

## THE SO-CALLED 'LENIN TESTAMENT'

This is an article that formed the basis of a talk given by Comrade W. B. Bland of the Communist League (UK) to the Stalin Society, and then printed in 1991.

'Lenin's Testament' - (1922-1923)  
By W. B. Bland for the Communist League (UK)

### The Charge

That in 1922 Lenin Advised the Russian Communist Party to Remove Stalin from the Top Post of General Secretary.

'In December 1922 in a letter to the Party Congress Vladimir Ilyich (Lenin - Ed.) wrote . . . a political document of tremendous importance, known in the Party history as Lenin's Testament. Vladimir Ilyich said; 'I propose that the comrades consider the method by which Stalin would be removed from this position (of General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union). ' N.S. Khrushchev, Secret Speech to 20th Congress CPSU, in Russian Institute, Columbia University (Ed.), 'The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism; A Selection of Documents', New York, 1956, p6, 7.

### Introduction

Khrushchev's charge - as above - is inaccurate in only one detail. Lenin did not write the document known as 'Lenin's Testament', it was in fact dictated by Lenin to one of his secretaries, Lidya Fotieva\*. However its authenticity has never been challenged. The passage concerned in Lenin's letter reads;

'Stalin is too rude, and this defect becomes intolerable in a Secretary General. That is why I suggest that the comrades think about a way of removing Stalin from that post'. V.I. Lenin, 'Letter to the Congress', 'Collected Works', Volume 36, Moscow, 1966, p596.

However, there are some puzzling features about Lenin's action in dictating this and some other passages in the letter.

### Lenin's Assessment of Stalin

One puzzling feature about the document known as 'Lenin's Testament' is that throughout Lenin's political life until late 1922, his assessment of Stalin was extremely high.

For example, as long ago as February 1913 Lenin was describing Stalin, in a letter to the writer Maksim Gorky\*, as 'a marvellous Georgian';

'We have a marvellous Georgian who has sat down to write a big article for 'Prosveshcheniye', for which he has collected all the Austrian and other materials'. V.I. Lenin, 'Letter to Maksim Gorky', 'Collected Works', Volume 35, Moscow, 1966, p84.

A little later, in December 1913 Lenin was characterising Stalin as the Party's leading Marxist analyst of the national question;

'The situation and the fundamentals of a national programme for Social-Democracy have recently been dealt with in Marxist theoretical literature (the most prominent place being taken by Stalin's article)'. V.I. Lenin, 'The National Programme of the RSDLP', 'Collected Works', Volume 19, Moscow, 1963, p539.

And as late as March 1922, at the 11th Congress of the Russian Communist Party, Lenin was defending Stalin against criticism from Yevgeny Preobrazhensky\* over the fact that Stalin held the posts of both People's Commissar of Nationalities and People's Commissar of State Control;

'The 'Turkestan, Caucasian and other questions . . . are all political questions! They have to be settled. These are questions that have engaged the attention of European states for hundreds of years. . . We are settling them; and we need a man to whom the representatives of any of these nations can go and discuss their difficulties in all detail. Where can we find such a man? I don't think Comrade Preobrazhensky could suggest any better candidate than Comrade Stalin... The same thing applies to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. This is a vast business; but to be able to handle investigations we must have at the head of it a man who enjoys high prestige, otherwise we shall become submerged in and overwhelmed by petty intrigue'. V.I. Lenin, 'The National Programme of the RSDLP', 'Collected Works', Volume 19, Moscow, 1963, p539.

Indeed, it was on Lenin's proposal that in April 1922, after the Congress, the Central Committee elected Stalin to the highest post in the Party - that of General Secretary;

'On Lenin's motion, the Plenum of the Central Committee, on April 3 1922, elected Stalin . . . General Secretary of the Central Committee'. G. F. Aleksandrov et al (Eds.); 'Joseph Stalin, A Short Biography', Moscow, 1947, p74-75.

'After the congress, the Central Committee, on Lenin's proposal, elected Stalin . . . as General Secretary of the Central Committee'. Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, 'Lenin', London, 1943, p183

'A new Central Committee.. voted to establish the post of General Secretary to run the Secretariat and named Stalin to this office. It is highly probable that Lenin initiated this decision'. R. H. McNeal, 'Stalin; Man and Ruler' (hereafter listed as 'R. H. McNeal, 1988'), Basingstoke, 1988, p67.

'It is.. fanciful for some Soviet historians, official and unofficial, to suggest that Stalin was not Lenin's personal choice for the post of General Secretary of the Central Committee to which he was elevated in April 1922'. A. B. Ulam, 'Stalin; The Man and his Era', London, 1989, p205.

'The obvious and indeed the only man with the knowledge, efficiency and authority for this key post (of General Secretary - Ed.) was Stalin. There can be no doubt that Lenin supported the nomination, which he probably initiated'. I. Grey, 'Stalin; Man of History', London, 1979, p159.

Clearly, something occurred in late 1922 to cause Lenin radically to alter the opinion of Stalin he had held until that date.

### Lenin's Assessment of Trotsky

There is a similar puzzling feature about references to Trotsky in the document known as 'Lenin's

Testament'. In it Lenin says;

'Comrade Trotsky . . is distinguished not only by outstanding ability. He is personally perhaps the most capable man in the present CC'. V.I. Lenin, 'Letter to the Congress', 'Collected Works', Volume 36, Moscow, 1966, p595.

It is, indeed, an important feature of Trotskyist mythology that during the period of Lenin's leadership of the Russian Communist Party Trotsky's relations with Lenin and the Party were relations of 'mutual confidence', and that Trotsky's conflict with the Party only began following Stalin's accession to the Party leadership. This picture, however, is quite false. In brief the following major policy disagreements and violent differences between Lenin and Trotsky are traced by dates.

In 1903;

At the 2nd Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in July-August. 1903, Trotsky's sympathetic biographer, Isaac Deutscher\*, records that;

'Trotsky was one of Lenin's most vocal opponents. He charged Lenin with the attempt to build up a closed organisation of conspiracy not a party of the working class. . . Lenin . . mildly and persuasively appealed to Trotsky. All was in vain. Trotsky was stiffening in hostility'. I. Deutscher, 'Prophet Armed; Trotsky; 1879-1921' (hereafter 'I. Deutscher, 1989 1'), Oxford, 1989, p80-81.

Shortly after the Congress, Trotsky wrote the 'Report of the Siberian Delegation' (of which he was a member). In this report he charged that Lenin 'resembles Maximilian Robespierre\*', although only as;

'a vulgar farce resembles historic tragedy'. L.D. Trotsky, 'Vtoroi Syezd RSDRP (Otchet Sibirskoi Delegatsy)', Geneva, 1903, p33.

Deutscher comments;

'Once he had made up his mind against Lenin, he did not mince his words. He attacked with all his intensity of feeling and with all the sweep to his invective'. L.D. Trotsky, 'Vtoroi Syezd RSDRP (Otchet Sibirskoi Delegatsy)', Geneva, 1903, p33.

In 1904;

In August 1904 Trotsky published his pamphlet 'Our Political Tasks', in which he strongly attacked as 'Jacobinism\*\*' Lenin's concept that a disciplined party was essential to lead the working people to carry through a socialist revolution and supported the idea of a 'workers' party' modelled on the lines of the social-democratic parties of Western Europe;

'Lenin's methods lead to this; the party organisation at first substitutes itself for the party as a whole; then the Central Committee substitutes itself for the organisation; and finally a single 'dictator' substitutes himself for the Central Committee. .... Is it so difficult to see that any serious group . . when it is confronted by the dilemma whether it should, from a sense of discipline, silently efface itself, or, regardless of discipline struggle for survival - will undoubtedly choose the latter course . and say; perish that 'discipline' which suppresses the vital interests of the movement. This evil-minded and morally repugnant suspicion of Lenin, this shallow caricature of the tragic intolerance of Jacobinism. . must be liquidated at the present time at all costs, otherwise the party is threatened by complete political, moral and theoretical decay'. L. D. Trotsky, 'Nos Taches Politiques', Paris, 1970, p192.

Trotsky's biographer Deutscher comments on this book;

'Hardly any Menshevik\* writer attacked Lenin with so much personal venom. 'Hideous', 'dissolute', 'demagogical', 'slovenly attorney', 'malicious and morally repulsive', these were the epithets which Trotsky threw at the man who had so recently held out to him the hand of fellowship, who had brought him to Western Europe, who had promoted him'. I. Deutscher, 1989 (1), p93.

However, Lenin was equally scathing about Trotsky. In October 1904 Lenin wrote;

'A new pamphlet by Trotsky came out recently. . . The pamphlet is a pack of brazen lies'. V.I. Lenin, 'Letter to Yelena Stasova and Others', 'Collected Works', Volume 43, Moscow, 1969, p129.

In 1909;

By August 1909 Lenin was writing;

'Trotsky behaves like a despicable careerist and factionalist. He pays lip-service to the Party and behaves worse than any other of the factionalists'. V.I. Lenin, 'Letter to Grigory Zinoviev', 'Collected Works', Volume 34, Moscow, 1966, p399-400.

In 1910;

In March-June 1910 Lenin was writing;

'Trotsky expressed the full spirit of the worst kind of conciliation, 'conciliation' in inverted commas . . . which actually renders the most faithful service to the liquidators\*\* and Otzovists\*\*. . This position of . . Trotsky is wrong'. V.I. Lenin, 'Notes of a Publicist', 'Collected Works', Volume 16, Moscow, 1963, p211, 251.

In December 1910, Lenin was no kinder to Trotsky, whose resolution said Lenin;

'Expresses the very aim of the 'Golos'\*\* group - to destroy the central bodies . . . and with them the Party as an organisation'. V.I. Lenin, 'The State of Affairs in the Party', 'Collected Works', Volume 17, Moscow, 1968, p23.

'Trotsky's call for 'friendly' collaboration by the Party with the 'Gobs' and 'Vpered\*\*' is disgusting hypocrisy and phrase-mongering. Trotsky groups all the enemies of Marxism. .. Trotsky unites all to whom ideological decay is dear, all who are not concerned with the defence of Marxism. struggle against the splitting tactics and the unprincipled adventurism of Trotsky!' V.I. Lenin, 'To Russian Collegium of the CC of RSDLP', 'Collected Works', Volume 17, Moscow, 1963, p20, 21, 22.

And at the end of 1910 Lenin was speaking of;

'The resonant but empty phrases of which our Trotsky is a master...Trotsky distorts Bolshevism, because he has never been able to form any definite views on the role of the proletariat in the Russian bourgeois revolution. That Trotsky's venture is an attempt to create a faction is obvious to all. Trotsky . . represents only his own personal vacillations and nothing more. In 1903 he was a Menshevik; he abandoned

Menshevism in 1904, returned to the Mensheviks in 1905 and merely flaunted ultra-revolutionary phrases.

One day Trotsky plagiarises from the ideological stock-in-trade of one faction; the next day he plagiarises that of another, and therefore declares himself to be standing above both factions. I am obliged to declare that Trotsky represents only his own faction and enjoys a certain amount of confidence exclusively among the Otzovists and the liquidators.' V.I. Lenin, 'Historical Meaning of Inner-Party Struggle in Russia', 'Collected Works', Volume 16, p375, 380, 389, 391.

In 1911;

In January 1911 Lenin was referring to Trotsky as;

'Judas Trotsky'. V. I. Lenin, 'Judas Trotsky's Blush of Shame', 'Collected Works', Volume 17, Moscow, 1968, p45.

In September 1911 Lenin declared;

'The 'Trotskyites . . .' are more pernicious than any liquidator. The Trotsky's deceive the workers'. V.I. Lenin, 'From the Camp of Stolypin Labour Party', 'Collected Works', Volume 17, Moscow, 1968, p243.

In October 1911;

'Trotsky expressed conciliationism \*\* more consistently than anyone else. He was probably the only one who attempted to give the trend a theoretical foundation. Ever since the spring of 1910 Trotsky has been deceiving the workers in a most unprincipled and shameless manner by assuring them that the obstacles to unity were principally (if not wholly) of an organisational nature.

The only difference between Trotsky and the conciliators in Paris is that the latter regard Trotsky as a factionalist and themselves as non-factional, whereas Trotsky holds the opposite view. . Trotsky provides us with an abundance of instances of scheming to establish unprincipled 'unity". V.I. Lenin, 'The New Faction of Conciliators, or the Virtuous', 'Collected Works', Volume 17, 1968, p258, 260, 264, 270.

And in December 1911;

'It is impossible to argue with Trotsky on the merits of the issue because Trotsky holds no views whatever. . In his case the thing to do is to expose him as a diplomat of the smallest calibre'. V.I. Lenin, 'Trotsky's Diplomacy and a Certain Party Platform', 'Collected Works', Volume 17, 1968, p362.

In 1912;

The Prague conference in January 1912 proclaimed the Bolsheviks alone to be the Party. In his paper 'Pravda'\*\*;

'Trotsky denounced Lenin's venture with much sound and fury. His anger rose to highest pitch in April, when the Bolsheviks began to publish in Petersburg a daily called 'Pravda'. . He thundered against the 'theft' and 'usurpation' . . committed by . . 'the circle which lives and thrives only through chaos and confusion'. I. Deutscher, 1989 (1), p198-99.

Lenin wrote in July 1912 to the editor of the paper;

'I advise you to reply to Trotsky through the post; 'To Trotsky'. (Vienna). We shall not reply to disruptive and slanderous letters. Trotsky's dirty campaign against 'Pravda' is one mass of lies and slander'. V.I. Lenin, Letter to the Editor of 'Pravda', 'Collected Works', Volume 35, Moscow, 1966, p41.

In August 1912 Trotsky's group got together with the Mensheviks, Jewish Bund\*\* and others to form an anti-Bolshevik coalition known as the 'August Bloc'. Trotsky's biographer Deutscher comments;

'Trotsky was that bloc's chief mouthpiece, indefatigable at castigating Lenin's 'disruptive work'. I. Deutscher, 1989 (1), p200.

In November 1912 Lenin was writing;

'Look at the platform of the liquidators. Its liquidationist essence is artfully concealed by Trotsky's revolutionary phrases'. V.I. Lenin, 'The Platform of the Reformists and the Platform of Revolutionary Social-Democrats', 'Collected Works', Volume 18, Moscow, 1968, p380.

In 1914;

Between February and May 1914 Lenin wrote;

'Trotsky has never yet held a firm opinion on any important question of Marxism.. At the present moment he is in the company of the Bundists and the liquidators'. V.I. Lenin, 'The Right of Nations to Self-Determination', 'Collected Works', Volume 20, Moscow, 1964, p447-48.

In May, 1914;

'Trotsky is fond of high-sounding and empty phrases. We were right in calling Trotsky a representative of the 'worst remnants of factionalism'. Trotsky. . possesses no ideological and political definiteness. Under cover of 'non-factionalism' Trotsky is championing the interest of a group abroad which particularly lacks definite principles and has no basis in the working-class movement in Russia. There is much glitter and sound in Trotsky's phrases, but they are meaningless. Joking is the only way of retorting mildly to Trotsky's insufferable phrase-mongering. Trotsky is very fond of using with the learned air of the expert pompous and high-sounding phrases, to explain historical phenomena in a way that is flattering to Trotsky. . Trotsky is trying to disrupt the movement and cause a split..

Trotsky avoids facts and concrete references .. because they relentlessly refute all his angry outcries and pompous phrases.

At the end of 1903 Trotsky was an ardent Menshevik. . . In 1904's he deserted the Mensheviks and occupied a vacillating position, now proclaiming his absurdly Left 'permanent revolution' theory. In the period of disintegration. . he again went to the right, and in August 1912 he entered into a bloc with the liquidators. He has now deserted them again, although in substance he reiterates their shoddy ideas'. V.I. Lenin, 'Disruption of Unity under Cover of Outcries for Unity', 'Collected Works', Volume 20, Moscow, 1964, p329, 331, 332, 333-334, 345, 346-7.

In 1915;

In July 1915 Lenin was declaring;

'Trotsky... as always entirely disagrees with the social-chauvinists\*\* in principle, but agrees as always, entirely disagrees with the social-in principle, but agrees with them'. V.I. Lenin, 'The State of Affairs in Russian Social-Democracy', 'Collected Works', Volume 21, Moscow, 1964, p284.

In the same month he was referring to;

'high-flown phraseology with which Trotsky always justifies opportunism. The phrase-banding Trotsky has completely lost his bearings on a simple issue'. V.I. Lenin, 'The Defeat of One's Own Government in the Imperialist War', 'Collected Works', Volume 15, Moscow, 1964, p275

And Lenin was denouncing Trotsky's support for the 'neither-victory-nor-defeat' slogan.

'Whoever is in favour of the slogan of 'neither victory nor defeat' is consciously or unconsciously a chauvinist; he is an enemy to proletarian policy... a partisan of the existing governments, of the present ruling classes. Those who stand for the 'neither-victory-nor-defeat' slogan are in fact on the side of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists, for they do not believe in the possibility of international revolutionary action by the working class against their own governments'. V.I. Lenin, 'The Defeat of One's Own Government in the Imperialist War', 'Collected Works', Volume 21, Moscow, 1964, p278, 279, 280.

Between July and August 1915 we find Lenin saying that;

'Phrase-lovers . . like Trotsky defend - in opposition to us - the peace slogan'. V.I. Lenin, 'The 'Peace' Slogan Appraised', 'Collected Works', Volume 21, Moscow, 1964, p288.

and Lenin was asserting that;

'In Russia, Trotsky. . . defends unity with the opportunist and chauvinist 'Nashe Zarya'\*\* group'. V.I. Lenin, 'Socialism and War', 'Collected Works', Volume 29, Moscow, 1964, p312.

In November 1915 Lenin was saying;

'Trotsky . . is repeating his 'original' 1905 theory and refuses to give some thought to the reason why, in the course of ten years, life has been by-passing this splendid theory. From the Bolsheviks Trotsky's original theory has borrowed their call for a decisive proletarian revolutionary struggle and the conquest of political power by the proletariat, while from the Mensheviks it has borrowed 'repudiation of the peasantry's role. .Trotsky is, in fact, helping the liberal-labour politicians in Russia who by 'repudiation' of the role of the peasantry understand a refusal to raise up the peasants'.V.I. Lenin, 'On the Two Lines in the Revolution', in 'Collected Works', Volume 21, Moscow, 1964, p419, 420.

In 1916;

In March 1916 Lenin wrote to Henriette Roland-Holst\*;

'What are our differences with Trotsky? . In brief - he is a Kautskyite\*\* V.I. Lenin, Letter to Henriette Roland-Holst, 'Collected Works', Volume 43, Moscow 1969, p515-16.

and in the same month was declaring;

'Trotsky . . is body and soul for self-determination, but in his case it is an empty phrase'.V.I. Lenin, 'The Peace Programme', 'Collected Works', Volume 22, Moscow, 1964, p167.

In June 1916 Lenin declared;

'No matter what the subjective 'good' intentions of Trotsky and Martov\* may be, their evasiveness objectively supports Russian social-imperialism'.V.I. Lenin, 'Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up', 'Collected Works', Volume 22, Moscow, 1964, p360

In 1917;

In February 1917 Lenin was writing respectively to Aleksandra Kollontai\* and Inessa Armand\*;

'What a swine this Trotsky is - Left phrases and a bloc with the Right . !!. He ought to be exposed'. V.I. Lenin, 'Letter to Aleksandra Kollontai', 'Collected Works', Volume 35, Moscow, 1966, p285.

'Trotsky arrived, and this scoundrel at once ganged up with the Right wing of 'Novy Mir'\*\*. . . That's Trotsky for you!! Always true to himself ' twists, swindles, poses as a Left, helps the Right'. V.I Lenin, 'Letter to Inessa Armand', 'Collected Works', Volume 35, Moscow, 1966, p288.

In April 1917 Lenin reported to the Petrograd City Conference of the RSDLP;

'Trotskyism; 'No Tsar but a workers' government'. This is wrong'. V.I. Lenin, 'Concluding Remarks, Debate on the Present Situation, Petrograd City Conference of RSDLP', 'Collected Works' Volume 24, Moscow, 1966, p150.

In May 1917 the Bolsheviks met the 'Inter-Borough Organisation', of which Trotsky was a member, to consider the possibility of a merger. At the meeting Trotsky declared;

'I cannot call myself a Bolshevik. We cannot be asked to recognise Bolshevism. The old factional name is undesirable' L.D. Trotsky, Speech at the Mezhraiontsji\*\* Conference, Institute of Marxism-Leninism, 'Against Trotskyism; Struggle of Lenin & CPSU against Trotskyism; Collection of Documents', Moscow, 1972, p122.

On 15 December 1917, the new revolutionary government of Soviet Russia signed an armistice with Germany, and on 22 December negotiations for a peace treaty began at Brest-Litovsk. The plan of Trotsky, who led the Russia Soviet delegation, was as follows;

'We interrupt the war and do not sign the peace - we demobilise the army'. I. Deutscher, 1989 (1), p175.

Lenin was strongly opposed to Trotsky's plan;

'Lenin opposed . . . my plan discreetly and calmly'. L.D. Trotsky, 'Lenin', New York, 1925, p135.

And so;

'Trotsky made a private arrangement with Lenin. . . What would happen, Lenin anxiously asked, if they (the Germans - Ed.) chose to resume hostilities? Lenin was rightly convinced that this was bound to happen. Trotsky treated this danger lightly. but he agreed to sign the peace if Lenin's fears proved justified'. I.Deutscher, 1989 (1), p375.

On 9 February Trotsky announced to the peace conference that;

'While Russia was desisting from signing a formal Peace Treaty, it declared the state of war ended with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria simultaneously, giving orders for the complete demobilisation of Russian forces on all fronts'. I. Deutscher, 1989 (1), p375.

Trotsky's delegation then walked out of the peace conference and returned to Petrograd.

On 15 February 1918, as Lenin had foreseen, Germany resumed military operations against Soviet Russia. On 18 February 1918, the Central Committee instructed its delegation to sign a peace treaty immediately. On 23 February 1918 the German government presented new peace terms, significantly harsher than the earlier ones. The Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was formally signed on 23 March 1918.

Lenin commented at the 7th Congress of the RCP in March 1918;

'That I predicted, has come to pass; instead of the Brest peace we have a much more humiliating peace, and the blame for this rests upon those who refused to accept the former peace'. V.I. Lenin, 'Political Report of the Central Committee, Extraordinary 7th Congress of the RCP', 'Collected Works', Volume 27, Moscow, 1965, p102.

As the Foreword to 'Against Trotskyism', issued by the Soviet revisionists in power in 1972, correctly expresses it;

'On the question of the Brest Peace Treaty, Trotsky maintained an anti-Leninist stand, criminally exposing the newly emerged Soviet Republic to mortal danger. As head of the Soviet delegation to the peace talks, he ignored the instructions of the Party Central Committee and the Soviet Government. At a crucial moment of the talks he declared that the Soviet Republic was unilaterally withdrawing from the war, announced that the Russian Army was being demobilised, and left Brest-Litovsk. The German Army mounted an offensive and occupied considerable territory. As a result, much harsher peace terms were put forward by the German Government'. V.I. Lenin, Political Report of the Central Committee, Extraordinary 7th Congress of the RCP, 'Collected Works', Volume 27, Moscow, 1965, p102.

And 'The 'Great Soviet Encyclopedia', issued by the Soviet revisionists 1974, comments similarly;

'No less adventuristic and demagogic was the position of L. D. Trotsky (People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR at the time) who proposed to declare the war terminated and to demobilise the army but not to sign the treaty. . As Trotsky, the head of the Soviet delegation was leaving for Brest, it was agreed between him and Lenin, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, that the negotiations were to be prolonged by all possible means until the presentation of an ultimatum, after which the peace treaty should be signed immediately. On January 28 Trotsky presented the adventuristic declaration that Soviet Russia would terminate the war and demobilise its army but not sign the peace. Trotsky refused further negotiations, and the Soviet delegation left Brest-Litovsk'. Great Soviet Encyclopedia', Volume 4, New York, 1974, p66, 67.

In 1920;

In December 1920 Lenin wrote;

'I have had to enumerate my 'differences' with Comrade Trotsky because, with such a broad theme as 'The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions', he has, I am quite sure, made a number of mistakes bearing on the very essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat'. V.I. Lenin, 'The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and Trotsky's Mistakes', 'Collected Works', Volume 32, Moscow, 1965, p22.

In 1921;

In January 1921 Lenin severely criticised Trotsky for dereliction of Party duty and factionalism;

'The Central Committee sets up a trade union commission and elects Comrade Trotsky to it. Trotsky refuses to work on the commission, magnifying by this step alone his original mistake, which subsequently leads to factionalism, becomes magnified and later leads to factionalism". V.I. Lenin, 'The Party Crisis', 'Collected Works', Volume 32, Moscow, 1965, p45.

and in the same month, Lenin criticised him for his proposal to 'militarise' the trade unions;

'Comrade Trotsky's theses have landed him in a mess. That part of them which is correct is not new, and what is more, turns against him. That which is new is all wrong. .Comrade Trotsky's political mistakes distract our party's attention from economic tasks. .All his theses, his entire pamphlet, are so wrong'. V.I. Lenin, 'Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin', 'Collected Works', Volume 32, Moscow, 1965, p74, 85, 90.

Even as late as in 1922;

There were serious differences between Lenin and Trotsky. Trotsky's biographer Deutscher describes a further rift between Lenin and Trotsky in 1922 over Trotsky's refusal to accept the post of Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars;

'In April 1922 an incident occurred which did much to cloud relations between Lenin and Trotsky. On 11 April . . . categorically and somewhat haughtily Trotsky declined to fill this office. The refusal and the manner in which it was made annoyed Lenin. Throughout the summer of 1922 . . the dissension between Lenin and Trotsky persisted. On 11 September . . Trotsky once again refused the post. . On 14 September the Politburo met and Stalin put before it a resolution which was highly damaging to Trotsky; it censured him in effect for dereliction of duty'. The circumstances of the case indicated that Lenin must have prompted Stalin to frame

this resolution or that Stalin at least had his consent for it'. I. Deutscher, 'The Prophet Unarmed, Trotsky, 1921-1929 (hereafter listed as 'I. Deutscher, 1989 (2)), Oxford, 1989, p35, 65-66.

Clearly, something occurred in late 1922 to cause Lenin radically to alter the opinion of Trotsky he had held until that date.

### **The 'Georgian Deviation'**

In July 1921 Stalin, speaking to the Tiflis Organisation of the Communist Party of Georgia, referred to the rise of nationalism in Transcaucasia;

'Nationalism Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijanian - has shockingly increased in the Transcaucasian republics during the past few years and is an obstacle to joint effort. Evidently, the three years of existence of nationalist governments in Georgia (Mensheviks), in Azerbaijan (Mussavatists\*\*) and in Armenia (Dashnaks\*\*) have left their mark'. J.V. Stalin, 'Immediate Tasks of Communism in Georgia & Transcaucasia', 'Works', Volume 5, 1953, p97

For this reason. Lenin proposed that Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia should, as a temporary measure, be united in a Federation. On 28 November 1921 Lenin wrote to Stalin stating that;

'A federation of the Transcaucasian republics is absolutely correct in principle, and should be implemented without fail'. V.I. Lenin, 'Memo to J. V. Stalin, 28 November 1921', 'Collected Works', Volume 33, Moscow, 1973, p127.

'This unification (in the Transcaucasian Federation - Ed.) was proposed by Lenin'. Great Soviet Encyclopedia', Volume 9, New York, 1975, p495.

On 29 November 1921;

'That proposal . . . was adopted by the Political Bureau unanimously'. J.V. Stalin, 'Reply to Discussion on CC's Organizational Report, 12th Congress RCP', 'Works', Volume 5, 1953, p234.

And it was confirmed by three subsequent decisions of the Central Committee;

'The Central Committee has on three occasions affirmed the necessity of preserving the Transcaucasian Federation'. J.V. Stalin, 'Works', Volume 5, 1953, p257.

As a result;

'The Transcaucasian Federation - the Federative Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of Transcaucasia - was founded on March 12, 1922. . . In December 1922, the Federative Union was transformed into the Transcaucasian Federative Soviet Republic. The Transcaucasian Federation existed until 1936. In conformity with the Constitution of the USSR adopted in 1936, the Armenian, Azerbaijanian and Georgian Soviet Socialist Republics entered the USSR as Union Republics'. J. V. Stalin; 'Works', Volume 5, Moscow, 1953, p421.

Stalin reminded the 12th Congress of the RCP in April 1923 why the formation of the Transcaucasian Federation had been considered essential;

'In a place like Transcaucasia . . it is impossible to dispense with a special organ of national peace. As you know, Transcaucasia is a country where there were Tatar-Armenian massacres while still under the tsar, and war under the Mussavatists, Dashnaks and Mensheviks. To put a stop to that strife an organ of national peace was needed, i.e., a supreme authority. . . And so . . . a federation of republics, and a year after that.. a Union of Republics was formed'. J.V. Stalin, 'Reply to Discussion on CC's Organizational Report, 12th Congress of RCP', 'Works', Volume 5, p232

'From very early times Transcaucasia has been an arena of massacre and strife and, under the Mensheviks and Dashnaks, it was an arena of war. That is why the Central Committee has on three occasions affirmed the necessity of preserving the Transcaucasian Federation as an organ of national peace. . The point is that the bonds of the Transcaucasian Federation deprive Georgia of that somewhat privileged position which she could assume by virtue of her geographical position. . Georgia has her own port - Batum - through which goods must flow from the West; Georgia has a railway junction like Tiflis, which the Armenians cannot avoid, nor can Azerbaijan avoid it. . If Georgia were a separate republic, if she were not part of the Transcaucasian Federation, she could present something in the nature of a little ultimatum both to Armenia, which cannot do without Tiflis, and to Azerbaijan, which cannot do without Batum.

There is yet another reason. Tiflis is the capital of Georgia, but the Georgians there are not more than 30% of the population, the Armenians not less than 35%, and then come all the other nationalities. . If Georgia were a separate republic, the population could be reshifted somewhat.. . Was not a well-known decree adopted in Georgia to reshift the population so as to reduce the number of Armenians in Tiflis from year to year, making them fewer than the Georgians, and thus convert Tiflis into a real Georgian capital?'. J.V. Stalin, 'Report on National Factors in Party and State Affairs, 12th Congress of RCP', 'Works', Volume 5, Moscow, 1953, p256, 257, 258-59.

However, both before and after its formation, the existence of the Transcaucasian Federation was opposed by a group of Georgian nationalists within the Communist Party of Georgia, headed by Polikarp ('Budu') Mdivani and Filipp Makharadze\* and known as the 'Georgian deviators';

'The struggle which the group of Georgian Communists headed by Mdivani is waging against the Central Committee's directive concerning federation dates back to that time (the end of 1921 - Ed.)'. J.V. Stalin, 'Reply to the Discussion on the Central Committee's Organisational Report, 12th Congress of RCP', 'Works', Volume 5, Moscow, 1953, p234.

'The national-deviationist opposition in the ranks of the Communist Party of Georgia arose and took shape in 1921. During the entire period of 1921-24 the Georgian national-deviationists carried on a fierce struggle against the Leninist and Stalinist national policy of our Party'. L. P. Beria, 'On the History of Bolshevik Organisations in Transcaucasia', London, 1939, p167.

Later, many of the 'Georgian deviators' joined the Trotskyist opposition;

'In 1924 a considerable number of the national-deviationists joined what was then the Trotskyite anti-Party opposition'. L. P. Beria, *ibid.*, p167.

Stalin pointed out to the 12th Congress that fear of Great Russian chauvinism was obviously not the cause of the 'Georgian deviation', since the 'Georgian deviators' supported the entry of Georgia into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as an independent state;

'There has been and still is a group of Georgian Communists who do not object to Georgia uniting with the Union of Republics, but who do object to this union being effected through the Transcaucasian Federation. These statements indicate that on the national question the attitude towards the Russians is of secondary importance in Georgia, for these comrades, the deviators (that is what they are called), have no objection to Georgia joining the Union directly; that is, they do not fear Great-Russian chauvinism, believing that its roots have been cut in one way or another or at any rate, that it is not of decisive importance'. J. V. Stalin, 'Report on National Factors in Party and State Affairs, 12th Congress of RCP', 'Works', Volume 5, Moscow, 1953, p257.

He assessed the cause of the 'Georgian deviation' as the desire of the Georgian nationalists not to lose the geographical advantages which an independent Georgia would possess, advantages of which they wished to take advantage;

'It is these geographical advantages that the Georgian deviators do not lose.. that are causing our deviators to oppose federation. They want to leave the federation, and this will create legal opportunities for independently performing certain operations which will result in the advantageous position enjoyed by the Georgians being fully utilised against Azerbaijan and Armenia. And all this would create a privileged position for the Georgians in Transcaucasia. Therein lies the whole danger. The Georgian deviators . . . are pushing us on to the path of granting them certain privileges at the expense of the Armenian and Azerbaijanian Republics. But that is a path we cannot take, for it means certain death to . . Soviet power in the Caucasus'. J. V. Stalin, 'Report on National Factors in Party and State Affairs, 12th Congress of RCP', 'Works', Volume 5, Moscow, 1953, p258, 261.

The 'Georgian Deviators', while dominating the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, formed only a small minority within the Communist Party of Georgia as a whole;

'The Mdivani group has no influence in its own Georgian Communist Party. . The Party has held two congresses; the first congress was held at the beginning of 1922, and the second was held at the beginning of 1923. At both congresses the Mdivani group, and its idea of rejecting federation, was emphatically opposed by its own Party. At the first congress, I think, out of a total of 122 votes he obtained somewhere about 18; and at the second congress, out of a total of 144 votes he obtained about 20'. J. V. Stalin, 'Reply to the Discussion on the Central Committee's Organisational Report, 12th Congress of PCP', 'Works', Volume 5, Moscow, 1953, p234-35.

Nevertheless, even after the Transcaucasian Federation had been formed against the objections of the 'Georgian Deviators', the latter did all they could to sabotage the functioning of the federation;

'Mdivani and his supporters, constituting a majority on the Georgian Communist Party Central Committee, virtually slowed down the economic and political union of the Transcaucasian Republics and were intent, in essence, on keeping Georgia isolated'. V.I. Lenin, 'Collected Works', Volume 45, Moscow, 1970, p750.

'The Mdivani group, now joined by Makharadze and his followers, protested the infringement on Georgian sovereignty and did everything in its power to prevent implementation of the federal union's directives'. P. G. Suny, 'The Making of the Georgian Nation', London, 1989, p215.

'The Georgians sabotaged as best they could the measures taken to bring about the economic integration of the three republics. They installed military guards on the frontiers of the Georgian republic, demanded residence permits, etc.' M. Lewin, 'Lenin's Last Struggle', London, 1969, p45.

At the 12th Congress of the RCP in April 1923 Grigory ('Sergo') Ordzhonikidze\*, First Secretary of the Transcaucasian Territorial Party Committee';

'accused the 'deviationists', Mdivani and Makharadze, of a series of improper activities - refusing to take down customs barriers, selling a Soviet ship to foreigners, negotiating with the Ottoman Bank, and closing the frontiers of Georgia to hungry refugees from the North Caucasus and the Volga region... More important, he condemned the Georgian government's failure to implement a radical land reform and eliminate once and for all the noble landlords'. R. G. Suny, op. cit., p218.

The policy of maintaining the Transcaucasian Federation was continued as preparations were made to form the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. On 6 October 1922 the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party decided;

'To have Transcaucasia enter the union as one unit'. R. G. Suny, op. cit., p216.

However;

'the Georgian leadership in Tiflis insisted on Georgia's separate entry.. . From Tiflis the Georgian leaders wired Moscow in protest and heatedly criticised the authoritarianism of the Transcaucasian Territory Party Committee'.R. G. Suny, op. cit., p216.

'The Georgians. . protested to Moscow, demanding the disbandment of the projected federation. To this request Stalin replied on October 16 in the name of the Central Committee, stating that it was unanimously rejected'. R. Pipes, 'The Formation of the Soviet Union', Cambridge (USA), 1964, p274

A group of the 'Georgian Deviators', headed by Kate Tsintsadze\* and Sergey Kavtaradze\* then telegraphed a protest, making a strong attack on Ordzhonikidze, directly to Lenin, who rebuked them sharply and defended Ordzhonikidze in a telegram of reply dated 21 October 1922;

'I am surprised at the indecent tone of the direct wire message sent by Tsintsadze and others. . . I was sure that all the differences had been ironed out by the CC Plenum resolutions with my indirect participation and with the direct participation of Midivani. That is why I resolutely condemn the abuse against Ordzhonikidze and insist that your conflict should be referred in a decent and loyal tone for settlement by the RCP CC Secretariat'. V.I. Lenin, Telegram to K.M. Tsintsadze and S. I. Kavtarddze, 21 October 1922, 'Collected Works',

On receiving Lenin's rebuke, the bloc of 'Georgian Deviators', who formed nine of the eleven members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, resigned in protest;

'Faced with Lenin's fury and isolated from the central leaders, the Georgian Central Committee took an unprecedented step; on October 22 they resigned en masse. Ordzhonikidze quickly appointed a new Central Committee of people who agreed with the positions taken up in Moscow, but the Mdivani-Makharadze stepped up their protests'. R. C. Suny, op. cit., p216.



On 25 November the Politburo of the Central Committee decided to send a commission to Georgia, headed by People's Commissar for Internal Affairs Feliks Dzerzhinsky\*;

'To examine urgently the statements by members of the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party who had resigned, and to work out measures to establish tranquillity in the Georgian Communist Party'. Note to; V.I. Lenin, 'Collected Works', Volume 45, Moscow, 1970, p656-57.

Dzerzhinsky reported the findings of his commission to Lenin on 12 December 1922, including the fact that;

'The commission had decided to recall to Moscow the leaders of the former Georgian Central Committee, who were held responsible for everything'. M. Lewin, op. cit., p68.

Then, at the very end of December 1922, Lenin, who had initiated the concept of the Transcaucasian Federation, who had denounced the 'Georgian deviators', and defended Ordzhonikidze against their attacks, suddenly reversed his position on these questions. In the document known as 'Lenin's Testament' he dictated to his secretary Maria Volodicheva on 30 December 1922, he implied that the charges of 'Georgian nationalism' levelled against the 'Georgian deviators' were 'imaginary' (and the product of 'Great Russian chauvinism on the part of Dzerzhinsky');

'Comrade Dzerzhinsky, who went to the Caucasus to investigate the 'crime' of those 'nationalist-socialists', distinguished himself there by his truly Russian frame of mind (it is common knowledge that people of other nationalities who have become Russified overdo this Russian frame of mind)'. V.I. Lenin, 'The Question of Nationalities, or 'Autonomisation'', 'Collected Works', Volume 36, Moscow, 1966, p606.

However, Lenin placed the main blame for this 'erroneous policy of Great Russian chauvinism' on Stalin. He declared that it was necessary;

'To defend the non-Russian from the onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great Russian chauvinist, in substance a rascal and a tyrant... I think that Stalin's . . . spite against the notorious 'nationalist-socialism' played a fatal role here. In politics spite generally plays the basest of roles'. V.I. Lenin, 'The Question of Nationalities, or 'Autonomisation'', 'Collected Works', Volume 36, Moscow, 1966, p606.

On the following day, 31 December 1922, Lenin dictated a postscript on the same lines, referring to Stalin as;

'The Georgian who. . . casually flings about accusations of 'nationalist-socialist', whereas he himself is a real and true nationalist-socialist' and even a vulgar Great-Russian bully)...The political responsibility for all this truly Great-Russian nationalist campaign must, of course, be laid on Stalin and Dzerzhinsky'. V.I. Lenin, 'The Question of Nationalities, or 'Autonomisation'', 'Collected Works', Volume 36, Moscow, 1966, p606

By March 1923 Lenin was dictating a letter to Trotsky asking him to defend the case of the 'Georgian deviators' in the Central Committee;

'It is my earnest request that you should undertake the defence of the Georgian case in the Party CC. The case is now under 'persecution' by Stalin and Dzerzhinsky, and I cannot rely on their impartiality. Quite the contrary, I would feel at ease if you agreed to undertake this defence'. V.I. Lenin, 'Letter to L. D. Trotsky, 5 March 1923', 'Collected Works', Volume 45, Moscow, 1970, p607

Trotsky declined to intervene in the affair;

'On the plea of ill health'. Note to V.I. Lenin, 'Collected Works', Volume 45, Moscow, 1970, p757.

On the following day, Lenin dictated a letter to the leading 'Georgian deviators', giving them his whole-hearted support to their case and offering to assist it with notes and a speech;

'I am following your case with all my heart. I am indignant over Ordzhonikidze's rudeness and the connivance of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky. I am preparing for you notes and a speech'. V.I. Lenin, 'Letter to P. G. Mdivani, F. Y. Makharadze and Others, 6 March 1923', 'Collected Works', Volume 45, Moscow, 1970, p608.

In conclusion it may be added that Trotsky's efforts in 1923 to persuade the Central Committee to adopt the line of the 'Georgian deviators' and abolish the Transcaucasian Federation were heavily defeated;

'Trotsky's motion in the Politburo on March 26 to recall Ordzhonikidze, decentralise the Transcaucasian Federation and recognise that the minority in the Communist Party of Georgia had not been 'deviationists', failed by six to one'. R.G.Suny, op. cit., p218.

Clearly, something occurred in late 1922 to cause Lenin radically to alter the opinion on Transcaucasia he had held until that date. And this was the same time at which something occurred to cause him radically to alter the opinions he had held of Stalin and Trotsky until that date.

Lenin's Illness

Lenin fell seriously ill in 1921;

'Lenin fell seriously ill towards the end of 1921 and was forced to rest for several weeks'. M.Lewin, op. cit., p33.

'On 23 April 1922 Lenin underwent surgery to remove one of the bullets fired at him in an assassination attempt by the Socialist Revolutionary Fanya Kaplan on 30 August 1918.' Note to; V.I. Lenin; 'Collected Works', Volume 33, Moscow, 1966, p527.

Then, on 26 May 1922;

'Catastrophe struck; his right hand and leg became paralysed and his speech was impaired, sometimes completely so. . . his convalescence was slow and tedious. . . He never fully regained his health. The return to public life was not to last long'. M. Lewin, op. cit., p33, 34.

and on 16 December, Lenin suffered;



'Two dangerous strokes'. M. Lewin, *ibid.*, pxxii.

and furthermore;

'On December 23 he . . . suffered another attack of his illness... He realised next morning that once again a part of his body, his right hand and leg, was paralysed'. M. Lewin, *op. cit.*, p73.

On 10 March 1923;

'A new stroke paralyses half of Lenin's body and deprives him of his capacity to speak. Lenin's political activity is finished'. M. Lewin, *op. cit.*, pxxiv.

Lenin died on 21 January 1924. The doctors who performed the autopsy on Lenin on 22 January found that;

'The basic disease of the deceased was disseminated vascular arteriosclerosis based on premature wearing out of the vessels. The narrowing of the lumen of the cerebral arteries and the disturbances of the cerebral blood supply brought about focal softening of the brain tissue which can account for all symptoms of the disease (paralysis, disturbance of speech). R. Payne, 'Report on the Pathological-Anatomical Examination of the Body of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin', 'The Life and Death of Lenin', London, 1967, p632.

The controversial document known as 'Lenin's Testament' was dictated between 23 and 31 December 1922, with a supplement dated 4 January 1923, after Lenin had already suffered four severe strokes which had adversely affected his brain function. Thus Lenin's radical changes of opinion on Stalin, on Trotsky and on Transcaucasia are partly explicable by psycho-pathological factors.

### **The Role of Krupskaya**

However, the puzzles of Lenin's remarkable changes of opinion up on Stalin, on Trotsky and on Transcaucasia are not explicable on psycho-pathological grounds alone. The political role of Krupskaya must be examined to unravel the puzzle further. Although on 18 December 1922 a Plenum of the Central Committee, had;

'Made Stalin personally responsible for the observance of the regime prescribed for Lenin by the doctors,' R.H. McNeal (1988), p73.

Nevertheless, Stalin was prevented from seeing Lenin;

'Though virtually Lenin's legal guardian, Stalin never saw his charge in person', R.H. McNeal (1988), p73.

In fact after 13 December, Stalin never saw Lenin alive at all;

'The last time Stalin saw Lenin alive.. Was 13 December', R.H. McNeal (1988), p73.

This was supposedly for strict medical rules, since;

'Strict rules were established, and it was agreed that no visitors should be allowed.. Except for the doctors immediate family, he was permitted to see only his secretaries. .. He was to be isolated almost as completely as a prisoner in the Peter Paul fortress'. R. Payne, *op. cit.*, p555.

In these conditions of isolation, an extremely important role was played by Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya\*. Her biographer Robert McNeal\* speaks of Krupskaya's;

'Long personal antipathy to Stalin'. R.H. McNeal, 'Bride of the Revolution; Krupskaya and Lenin (hereafter referred to as 'R. H. McNeal (1973)', London, 1973, p254.

After Lenin's death in 1924, Krupskaya participated in the Opposition. McNeal speaks of her;

'Readiness to lean towards the opposition. Krupskaya . . . really stood with the opposition. It date on her entry into this status. Krupskaya was in reality coming round to . . . signing a manifesto of protest against official policy. This document was the work of Zinoviev\*. ... Kamenev\*, Krupskaya and Sokolnikov\* (the Commissar of Finance) jointly signed a 'platform' attacking the leadership. . . It was circulated among members of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission. The 14th Party Congress (in December 1925) was the pinnacle of Krupskaya's career in the opposition. It was left to her to begin the opposition's critique. Krupskaya remained in the opposition . . . until October 1926. She signed the major political manifesto that the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition produced in this period, the 'Declaration of the Thirteen' ... along with another protest against Soviet policy in the English General Strike of 1926'. R.H. McNeal (1973), *ibid.*, p250, 251. 252, 253, 256.

'Krupskaya stood firmly behind Zinoviev and Kamenev.. . She was now eager to testify in favour of Zinoviev's interpretation of Leninism and against socialism in one country'. I.Deutscher (1989, 2), p247.

At the 15th Conference of the CPSU in November 1926, Stalin hinted that Krupskaya had broken with the opposition;

'Is it not a fact that Comrade Krupskaya, for instance, is leaving the opposition bloc? (Stormy applause)'. J.V. Stalin, 'Reply to the Discussion on the Report on 'The Social Democratic Deviation in our Party'', 'Works', Volume 8, Moscow, 1954, p371.

But not until six months later, in May 1927, did Krupskaya herself confirm this;

'On May 20 1927, 'Pravda' carried a short, undated note from Krupskaya to the editor. In it she gave the Party and the public at large the first confirmation that she had left the opposition. . . There was no word of repentance on any specific issue'. R. H. McNeal (1973), p261-62.

Afterwards,

'She even explained her membership of the opposition as if it had been quite correct'. R.H. McNeal (1973), p262-63.

Robert Payne\* - a biographer of Lenin who is violently antagonistic to Stalin - admits that Krupskaya took advantage of her role during Lenin's illness to feed selected items of 'information' to him;

'Krupskaya . showed not the slightest intention of carrying out the orders of the doctors and the Politburo; and so small scraps of information were fed to Lenin. . . While he lay ill, she was his ears and eyes, his sole powerful contact with the outside world'. R.Payne, op. cit., p555-56.

These selected items of 'information' were naturally hostile to Stalin, and favourable to Trotsky and to the 'Georgian deviators' and Krupskaya's biographer agrees that Stalin was justified in suspecting her of having influenced Lenin's attitude towards him in 1923-24;

'She (Krupskaya - Ed.) may have influenced Lenin's attitude toward Stalin, intentionally or otherwise. . Stalin is justified in suspecting that she had, as he later intimated'. R.H. McNeal (1973), p223.

while Payne is even more frank;

'Krupskaya did what she had to do; she waged war against Stalin'. R.Payne, op. cit., p563.

On 22 December Stalin rebuked Krupskaya on the telephone for her role in feeding selective items of 'information' to Lenin and threatened to bring the matter before the Central Control Commission of the CPSU. On the following day she wrote to a letter of complaint to Lev Kamenev\* on Stalin's 'rudeness';

'Stalin subjected me to a storm of the coarsest abuse yesterday about a brief note that Lenin dictated to me. . I know better than all the doctors what can and what cannot be said to Ilyich, for I know what disturbs him and what doesn't. And in any case I know better than Stalin. I have no doubt as to the unanimous decision of the Control Commission with which Stalin takes it upon himself to threaten me, but I have neither the time nor the energy to lose in such a stupid farce'. N. K. Krupskaya, 'Letter to Lev Kamenev, 23 December 1922', M. Lewin, op.cit., p152-53.

When this incident came to Lenin's knowledge, on 5 March 1923 he wrote to Stalin saying;

'You have been so rude as to summon my wife to the telephone and use bad language. . . . What has been done against my wife I consider having been done against me as well. I ask you, therefore, to think it over whether you are prepared to . make your apologies, or whether you prefer that relations between us should be broken off'. V.I. Lenin, 'Letter to J. V. Stalin, 5 March 1923', 'Collected Works', Volume 45, Moscow, 1970, p607-08.

Lenin's sister, Maria Ullyanova\*, wrote to the Presidium of the 1926 Joint Plenum of the CC and CCC, stating that;

'Stalin offered to apologise'. Note to; V.I. Lenin, 'Collected Works', Volume 45, Moscow, 1970, p75

### **The Subsequent History of the 'Testament'**

On 18 May 1924 Krupskaya sent the 'Testament' to Lev Kamenev, who passed it on to Stalin, as General Secretary. On 19 May Stalin passed the documents to the steering committee for the next (13th) Congress, which was due to begin on 23 May 1924.

By a vote of 30-10, the steering committee resolved not to publish the document, but to read it to a closed session of delegates;

'With explanations that Lenin had been ill'. R.H. McNeal (1988), p110.

'As regards publishing the 'will', the congress decided not to publish it, since it was addressed to the congress and was not intended for publication'. J.V. Stalin, 'Speech to Joint Plenum of CC & CCC of CPSU', 'Works', Volume 10, Moscow, 1954, p181.

First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev, in his secret speech to the 20th Congress of the CPSU(B) in February 1956, confirmed that Lenin's 'Testament';

'Was made known to the delegates at the 13th Party Congress who discussed the question of transferring Stalin from the position of Secretary General'. N.S. Khrushchev, op. cit., p7.

At the Congress itself, in view of the criticism of him made in 'Lenin's Testament', Stalin offered his resignation as General Secretary;

'This question. was discussed by each delegation separately, and all the delegations unanimously, including Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev\*, obliged Stalin to remain at his post. What could I do? Desert my post? That is not in my nature. I have never deserted any post, and I have no right to do so. . When the Party imposes an obligation upon me, I must obey.' J.V. Stalin, 'Speech to Joint Plenum of CC & CCC of CPSU', 'Works', Volume 10, Moscow, 1954, p181.

Khrushchev confirms that;

'The delegates (to the 13th Party Congress - Ed.) declared themselves in favour of retaining Stalin in this post'. N.S. Khrushchev, op. cit., p7.

At the first meeting of the Central Committee elected at the 13th Congress of the Party, and again a year later, Stalin offered his resignation, and each time it was rejected;

'At the very first plenum of the Central Committee after the 13th Congress, I asked the plenum to release me from my duties as General Secretary.. A year later I again put in a request to the plenum to release me, but I was again obliged to remain at my post. What else could I do?' J.V. Stalin, *ibid.*, p181

In 1925 the Trotskyist Max Eastman\* published the book 'Since Lenin Died' which included excerpts from 'Lenin's Testament. As Stalin said in October 1927;

'There is a certain Eastman, a former American Communist who was later expelled from the Party. This gentleman, who mixed with the Trotskyists in Moscow, picked up some rumours and gossip about Lenin's 'will', went abroad and published a book entitled 'Since Lenin Died', in which he did his best to blacken the Party, the Central Committee and the Soviet regime, and the gist of which was that the Central Committee of our Party was 'concealing' Lenin's 'will'. J.V. Stalin, 'Speech to Joint Plenum of CC & CCC of CPSU', 'Works', Volume 10, 1954, p178-79.

In September 1925, in a statement published in 'Bolshevik', Trotsky publicly dissociated himself from Eastman and denied that Lenin's letter to the Congress constituted any form of 'testament', which would have been quite alien to Party practice;

'In several parts of his book Eastman says that the Central Committee concealed' from the Party a number of exceptionally important documents written by Lenin in the last period of his life (it is a matter of letters on the national question, the so-called 'will', and others); there can be no other name for this than slander against the Central Committee of our Party. From what Eastman says it may be inferred that Vladimir Ilyich intended those letters, which bore the character of advice on internal organisation, for the press. In point of fact, that is absolutely untrue. . It goes without saying that all those letters and proposals . . were brought to the knowledge of the delegates at the 12th and 13th Congresses, and always, of course, exercised due influence upon the Party's decisions; and if not all of those letters were published, it was because the author did not intend them for the press. Vladimir Ilyich did not leave any 'will', and the very character of his attitude towards the Party, as well as the character of the Party itself, precluded any possibility of such a 'will'. What is usually referred to as a 'will' in the emigre' and foreign bourgeois and Menshevik press (in a manner garbled beyond recognition) is one of Vladimir Ilyich's letters containing advice on organisational matters. The 13th Congress of the Party paid the closest attention to that letter, as to all of the others, and drew from it the conclusions appropriate to the conditions and circumstances of the time. All talk about concealing or violating a 'will' is a malicious invention'. L.D. Trotsky, 'Concerning Eastman's Book 'Since Lenin Died'', 'Bolshevik', 16, 1 September, 1925, p68.

At a Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the CPSU in October 1927, the opposition raised the question of 'Lenin's Testament'. Stalin replied;

'The oppositionists shouted here - you heard them - that the Central Committee of the Party 'concealed' Lenin's 'will'. It has been proved and proved again that nobody has concealed anything, that Lenin's 'will' was addressed to the 13th Party Congress, that this 'will' was read out at the Congress (Voices; That's right!), that the congress unanimously decided not to publish it because, among other things, Lenin himself did not want it to be published and did not ask that it should be published'. J.V. Stalin, 'Speech at Joint Plenum of CC & CCC of CPSU', p173.

At this point Stalin publicly confirmed and commented upon the reference in the 'Testament' to his 'rudeness' and on Lenin's proposal that he should be removed as General Secretary;

'It is said that in that 'will' Comrade Lenin suggests to the congress that in view of Stalin's 'rudeness' it should consider the question of putting other comrade in Stalin's place as General Secretary. That is quite true. Yes, comrades, I am rude to those who grossly and perfidiously wreck and split the Party. I have not concealed this and do not conceal it now. Perhaps some mildness is needed in the treatment of splitters, but I am a bad hand at that. But rudeness is not and cannot be counted as a defect in Stalin's political line or position.' J.V. Stalin, 'Works', Volume 10, Moscow, 1927, p180-81, 182.

The 15th Congress of the CPSU in December 1927 decided to publish 'Testament' in the Congress Bulletin, so that;

'After the 15th Congress of 1927 Lenin's 'Testament' became somewhat more widely known among the Party aktiv'. R.A. Medvedev, 'Let History Judge', London, 1972, p29.

Finally, after the victory of revisionism in the CPSU following the death of Stalin in 1953, First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev quoted extensively from 'Lenin's Testament' in his secret speech to the 20th Congress in February 1956, and copies were;

'Distributed among the delegates'. N. S. Khrushchev, op. cit., p6.

Later, the 'Testament' was published in Lenin's 'Collected Works'.

## Conclusion

The fact that, despite Lenin's reputation as the world's leading Marxist, his call, in his 'Testament', for the removal of Stalin from the post of General Secretary was rejected by 13th Congress of the CPSU, says much about the circumstances in which the document came to be issued.

BUT IT SAYS EVEN MORE ABOUT THE HIGH ESTEEM IN WHICH STALIN WAS HELD BY THE PARTY.

## Biographical Notes

\*ARMAND, Yelizaveta ('Inessa') F., French-born Soviet women's movement worker (1875-1920); head of Women's Department of CC, RCP (1918-20).

\*DEUTSCHER, Isaac, Polish-born British Trotskyist historian and journalist (1907-67); emigrated to Britain (1939).

\*DZERZHINSKY, Feliks E., Polish-born Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1877-1926); Chairman, CHEKA, later OGPU (1917-26); Commissar of Communications and Internal Affairs (1921-24); Chairman, Supreme Economic Council (1924-26).

\*EASTMAN, Max, American Trotskyist author and poet (1883-1969).

\*FOTIEVA, Lidya A., (1881- ), one of Lenin's secretaries (1918-22).

\*'GORKY, Maksim' (pseudonym of Aleksey I. Peshkov), Soviet Marxist-Leninist writer (1868-1936); President, Soviet Writers' Union (1934-36); murdered by revisionist conspirators (1936).

\*KAMENEV, Lev B., Soviet revisionist politician (1883-1936); USSR Commissar of Trade (1926-27); Minister to Italy (1927); leader of Trotskyist opposition (1926-28); expelled from CPSU (1927); readmitted (1928); Chairman, Main Concessions Committee (1929); again expelled from Party (1932); again readmitted (1933); expelled from Party for third time (1934); sentenced to imprisonment for terrorism (1935); sentenced to death for treason and executed (1936).

\*KAUTSKY, Karl J., German revisionist politician (1854-1938).

\*KAVTARADZF, Sergey I., Georgian nationalist politician (1885-1971); Georgian Commissar of Justice (1921-22); Georgian Premier (1922-23); 1st Deputy Procurator, USSR Supreme Court (1924-28); expelled from Party (1927); reinstated (1934); USSR Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1941-5); Ambassador to Romania (1945-52).

\*KOLLONTAY, Aleksandra H., Soviet Marxist-Leninist diplomat (1872-1952); Minister to Norway (1923-26, 1927-30); Minister to Mexico (1926-27); Minister, then Ambassador, to Sweden (1930-45); counsellor, USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1945-52).

\*KRUPSKAYA, Nadezhda K., Lenin's wife (1869-1939).

\*McNEIL, Robert H., American historian (1930- ); Associate Professor of History, University of Toronto (1964-69); Professor of History, University of Massachusetts (1969- ).

\*MAKHARADZE, Filipp I., Georgian nationalist historian and politician (1868-1941); President, Georgia (1922-41).

\*'MARTOV, L. (pseudonym of Yuly O. Tserdabauw), Russian Menshevik leader and journalist (1873-1923); emigrated to Germany (1920).

\*MDIVANI, Polykarp ('Budu') C., Georgian nationalist politician (1877-1937); Georgian Commissar of Light Industry and Deputy Premier (1931-36); expelled from Party for Trotskyism (1928); reinstated (1931); again expelled (1936); sentenced to death for treason and executed (1937).

\*PAYNE, Robert, British-born American historian (1911-83).

\*ORDZHONIKIDZE, Grigory ('Sergo') K., Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1886-1937); 1st Secretary, Transcaucasian Party Committee (1922-26); Chairman, CPSU Central Control Commission and USSR Commissar of Workers' and Peasants Inspection (1926-30); Chairman, USSR Council of National Economy (1930-32); member, Politburo, CC, CPSU (1930-37); USSR Commissar of Heavy Industry (1932)

\*PREOBRAZHENSKY Yevgeny A., Soviet revisionist economist (1886-1937); member, Politburo, Secretary of Central Committee, Commissar of Finance (1921-27) expelled from party (1927); tried for treason; died in prison (1937).

\*ROBESPIERRE, Maximilien P-M-I. de, French revolutionary leader (1758-94); leader of Jacobin Club (1791-92); leader of Committee of Public Safety (1793-94); guillotined (1794).

\*ROLAND-HOLST, Henriette, Dutch 'Christian socialist', later Trotskyist; poet (1869-1952).

\*SOKOLNIKOV, Grigory Y., Soviet revisionist lawyer and economist (1888-1939); USSR Commissar of Finance (1921-26); Chairman, Oil Syndicate (1926-28); Ambassador to Britain and USSR Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs (1929-34); USSR Deputy Commissar of Forestry Industry (1934-36); expelled from Party (1936); admitted to treason at public trial and sentenced to imprisonment (1937); died in prison (1939).

\*TSINTSADZE, Kate H., Georgian nationalist politician (1887-1930).

\*ULYANOVA, Marya I. (1878-1937); Lenin's sister.

\*ZINOVIEV, Grigory Y., Soviet revisionist politician (1883-1936); Member, Politburo, CC, CPSU (1925); headed Leningrad opposition (1926); expelled from CPSU (1927); readmitted (1928); again expelled from Party (1932); again readmitted (1933); imprisoned for terrorism (1935); sentenced to death and executed for treason (1936).

## Notes

\*\*BUND (The General Jewish Workers' Union of Lithuania, Poland and Russia). A Jewish bourgeois-nationalist organisation formed in 1897 which functioned as a centre of Jewish nationalism in the Russian working class movement.

\*\*CONCILIATIONISM A political trend advocating collaboration, and even unity between Marxist-Leninists and opponents of Marxism.

\*\*DASHNAKS. Members of the 'Dashnaktsutyun Party, a nationalist party of the landlords and bourgeoisie in Armenia, formed in the 1890s.

\*\*GOLOS (The Voice). A Menshevik daily newspaper published in Paris between 1908 and 1911.

\*\*JACOBINISM. The policies of the Jacobin Club, representing the left-wing of the French Revolution.

\*\*KAUTSKYITE. A follower of Kautsky.

\*\*LIQUIDATORS. Followers of 'Liquidationism', a reactionary trend within the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in 1907-10 which advocated the liquidation of the disciplined revolutionary Party of the working class and its replacement by a legal reformist party of the West European social-democratic type.

\*\*MENSHEVIK. Member of the right (social-democratic) minority wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

\*\*MEZHRAIONTSYI. Members of the 'Mezhraionnaia' (Inter-borough Organisation), formed in 1913 in St. Petersburg. The organisation joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917.

\*\*MUSSAVATISTS. Members of the 'Mussavat Party', a nationalist party of the landlords and bourgeoisie in Azerbaijan, formed in 1912.

\*\*NASHE ZARYA' (Our Dawn). A monthly magazine published by the Menshevik 'Liquidators' in St. Petersburg between 1910 and 1914, when it was suppressed and replaced by 'Nashe Delo' (Our Cause).

\*\*NOVY MIR' (New World). A pro-Menshevik newspaper published by Russian emigres in New York in 1911-17.

\*\*OTZOVISTS (Recallers). Supporters within the Bolshevik Party of an opportunist trend which opposed legal forms of activity and called for the recall of Social-Democratic Party deputies from the State Duma.

\*\*SOCIAL-CHAUVINISM. 'Chauvinism' ('Jingoism') takes its name from a French jingoistic soldier, Nicolas Chauvin (b. 1815). 'Social-chauvinism' is jingoism within the socialist movement.

\*\*VPERED (Forward). An anti-Party group formed outside Russia which opposed the use of legal tactics; it operated from 1909 to 1913.