending educational institutions, the students, whom I shall also mention again later on. I have recounted the main groups only. We can thus see that there is a great division of labor in the Party; and this cannot be otherwise, as we are governing a great state. This division of work has its advantages, but it has its negative aspects as well. Every comrade becomes specialized in some particular line, and is unable to form a clear survey of other lines. Now, comrades, look at our Party as it is. Of the old guard there remains only a small group of 10,000 men. An enormous number of new members have joined, who have been steeled in the fire of civil war, but lacking in adequate preparation and real Party schooling. There has been an enormous influx of peasantry, many other followers have joined us because we were successful, the division of work has ensued. Is it not inevitable that there must be tendencies in the Party which strive towards schism? Splits are possible with reference to the Soviets or to the Party; a rupture may take place between the old main body of the Party and the younger section; it is also possible that breaches take place in economic and productive matters, or in trade union affairs. Thus we have three possibilities of schism and decay. We are holding all these trends together with one single clamp — with Party discipline, with the decisions of the Party Congresses which hold the staff of the Party together. Imagine what would be the result, were we to add to all these fundamental tendencies still one more — the tendency to split up into groups. What would happen then? It would mean the decay of the Party, so much we must candidly admit to ourselves. It is not a question of whether we allow or do not allow this or that person to "join" someone else for the purpose of the existence of the Party itself; the fate of the whole Party is at stake. And therefore we ask the question, whether the decisions for which comrade Lenin fought, could only be defended by him alone; must we cancel them, or shall they continue?

## V. The Majority of the Central Committee and our Opposition.

This is the reason, comrades, why we, the majority of the Central Committee — the overwhelming majority if I am not mistaken: 55 to 3 (including candidates) — hold fast to our position. You may believe us, and I know that the majority of those present in this hall believe us (applause), that we are not clinging to the epaulettes of the Central Committee. It is well known to you that a few years ago some of us sat together with the Mensheviks in united Central Committees. We shall do our work in whatever place the Party sends us. But so long as the Party does not dismiss us, we shall do as comrade Lenin taught us to do, we shall fight energetically and passionately against the tolerance of the freedom to form fractions. (Applause.) We are prepared for the severe accusations which will be brought against us, for savage attacks against the representatives of the present majority of the Central Committee. But we have a thick skin, we have gone through a lot already, and we have managed to fight for our views under the most difficult circumstances. I tell you in advance: you will hear many lamentations, you will be told that we act ruthlessly, etc. But we shall fight to the end. You comrades of the opposition believe that you will now conquer the freedom of group formation, but we say to you: No. We are convinced that when the question is put to our Party generally with regard to this question, the unanimous answer will be: that our Party, pursuing its activity under the conditions of the new economic policy, surrounded on all sides by the bourgeoisie, and showing to the whole world an example of discipline, cannot tolerate any freedom to form fractions and groups. We do not doubt but that the Party will answer again, this time as at the time of the X. Party Congress, with the same reply.

Comrades, at the present time our debate has reached a somewhat difficult zone, just as in the year 1921. For me it is especially disagreeable to have to polemize against comrade Trotzky in his absence, but unfortunately comrade Trotzky was unable to come. The core of the present opposition is the fraction of "democratic centralism". We of Petrograd, poor provincials that we are, are little acquainted with this fraction, but in other organizations it caused enough commotion at the IX. X. and XI. Party Congresses (it was not for nothing that comrade Lenin named it the "fraction of the loudest shouters") — its adherents were Sapronov, Ossinsky, Rafael, and some other Ukrainians, in part really old Bolsheviks, in part old Mensheviks. These comrades hang out the attractive sign of "democratic centralism" as a designation for their fraction. It is written in our statutes that the Party works on the basis of democratic centralism. But as you are well aware, it is often possible to draw wrong conclusions from the best of premises. As early as the X. Party Congress, these comrades adopted their present line. Their motions were rejected by the X. and XI. Party Congresses. Comrade Lenin said that this fraction was more lacking in principle than any other which he had ever encountered in the course of his long struggles (the fraction of the "loudest shouters"). And a fresh question can scarcely be raised in the Party, before this flighty group appears on the surface again. "Aha! democracy?" they cry, "this is where we come in again." And now the old song begins again to a new tune: Allow fractions, etc. And now important members of the Central Committees have joined them — Preobraschensky, Smirnov, Serebryakov, comrades who on the motion of comrade Lenin were not re-elected to the Central Committee at the X. Party Congress of the RCP. All these are comparatively prominent workers; the Party has tried them, and proclaimed through Lenin's mouth: You are of no use as leaders for the Party. At the X. Congress this group was let drop collectively on the motion of comrade Lenin, who spoke openly to the Congress as follows: "These comrades are of no use as leaders of the Party, and I advise the Congress not to elect them." The Congress followed his advice and did not elect this group. Now these one-time members of the Central Committee have joined the group of "democratic centralism".

Comrade Trotzky has not expressed himself clearly. When the resolution was drawn up, he was opposed to any formulation containing severe condemnation of groups and fractions. But after he had convinced himself that we were really severe in our judgment of his present allies of the "democratic central", and had politically almost annihilated them in the public opinion of the Party, then he abandoned his reserve and spoke the words to which so much weight is attached.

## VI. Comrade Trotzky's "New Course".

We have before us an article by comrade Trotzky, one which has been published in our newspapers under the title of "The New Course". Unfortunately, this article is not expressed clearly either, and it is not possible for everyone to understand it immediately. I have even come across individuals who maintain that comrade Trotzky supports the resolution of the Central Committee in this article. Of course it is nothing new that the rope "supports" the man being hanged.

Comrade Trotzky's authority is as undoubted as the services he has rendered to the Party. Among ourselves there is no need to waste words upon this. But mistakes are mistakes, and remain so. When I made a mistake, I was pulled up sharp by the Party; Bucharin, too, had to undergo the same experience. When comrade Trotzky committed grave errors in the year 1921, comrade Lenin published two pamphlets on Trotzky's errors. Discussions were held all over Russia, and comrade Trotzky was slightly in the minority at the Party Congress.

And now we must go into this question in its essentials, without regard for the former services of those who commit errors.

I repeat, that comrade Trotzky's article is most unclearly expressed. But we, the majority of the Central Committee, distinctly see in it no support, but a thwarting of the line followed by the Central Committee and its unanimous decisions. We worked in collaboration with comrade Trotzky for a whole week on the resolution, in commissions and sub-commissions. It need not be said that every possible concession was made in order to arrive at an agreement with comrade Trotzky, for we lay very great value on his agreement. Who can fail to appreciate comrade Trotzky's enormous authority in the Party? We reached an agreement. And what happened? The unanimously passed resolution was published, and the next day this article by comrade Trotzky appeared, undoubtedly violating this unanimity.

You are naturally entitled to demand from me proofs in confirmation of my assertion that comrade Trotzky's article is in contradiction to the resolution of the Central Committee. I therefore pass to these proofs.

## VII. What is the Party?

It will be known to you that "Trotzkyism" represents a certain trend in the Russian labour movement. What was the essential character of the old "Trotzkyism"? I shall not go here into the peasant question, but shall deal with the questions occupying us in the immediate present. For instance, the question of what the Party is, the question of what inner Party democracy is, the question of what attitude we are to adopt towards fractions. Before entering our Party, comrade Trotzky fought with the whole of his characteristic passionateness for the idea that the labour party has to represent a conglomeration of various tendencies, various fractions, various groups, and various currents. At that time we even employed a special term, invented by Vladimir Ilyitch: "currenters", as a designation for those who pursued special "currents". In the liquidation question, comrade Trotzky repeatedly asserted that he fundamentally supported the liquidation idea. At first he admitted that it was wrong in many points, but still he held the liquidation idea to be a "permissible gradation" in the labour party. Many old comrades will recollect these words on the "permissible gradation", which I here adduce exactly as they were spoken: "In a word, let us live and let live. The Party is a conglomeration of separate fractions and currents."

Even at that time we replied: No, we cannot adopt this formula of "live and let live" as a rule of conduct. We said: "if the working class is to be victorious, there must be one united and steered Bolshevik party, and we cannot allow the liquidators, the Mensheviks, to go on working as they think best." They must be wiped out. (Applause.) This was the reason of the strife at the time when comrade Trotzky issued the newspaper named *Pravda* in Vienna. At that time we published the labor paper "*Pravda*" in Petrograd, with the aid of the workers' pence.

Is it possible for us to adopt the "live and let live" standpoint in the question of the "currents"? Now, as then we reply: No, for the Party cannot become a Noah's ark, where there are two of each kind; the Party must not become a conglomeration of separate groups and currents. The Party, working under the conditions created by the new economic policy, that is, under

fairly variegated conditions, must be a united Bolshevik party of the old Leninian type. Otherwise we are condemned to decay.

The chief error committed by comrade Trotzky in his article: "The New Course" consists of the fact that it contains a certain revival, a certain renaissance of the old views which recognized the "permissibility" of separate currents and gradations. "Let us live and let live"; it does not matter if varying opinions exist, we shall all manage together in the end. Of course this sounds very democratic. We may represent the matter somewhat as follows: On one side there stand the bloodthirsty old Bolsheviks, who will not allow other people to "live", and on the other side stand the good people with their motto of "live and let live". To be sure there are many people who appreciate this angelic goodness. But Bolshevism is not founded on angelic goodness, it was formed by the proletarian distrust of everything not belonging to Bolshevism, of everything which was not Leninism. Why did the Mensheviks go so miserably bankrupt? In the first place, of course, for the reason that they were opportunists, but also for the reason that under their rule the Party was formed on the mosaic-work principle: two of every kind, their whole party a conglomeration of currents. You will remember that Tschernov boasted that they had right socialists and left socialists in their ranks, that they valued freedom of criticism, etc. Indeed, for several months they enjoyed an extraordinary "freedom of speech"; but where are they now and what has become of their party? The same would have happened to us, had we not opposed ourselves irreconcilably to everything which was not Leninian Bolshevism.

## VIII. Our Party Apparatus.

Comrade Trotzky brings the whole might of his argumentation to bear against our Party apparatus, and writes: "The new course does not by any means signify that the Party apparatus is set the task of decreeing, creating, or establishing the regime of "democracy" within any definite term". And we read further, in italics: "The Party must subordinate itself to its apparatus". Then comes an exposition to the effect that a number of "Party workers" should be relieved of their posts and reduced to the ranks. I am by no means an unconditional worshipper of the apparatus and Party workers at any price, I have never counted myself among them, and I have attacked them as often as any one else. I have attacked bureaucracy severely, both in our Soviet press and at the All Russian Soviet Congress. I know the weak sides of our Party apparatus very well, and know that this must be renewed and democratized from below; but when I have to look on and see that Preobrazhensky, Sapronov, and Rafael cry out against the "Party workers" at every turn, and that they employ the term almost as much as an invective as the term "Tschekist" is used by the Mensheviks, then we step forward, and beg the Party to count us among the ranks of the unhappy "Party workers". You may as well know, comrades, that when the term "Party workers" is used, the Central Committees of the Party is meant: the Central Committee of the Party stamps its mark upon everything.

When we turn to statistics, we see that in the whole of this, our terrible apparatus of the Union of Socialist Republics, which comprises one sixth of the globe, there are 18,000 Party workers, the greater number of which are technical workers, including a large number of retiring and honest worker bees, who work on the spots where they have been placed by the Party. For indeed, though it be a disgrace to be an official and a Party worker in the despicable Menshevik machine, it is no disgrace whatever to be a "Party worker" in the proletarian apparatus of the Communist Party. Comrade Lenin censured the state apparatus, the whole Soviet machine. He said that it was still in part the old Czarist apparatus, which we had not succeeded in remodelling, and he censured this apparatus so severely that there was no point left uncriticized. And to whom did he appeal? To the Party apparatus. He submitted a definite plan for the re-organization of the workers' and peasants' control, and of the Central Control Commission. And if there was anything rotten in the Soviet state, then all eyes always turned to the Party apparatus, for nowhere else was protection from bureaucracy to be found. We must renew and reform our apparatus. Those comrades who maintain that our people remain too long in the apparatus are wrong. It is rather the contrary which is the case. Even in the Central Committee, in which the qualified Party workers are gathered together, 90 out of 134 responsible workers have been working for less than a year. Thus the Party

workers do not only not remain too long, but have not even time for the preparation required if they are to work fully into the great apparatus of the present day.

We, comrades, are "provincials". In Petrograd we have just begun with the re-election of the collective bureaus, of the secretaries; we are of the opinion that this is in accordance with the spirit of democracy, and that by this means the apparatus receives the necessary renewal from below. But it is utterly wrong to condemn the apparatus wholesale. A short time ago we conquered the Far East, and we had to form a new government there. It was necessary to create a Soviet apparatus, a Party apparatus, and an economic apparatus, etc. At the beginning we naturally did this by appointing suitable persons through the medium of our apparatus. And what else could we have done? How could we govern the state otherwise?

We do not want to assert, comrades, that ideal conditions obtain amongst us. It goes without saying that we have our faults like everyone else, and our apparatus is no more immune from rust than other machinery; it must be cleaned and polished, re-oiled, some few small wheels replaced. But there is no need to throw the baby away with the bath water. And it is here that comrade Trotzky commits his greatest error, for he is beginning to support people who want to do away with the main core of the Party apparatus. What is the meaning of the phrase: "The Party must subordinate itself to its apparatus?" Has the reverse been the case up to now? Comrade Kalinin was indeed right when he said, during a discussion at Moscow: "A few years ago the Mensheviks called us "committee workers", and in the mouths of the Mensheviks this was severe invective; and now you are implying with "Party workers" the same as the Mensheviks meant at that time with "committee workers"."

Yes, comrades, there is much in our apparatus which must be improved, renewed, and purified. Bureaucracy must be removed. But those who want to depose the apparatus wholesale must be put in their place, for our Party apparatus is the right hand of the Party.

#### IX. The "Old Guard" and the Youth.

Our next difference of opinion with comrade Trotzky refers to that passage in his article in which he says: "A degeneration of the "Old Guard" is to be observed several times in the development of history. Let us take the most recent and most striking historical example: the leaders and the parties of the Second International. We know perfectly well that Wilhelm Liebknecht, Bebel, Singer, Victor Adler, Kautsky, Bernstein, Lafargue, Guesde and others have been direct and immediate disciples of Marx and Engels. We know, however, that all these leaders — some partially, others totally — have, in the atmosphere of parliamentary reform and of the strong growth of the party and trade unions apparatus, degenerated towards opportunism." Bebel, Lafargue, and other dead leaders, who cannot defend themselves, are simply cited to point a moral; it was hardly possible to name the members of the Political Bureau, and therefore Bebel, Lafargue, and others are adduced. This is clear to each and everyone. And which disciples are meant is equally clear. Comrade Trotzky steps forwards and says: You are the immediate disciples of Lenin; the disciples of Marx went over to the side of the bourgeoisie under the influence of parliamentary conditions, from which we may conclude that the same may happen to you. Of course we cannot take a patent preventative that nothing of the kind could ever happen to us. Should that which comrade Trotzky is frightening us with really occur, the Party will turn us out ruthlessly enough. But what has really happened to us? Of all the persons adduced by comrade Trotzky, the only ones still living are Kautsky and Bernstein, and these too are mere political corpses adorning the very extreme right wing of the Scheidemann party, although they are both disciples of Marx and Engels. It is with these that we are compared, and the comparison is drawn in the hope that a shadow will thus be cast on the political trend of the majority of the Central Committee.

The rule of the bourgeoisie and parliament spoils people. That is true. But fortunately these elements do not obtain amongst us, and our past is cleaner than that of Kautsky and Bernstein, and we are carved from another wood altogether . . .

The third passage in comrade Trotzky's letter which calls for special objections on our part is that in which he speaks of the Youth. This is an especially wide and delicate question, and cannot be passed over in silence. Comrade Trotzky expresses himself as follows: "Since the Party apparatus is unavoidably

constituted out of the most experienced and proved comrades, the worst consequences of the bureaucratism of the apparatus will be its influence on the ideological-political formation of the young generation of the Party. It is precisely owing to this circumstance that the youth — the surest barometer of the Party — reacts against the Party bureaucratism in the most energetic manner." In other words, the question dealt with is that of the Party generations, of the fundamental core — the old Bolshevik guard and the Youth.

I have already quoted the main figures referring to the various ages represented among Party members. We are fully convinced that there are no differences of opinion between us and our young guard, and that there cannot be any. In no case must we permit the old Bolsheviks to hold the young in tutelage. This would be the most foolish thing which could be done. It is ridiculous to suppose that we could act in the manner of those people who say: the chicken must not try to teach the hen; listen to what your elders say, do as papa and mamma tell you; for we are the disciples of comrade Lenin, and know that, given like conditions, the rule is valid which says: the younger the better. We know that the day must come when we shall be relieved of our posts, that we old communists will be followed by the coming generation. It is incumbent on us to help this younger generation, to transmit to it the political experience gained by the Party during long decades. It is the task of the Party to prepare the way for the coming generation, to give it the opportunity of learning, so that it may be able to render service to the country later on.

I recall to your minds the demagogic observation made by Preobraschensky, to the effect that the students who had passed through the Sverdlov university gain culture and Marxian knowledge, but that this knowledge is of no use to them if they cannot apply it to real life. We know that all the best of the Sverdlov scholars and students of our universities hold circles, and participate in Party work. And it is well that they do so! But to assert that there is no room in our country for the application of Marxian knowledge, in a country where we have so many illiterates and political untaught; to assert to the youthful members that they will never be able to apply their knowledge, for the Party prevents them — that is bad demagoguery, comrades.

When comrade Preobraschensky makes such assertions, it is at least incautious of comrade Trotzky to make the observation which he does with regard to the youth, especially if we consider the circumstances under which he makes it. Comrade Trotzky makes another grave mistake here. It is not correct to regard this youth as a barometer which the Central Committee has to take as rule of conduct. The barometer according to which the Central Committee has to regulate its actions is — the workers in the workshops and factories. It is not our intention to depreciate the value of the other groups in the least. But if we are speaking of who is the "weather maker" for the Party, then it is a matter of course that this role is played by the workers. We seek these workmen alike, in the nuclei and at their work. The youth question has become particularly acute at the present time and we must come to a definite agreement. Should anyone succeed in erecting a partition between the main core of the Party and the youth, this partition would naturally be a great misfortune for us. We are therefore convinced that the overwhelming majority of the really proletarian youth, now learning under the guidance of the Party, will discern the intrinsic character of our differences of opinion, and will say to the praisers of youth: Do not praise us too much, we are not going to allow ourselves to be divided from the old fundamental core of the Party. We want to learn from the old main core of the Bolshevik Party. I think that the great majority of the youthful members will speak thus, and they will be right.

#### X. Conclusion.

I have not touched upon every point of dispute which might arise from Comrade Trotzky's article. His article is one which is not easily forgotten. In the old Bolshevik days we should have placed every sentence of the article under the magnifying glass, and not left one stone upon another, as Bolshevism was accustomed to treat wrong programmatic articles. We regret that comrade Trotzky should have violated the unanimity once arrived at by the unanimously accepted resolution of the Central Committee, and should have come forward with such an article. This article will be debated and re-debated everywhere. A discussion has

begun all over Russia. But everything has its good side. The whole Party, including our Petrograd organization, will consider the questions raised in this article. I hope that our organization will give a clear and definite reply to these questions. The composition of the Central Committee of our Party is well known to you; you know that it is the pick of the Party, sifted out 25 years ago. The whole Central Committee is agreed now even more than in Lenin's time, that comrade Trotzky is still committing a fundamental political error, as he did at the X. Party Congress, when comrade Lenin was obliged to oppose him.

But it need not be said that however much we may differ in opinion from comrade Trotzky in a number of questions, comrade Trotzky is and remains one of our most authoritative

leaders. Whatever comes, comrade Trotzky's co-operation in the Political Bureau and other organs is indispensable. And this is secured. Do not believe any rumours, legends, etc. There have been differences of opinion, and always will be. The Party will decide who is right, but we shall continue to work unanimously together.

We must make careful decision on all questions raised, and pay no heed to the malicious joy of our enemies the Social Revolutionists, the white guards, the Mensheviki. We are fully convinced that the unity of our Party is secure. Naturally, we need more than mere external unity, we need unity on the basis of Lenin's views. I call upon our Petrograd organization — the oldest organization of the Bolsheviki to exercise this unity!