

The Workers' Opposition - Alexandra Kollontai



Kollontai's pamphlet was one of the central theoretical works of the Workers' Opposition movement within the Bolshevik Party, arguing for increased union control of the economy and the debureaucratisation of the party hierarchy.

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Individual or Collective Management?

Before making clear what the cause is of the ever-widening break between the "Workers' Opposition" and the official point of view held by our directing centres, it is necessary to call attention to two facts:

(1) The Workers' Opposition sprang from the depths of the industrial proletariat of Soviet Russia. It is an outgrowth not only of the unbearable conditions of life and labour in which seven million industrial workers find themselves, but it is also a product of vacillation, inconsistencies, and outright deviations of our Soviet policy from the clearly expressed class-consistent principles of the Communist programme.

(2) The Opposition did not originate in some particular centre, was not a fruit of personal strife and controversy, but, on the contrary, covers the whole extent of Soviet Russia and meets with a resonant response. At present, there prevails an opinion that the whole root of the controversy arising between the Workers' Opposition and the numerous currents noticeable among the leaders consists exclusively in difference of opinions regarding the problems that confront the Trade Unions.

This, however, is not true. The break goes deeper. Representatives of the Opposition are not always able clearly to express and define it, but as soon as some vital question of the reconstruction of our Republic is touched upon, controversies arise concerning a whole area of cardinal economic and political questions.

For the first time, the two different points of view (as expressed by the leaders of our party and the representatives of our class-organised workers), found their reflection at the Ninth Congress of our Party when that body was discussing the question: collective versus personal management in industry.

At that time, there was no opposition from any well-formed group, but it is very significant that collective management was favoured by all the representatives of the Trade Unions, while opposed to it were all the leaders of our Party, who are accustomed to appraise all events from the institutional angle. They require a good deal of shrewdness and skill to placate the socially heterogeneous and the sometimes politically hostile aspirations of the different social groups of the population as expressed by proletarians, petty owners, peasantry, and bourgeoisie in the person of specialists, and pseudo-specialists, of all kinds and degrees.

Why was it that only the Unions stubbornly defended the principle of collective management, even without being able to adduce scientific arguments in favour of it? And why was it that the specialists' supporters at the same time defended the "one man management"? The reason is that in this controversy, though both sides emphatically denied that there was a question of principle involved, two historically irreconcilable points of view had clashed. The "one man management" is a product of the individualist conception of the bourgeois class. The "one man management" is in principle an unrestricted, isolated, free will of one man, disconnected from the collective. This idea finds its reflection in all spheres of human endeavour - beginning with the appointment of a sovereign for the State, and ending with a sovereign director of the factory. This is the supreme wisdom of bourgeois thought. The bourgeoisie do not believe in the power of a collective body. They like to whip the masses into an obedient flock, and drive them wherever their unrestricted will desires. The working class and its spokesmen, on the contrary, realise that the new Communist aspirations can be obtained only through the collective efforts of the workers themselves. The more the masses are developed in the expression of their collective will and common thought, the quicker and more complete will be the realization of working class aspirations, for it will create a new: homo-geneous,

unified, perfectly-arranged Communist Industry. Only those who are directly bound to industry can introduce into it animating innovations.

Rejection of a principle - the principle of collective management in the control of industry - was a tactical compromise on behalf of our Party, an act of adaptation; it was, moreover, an act of deviation from that class policy which we so zealously cultivated and defended during that first phase of the revolution.

Why did this happen? How did it happen that our Party, matured and tempered in the struggle of the revolution, was permitted to be carried away from the direct road, in order to journey along the roundabout path of adaptation? formerly condemned overtly and branded as "opportunism"? The answer to this question we shall give later. Meanwhile we shall turn to the question: how did the Workers' Opposition form and develop?

1. Growth of the Workers Opposition

The Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party was held in the spring of 1920. During the summer, the opposition did not assert itself. Nothing was heard about it during the stormy debates that took place at the Second Congress of the Communist International. But deep at the bottom, there was taking place an accumulation of experience, of critical thought. The first expression of this process, incomplete at the time, was at the Party Conference in September, 1920. For a time, the thought preoccupied itself largely with rejections and criticisms. The Opposition had no well-formulated proposals of its own. But it was obvious that the Party was entering into a new phase of its life. Within its ranks, "lower" elements demand freedom of criticism, loudly proclaiming that bureaucracy strangles them, leaves no freedom for activity or for manifestation of initiative.

The leaders of the Party understood this undercurrent, and Comrade Zinoviev made many verbal promises as to freedom of criticism, widening of the scope of self-activity for the masses, persecution of leaders deviating from the principles of democracy, etc. A great deal was said and well said; but from words to deeds there is a considerable distance. The September conference, together with Zinoviev's much-promising speech has changed nothing either in the Party itself or in the life of the masses. The root from which the Opposition sprouts, was not destroyed. Down at the bottom, a growth of particulate dissatisfaction, criticism and independence was taking place. This inarticulate ferment was noted even by the Party leaders and it quite unexpectedly generated sharp controversies. It is significant that in the central Party bodies, sharp controversies arose concerning the part that must be played by the Trade Unions. This, however, is only natural.

At present, this subject of controversy between the Opposition and the Party leaders, while not being the only one, is still the cardinal point of our whole domestic policy. Long before the Workers' Opposition had appeared with its Theses and formed that basis on which, in its opinion, the dictatorship of the proletariat must rest, in the sphere of industrial reconstruction, the leaders in the Party had sharply disagreed in their appraisal of the part that is to be played by the working class organizations regarding the latter's participation in the reconstruction of industries on a Communist basis. The Central Committee of the Party split into groups. Comrade Lenin stood in opposition to Trotsky, while Bukharin took the middle grounds. Only at the Eighth Soviet Congress and immediately after did it become obvious that within the Party itself there was a united group kept together primarily by the Theses of principles concerning the Trade Unions. This group, the Opposition, having no great theoreticians, and in spite of a most resolute resistance from the most popular leaders of the Party was growing strong and spreading all over labouring Russia. Was it so only in Petrograd and Moscow? Not at all. Even from the Donetz basin, the Ural mountains, Siberia, and a number of other

industrial centres came reports to the Central Committee that there also the Workers' Opposition was forming and acting.

It is true that not everywhere does the Opposition find itself in complete accord on all points with the workers of Moscow. At times there is much indefiniteness, pettiness and absurdity in the expressions, demands and motives of the Opposition. Even the cardinal points may differ. Yet there is everywhere one unalterable point - and this is the question : who shall develop the creative powers in the sphere of economic reconstruction? Shall it be purely class organs, directly connected by vital ties with the industries - that is, shall industrial unions undertake the work of reconstruction - or shall it be left to the Soviet machine which is separated from direct vital industrial activity and is axed in its composition? This is the root of the break. The Workers' Opposition defends the first principle, where the leaders of the Party, whatever their differences on various secondary matters, are in complete accord on the cardinal point, and defend the second principle.

What does this mean? This means that our Party lives through its first serious crisis of the revolutionary period, and that the Opposition is not to be driven away by such a cheap name as "syndicalism", but that all comrades must consider this in all seriousness, Who is right, the leaders or the working masses endowed with a healthy class instinct?

2. Causes of the crisis

Before considering the basic points of the controversy between the leaders of our Party and the Workers' Opposition? it is necessary to find an answer to the question: how could it happen that our Party - formerly strong, mighty and invincible because of its clear-cut and firm class policy - began to debate from its programme?

The dearer the Communist Party is to us just because it has made such a resolute step forward on the road to the liberation of the workers from the yoke of capital, the less right do we have to close our eyes to the mistakes of leading centres.

The power of the Party must lie in the ability of our leading centres to detect the problems and tasks that confront the workers, and to pick up the tendencies, which they have been able to direct, so that the masses might conquer one more of the historical positions. So it was in the past, but it is no longer so at present. Our Party not only reduces its speed, but more often (wisely' looks back and asks: have we not gone too far? Is this not the time to call a halt? Is it not wiser to be more cautious and to avoid daring experiments unseen in the whole of history?' What was it that produced this wise caution' (particularly expressed in the distrust of the leading Party centres towards the economic industrial abilities of the labour unions) - caution that has lately overwhelmed all our centres? Where is the cause?

If we begin to diligently to search for the cause of the developing controversy in our Party, it becomes clear that the party is passing through a crisis which was brought about by three fundamental causes. The first main basic cause is the unfortunate environment in which our Party must work and act. The Russian Communist Party must build Communism and carry into life its programme:

- (a) in the environment of complete destruction and breakdown of the economic structure ;
- (b) in the face of a never diminishing and ruthless pressure of the Imperialist States and White Guards',
- (c) to the working class of Russia has fallen the lot of realising Communism, creating new Communist forms of economy in an economically backward country with a preponderant peasant population, where the necessary economic prerequisites for socialization of production and distribution are lacking, and where Capitalism has not as yet been able to complete the full cycle of its development (from the unlimited struggle of competition of the

first stage of Capitalism to its highest form: the regulation of production by capitalist unions - the trusts).

It is quite natural that all these factors hinder the realization of our programme (particularly in its essential part - in the reconstruction of Industries on the new basis) and inject into our Soviet economic policy diverse influences and a lack of uniformity.

Out of this basic cause follow the two others. First of all, the economic backwardness of Russia and the domination of the peasantry within its boundaries create that diversity, and inevitably detract the practical policy of our Party from the clear-cut class direction, consistent in principle and theory.

Any party standing at the head of a heterogeneous Soviet state is compelled to consider the aspirations of peasants with their petty-bourgeois inclinations and resentments towards Communism, as well as lend an ear to the numerous petty-bourgeois elements, remnants of the former capitalists in Russia and to all kinds of traders, middlemen, petty officials, etc. These have very rapidly adapted themselves to the Soviet institutions and occupy responsible positions in the centres, appearing in the capacity of agents of different commissariats etc. No wonder that Zarupa, the People's Commissar of Supplies, at the Eighth Congress quoted figures which showed that in the service of the Commissariat of Supplies there were engaged 17% of workers, 13% of peasants, less than 20% of specialists, and that of the remaining, more than 50% were tradesmen, salesmen, and similar people, in the majority even illiterate' (Zarupa's own words). In Zarupa's opinion this is a proof of their democratic constitution, even though they have nothing in common with the class proletarians, with the producers of all wealth, with the workers in factory and mill.

These are the elements - the petty-bourgeois elements widely scattered through the Soviet institutions, the elements of the middle class, with their hostility towards Communism, and with their predilections towards the immutable customs of the past, with resentments and fears towards revolutionary arts. These are the elements that bring decay into our Soviet institutions, breeding there an atmosphere altogether repugnant to the working class. They are two different worlds and hostile at that. And yet we in Soviet Russia are compelled to persuade both ourselves and the working class that the petty-bourgeoisie and middle classes (not to speak of well-to-do peasants) can quite comfortably exist under the common motto: "All power to the Soviets", forgetful of the fact that in practical everyday life, the interests of the workers and those of the middle classes and peasantry imbued with petty-bourgeois psychology must inevitably clash, rending the Soviet policy asunder, and deforming its clearest class statutes. Beside peasant-owners in the villages and burgher elements in the cities, our party in its Soviet State policy is forced to reckon with the influence exerted by the representatives of wealthy bourgeoisie now appearing in the form of specialists, technicians, engineers and former managers of financial and industrial affairs, who by all their past experience are bound to the capitalist system of production. They cannot even imagine any other mode of production, but the one which lies within the traditional bounds of capitalist economics.

3. The growing influence of the specialists

The more Soviet Russia finds itself in need of specialists in the sphere of technique and management of production, the stronger becomes the influence of these elements, foreign to the working class, on the development of our economy. Having been thrown aside during the first period of the revolution, and being compelled to take up an attitude of watchful waiting or sometimes even open hostility towards the Soviet authorities, particularly during the most trying months (the historical sabotage by the intellectuals), this social group of brains in

capitalist production, of servile, hired, well-paid servants of capital, acquire more and more influence and importance in politics with every day fiat passes.

Do we need names? Every fellow worker, carefully watching our foreign and domestic policy, recalls more than one such name. As long as the centre of our life remained at the military fronts, the influence of these gentlemen directing our Soviet policy, particularly in the sphere of industrial reconstruction, was comparatively negligible. Specialists, the remnants of the past, by all their nature closely, unalterably bound to the bourgeois system that we aim to destroy, gradually begin to penetrate into our Red Army, introducing there their atmosphere of the past (blind subordination, servile obedience, distinction, ranks, and the arbitrary will of superiors in place of class discipline, etc.). But their influence did not extend to the general political activity of the Soviet Republic. The proletariat did not question their superior skill to direct military affairs, fully realising through their healthy class instinct that in military matters the working class as a class cannot express a new world, is powerless to introduce substantial changes into the military system - to reconstruct its foundation on a new class basis. Professional militarism - an inheritance of past ages - militarism and wars will have no place in Communist society. The struggle will go on along other channels, will take quite different forms inconceivable to our imagination. Militarism lives through its last days, through the transitory epoch of dictatorship, and therefore it is only natural that the workers, as a class, could not introduce into the forms and systems anything new and conducive to the future development of society. Even in the Red Army, however, there were innovating touches of the working class. But the nature of militarism remained the same, and the direction of military affairs by the former officers and generals of the old army did not draw the Soviet policy in military matters away to the opposite side sufficiently for the workers to feel any harm to themselves or to their class interests.

In the sphere of national economy it is quite different however. Production, its organization - this is the essence of Communism. To debar the workers from the organization of industry, to deprive them, that is, their individual organizations, of the opportunity to develop their powers in creating new forms of production in industry through their unions, to deny these expressions of the class organization of the proletariat, while placing full reliance on the 'skill' of specialists trained and taught to carry on production under a quite different system of production - is to jump off the rails of scientific Marxist thought. That is, however, just the thing that is being done by the leaders of our Party at present.

Taking into consideration the utter collapse of our industries while still clinging to the capitalist mode of production (payment for labour in money, variations in wages received according to the work done) our Party leaders, in a fit of distrust in the creative abilities of workers' collectives, are seeking salvation from the industrial chaos. Where? In the hands of scions of the bourgeois- capitalist past. In businessmen and technicians, whose creative abilities in the sphere of Industry are subject to the routine, habits and methods of the capitalist system of production and economy. They are the ones who introduce the ridiculously naive belief that it is possible to bring about Communism by bureaucratic means. They 'decree' where it is now necessary to create and carry on research.

The more the military front recedes before the economic front, the keener becomes our crying need; the more pronounced the influence of that group which is not only inherently foreign to Communism, but absolutely unable to develop the right qualities for introducing new forms of organizing the work, of new motives for increasing production, of new approaches to production and distribution. All these technicians, practical men, men of business experience, who just now appear on the surface of Soviet life bring pressure to bear upon the leaders of our Party through and within the Soviet institutions by exerting their influence on economic policy.

4. State and Party

The Party, therefore, finds itself in a difficult and embarrassing situation regarding the control over the Soviet state. It is forced to lend an ear and to adapt itself to three economically hostile groups of the population, each different in social structure. The workers demand a clear-cut, uncompromising policy, a rapid, forced advance towards Communism; the peasantry, with its petty-bourgeois proclivities and sympathies, demands different kinds of "freedom", including freedom of trade and non-interference in their affairs. The latter are joined in this demand by the burgher class in the form of (agents' of Soviet officials, commissaries in the army, etc., who have already adapted themselves to the Soviet regime, and sway our policy toward petty-bourgeois lines.

As far as the centre is concerned, the influence of these petty-bourgeois elements is negligible. But in the provinces and in local Soviet activity, their influence is a great and harmful one. Finally, there is still another group of men consisting of the former managers and directors of the capitalist industries. These are not the magnates of capital, like Riabushinsky or Rublikoff, whom the Soviet Republic got rid of during the first phase of the revolution, but they are the most talented servants of the capitalist system of production, the obtains and genius' of Capitalism, its true creators and sponsors. Heartily approving the centralist tendencies of the Soviet government in the sphere of economics, well realising all the benefits of trustification and regulation of production (this, by the way, is being carried on by capital in all advanced Industrial , countries), they are striving for just one thing - they want this regulation to be carried on not through the labour organizations (the industrial unions), but by themselves- acting now under the guise of Soviet economic institutions - the central industrial committees, industrial centres of the Supreme Council of National Economy, where they are already firmly rooted. The influence of these gentlemen on the 'sober' State policy of our leaders is great, considerably greater than is desirable. This influence is reflected in the policy which defends and cultivates bureaucratism (with no attempts to change it entirely, but just to improve it). The policy is particularly obvious in the sphere of our foreign trade with the capitalist states, which is just beginning to spring up: these commercial relations are carried on over the heads of the Russian as well as the foreign organised workers. It finds its expression, also, in a whole series of measures restricting the self-activity of the masses and giving the initiative to the scions of the capitalist world.

Among all these various groups of the population, our Party, by trying to find a middle ground, is compelled to steer a course which does not jeopardize the unity of the State interests. The clear-cut policy of our Party, in the process of identifying itself with Soviet State institutions, is being gradually transformed into an upper-class policy, which in essence is nothing else but an adaptation of our directing centres to the heterogeneous and irreconcilable interests of a socially different, mixed, population. This adaptation leads to inevitable vacillation, fluctuations, deflations and mistakes. It is only necessary to recall the zig-zag-like road of our policy toward the peasantry, which from thanking on the poor peasant', brought us to placing reliance on the industrious peasant-owner'. Let us admit that this policy is proof of the political soberness and "statecraft wisdom" of our directing centres. But the future historian, analysing without bias the stages of our domination, will find and point out that in this is evident a dangerous digression' from the class line toward 'adaptation' and a course full of harmful possibilities or results.

Let us again take the question of foreign trade. There exists in our policy an obvious duplicity. This is attested by the constant, unending friction between the Commissariat of Foreign Trade and the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. This friction is not of administrative nature alone. Its cause lies deeper. And if the secret work of the directing centres were

exposed to the view of rank and file elements, who knows what the controversy dividing the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and the trade representatives abroad might lead to?

This seemingly administrative friction is essentially a serious, deep, social friction, concealed from the rank and file, and makes it absolutely necessary for Soviet politics to adapt to the three heterogeneous social groups of the population (workers, peasants and representatives of the former bourgeoisie). This constitutes another cause bringing a crisis into our Party. And we cannot but pay attention to this cause. It is too characteristic, too pregnant with possibilities. It is therefore the duty of our Party, on behalf of Party unity and future activity, to ponder over this cause and to learn the necessary lessons from the widespread dissatisfaction generated by it in the rank and file.

5. The masses are not blind

As long as the working class, during the first period of the revolution, felt itself to be the only bearer of Communism, there was perfect unanimity in the Party. In the days immediately following the October revolution, none could even think of 'ups' as something different from 'downs', for in those days the advanced workers were busily engaged in realising point after point in our class- Communist programme. The peasant who received the land did not at the time assert himself as a part of and a full- fledged citizen of the Soviet Republic. Intellectuals, specialists, men of affairs - the entire petty-bourgeois class and pseudo-specialists at present climbing up the Soviet ladder, rung by rung, under the guise of 'specialists', stepped aside, watching and waiting but meanwhile giving freedom to the advanced working masses to develop their creative abilities.

At present, however, it is just the other way. The worker feels, sees, and revises at every step that specialists and (what is worse) untrained illiterate pseudo-specialists, and unpractical men throw out the worker and fill up all the high administrative posts of our industrial and economic institutions. And the Party, instead of putting the brakes on this tendency from the elements which are altogether foreign to the working class and Communism, encourages it. The Party seeks salvation from the industrial chaos, not in the workers but in these very elements. Not in the workers, not in their union organizations does the Party repose its trust, but in these elements. The working masses feel it and instead of unanimity and unity in the Party, there appears a break.

The masses are not blind. Whatever words the most popular leaders milt use in order to conceal their deviation from a clear-cut class policy, whatever the compromises made with the peasants and world Capitalism, and whatever the trust that the leaders place in the disciples of the capitalist system of production, the working masses feel where the digression beans. The workers may cherish an ardent affection and love for such personalities as Lenin. They may be fascinated by the incomparable flowery eloquence of Trotsky and his organizing abilities. They may revere a number of other leaders - as leaders. But when the masses feel that they and their class are not trusted, it is quite natural that they say : No, halt! We refuse to follow you blindly. Let us examine the situation. Your policy of picking out the middle ground between three socially opposed groups is a wise one indeed, but it smacks of the well-tried and familiar adaptation and opportunism. Today we may gain something with the help of your sober policy, but let us beware lest we find ourselves on a wrong road that, through zigzag and turns, will lead from the future to the debris of the past.' Distrust of the workers by the leaders is steadily growing. The more sober these leaders get, the more clever statesmen they become with their policy of sliding over the blade of a sharp knife between Communism and compromise with the bourgeois past, the deeper becomes the abyss between the 'ups' and 'downs' the less understanding there is! and the more painful and inevitable becomes the crises within the Party itself. The third reason enhancing the crisis in the Party is that, in fact during these three years of the revolution, the economic situation of the working

class, of those who work in factories and mills, has not only not been improved, but has become more unbearable. This nobody dares to deny. The suppressed and widely-spread dissatisfaction among workers (workers, mind you) has a real justification.

6. Who has gained from the revolution?

Only the peasants gained directly by the revolution. As far as the middle classes are concerned, they very cleverly adapted themselves to the new conditions, together with the representatives of the rich bourgeoisie! who had occupied all the responsible and directing positions in the Soviet institutions (particularly in the sphere of directing State economy, in the industry organizations and the re-establishment of commercial relations with foreign nations). Only the basic class of the Soviet Republic, which bore all the burdens of the dictatorship as a mass, ekes out a shamefully pitiful existence.

The Workers' Republic controlled by the Communists, by the vanguard of the working class, which, to quote Lenin, has absorbed all the revolutionary energy of the class', has not had time enough to ponder over and improve the conditions of all the workers (those not in individual establishments which happened to gain the attention of the Council of the People's Commissars in one or another of the so-called 'shock industries') in general and lift their conditions of life to a human standard of existence.

The Commissariat of Labour is the most stagnant institution of all the Commissariats. In the whole of the Soviet policy, the question was never seriously raised on a national scale and discussed: what must and can be done in the face of the utter collapse of industry at home and a most unfavourable internal situation to improve the workers' conditions and preserve their health for productive labour in the future, and to better the lot of the workers in the shops?

Until recently, Soviet policy was devoid of any worked out plan for improving the lot of the workers and their conditions of life. All that was done in this field was done almost incidentally, or at random, by local authorities under the pressure or the masses themselves. During these three years of civil war, the proletariat heroically brought to the altar of the revolution their innumerable sacrifices. They waited patiently. But now that the pulse of life in the Republic is again transferred to the economic front, the rank and file worker considers it unnecessary to 'suffer and wait'. Why? is he not the creator of life on a Communist basis? Let us ourselves take up this reconstruction, for we know better than the gentlemen from the centres where it hurts us most.

The rank and file worker is observant. He sees that so far the problems of hygiene, sanitation, improving conditions of labour in the shops - in other words, the betterment of the workers' lot has occupied the last place in our policy. In our solution to the housing problem, we went no further than housing the workers' families in inconvenient bourgeois mansions. What is still worse, so far we have not even touched the practical problem of housing in regard to workers. To our shame, in the heart of the Republic, in Moscow itself, working people are still living in filthy, overcrowded and unhygienic quarters, one visit to which makes one think that there has been no revolution at all. We all know that the housing problem cannot be solved in a few months, even years, and that due to our poverty, its solution is faced with the serious difficulties. But the facts of ever-growing inequality between the privileged groups of the population in Soviet Russia and the rank and file workers, 'the frame-work of the dictatorship', breed and nourish the dissatisfaction.

The rank and file worker sees how the Soviet official and the practical man lives and how he lives - he on whom rests the dictatorship of the proletariat. He cannot but see that during the revolution, the life and health of the workers in the shops commanded the least attention; that where prior to the revolution there existed more or less bearable conditions, they are still maintained by the shop committees. And where such conditions did not exist, where

dampness, foul air and gases poisoned and destroyed the workers' health, these conditions remain unchanged. "We could not attend to that; pray, there was the military front. " And yet whenever it was necessary to make repairs in any of the houses occupied by the Soviet institutions, they were able to find both the materials and the labour. What would happen if we tried to shelter our specialists or practical men engaged in the sphere of commercial transactions with foreign capitalists in those huts in which the masses of workers still live and labour? They would raise such a howl that it would become necessary to mobilize the entire housing department in order to correct 'the chaotic conditions' that interfere with the productivity of our specialists.

7. "Our sorrows are not theirs..."

The service of the Workers' Opposition consists in that it included the problem of improving the workers' lot (together with all the other secondary workers' demands) into the general economic policy. The productivity of labour cannot be increased unless the life of the workers is organised on a new Communist basis.

The less that is undertaken and planned (I do not speak of something that has been carried out) in this sphere. the deeper is the mutual distrust between leaders and workers. There is no unity, no sense of their identity of needs, demands and aspirations. The leaders are one thing, and we are something altogether different. Maybe it is true that the leaders know better how to rule over the country, but they fail to understand our needs, our life in the shops, its requirements and immediate needs; they do not understand and do not know. From this reasoning follows the instinctive leaning towards the unions, and the consequent dropping out of the Party. It is true they are a part of us, but as soon as they get into the centres, they leave us altogether; they begin to live differently; If we suffer, what do they care? Our sorrows are not theirs any longer.

And the more our industry establishments and unions are drained of their best elements by the Party (which sends them either to the front or to the Soviet institutions), the weaker becomes the direct connection between the rank and file workers and the directing Party centres. A chasm is growing. At present, this division manifests itself even in the ranks of the Party itself. The workers, through their Workers' Opposition ask: Who are we? Are we really the prop of the class dictatorship? Or are we just an obedient flock that serves as a support for those who, having severed all ties with the masses, carry out their own policy and build up industry without any regard to our opinions and creative abilities under the reliable cover of the Party label?

8. Objectives of the opposition

Whatever the Party leaders might do in order to drive away the Workers' Opposition, the latter will always remain that growing healthy class force which is destined to inject vitalising energy into the rehabilitation of economic life as well as into the Communist Party, which begins to fade and bend low to the ground.

There are thus three causes which bring about a crisis in our Party : there is first of all the overall objective conditions under which Communism in Russia is being carried out (the civil war! economic backwardness of the country, its utter industrial collapse as an aftermath of the long years of war); the second cause is the heterogeneous composition of our population seven million workers, the peasantry, the middle classes, and, finally, the former bourgeoisie, men of affairs in all professions, who issuance the policy of Soviet institutions and penetrate into the Party); the third cause is the inactivated of the Party in the field of immediate improvement of the workers' life coupled with the inability and weakness of the corresponding Soviet institutions to take up and solve these problems. What then is it that the Workers' Opposition wants? What is its role?

Its role consists in raising before the Party all the perturbing questions, and in giving form to all that heretofore was causing only a subdued agitation in the masses and led the non-partisan workers ever further from the Party. It clearly and fearlessly shouted to the leaders : estop, look and thinks Where do you lead us? Are we not going off the right road? It will be very bad for the Party to find itself without the foundation of the dictatorship. The Party will be on its own and so will the working class. In this lies the greatest danger to the revolution. ' The task of the Party at its present crisis is fearlessly to face the mistakes and lend its ear to the healthy class call of the wide working masses. Through the creative powers of the rising class, in the form of industrial unions, we shall go forwards towards reconstruction and the development of the creative forces of the country ; towards purification of the Party itself from elements foreign to it ; towards correction of the activity of the Party by means of going back to democracy, freedom of opinion, and criticism inside the Party.

The trade unions: their role and problems

1. Who shall build the communist economy?

In a basic yet brief outline, we have already explained what it is that causes the crisis in our Party. Now we shall make clear what are the most important points of the controversy between the leaders of our Party and the Workers' Opposition.

There are two such point's: firstly, the part to be played by, and the problems confronting, the trade unions during the reconstruction period of the national economy, coupled with the organization of production on a Communist basis, and secondly, the question of self- activity of the masses. This question is linked with that of bureaucracy in the Party and the Soviets.

Let us answer both questions in turn. The period of 'making theses' in our Party has already ended. Before us we find six different platforms, six Party tendencies. Such a variety and such minute variations of shades in its tendencies our Party has never seen before. Party thought has never been so rich in formulae on one and the same question. It is, therefore, obvious that the question is a basic one, and very important.

And such it is. The whole controversy boils down to one basic question : Who shall build the Communist economy, and how shall it be built? This is, moreover: the essence of our programme: this is its heart. This question is just as important as the question of seizure of political power by the proletariat. Only the Bubnoff group of so-called political centralists is so nearsighted as to under- estimate its importance and to say "The question concerning trade unions at the present moment has no importance whatsoever, and presents no theoretical difficulties"

It is, however, quite natural that the question seriously agitates the Party. The question is really in what direction shall we turn the wheel of history; shall we turn it back or move it forward? It is also natural that there is not a Single Communist in the Party who would remain non-committal during the discussion of this question. As a result, we have six different groups. If we begin, however, carefully to analyse all the theses of these most minutely divergent groups, we find that on the basic question - who shall build the Communist economy and organist production on a new basis - there are only two points of view. One is that which is expressed and formulated in the statement of principles of the

Workers' Opposition. The other is the viewpoint that unites all the rest of the groups differing only in shades, but identical in substance. What does the statement of the Workers' Opposition stand for, and how does the latter understand the part that is to be played by the trade unions, or, to be more exact, the industrial unions, at the present moment?

"We believe that the question of reconstruction and development of the productive forces of our country can be solved only if the entire system of control over the people's economy is changed"(from Shliapnikoffs report, December 30). Take notice comrades: only if the entire system of control is changed.' What does this mean? (The basis of the controversy', the report continues, revolves around the question: by what means during this period of transformation can our Communist Party carry out its economic policy - shall it be by means of the workers organised into their class union, or - over their heads - by bureaucratic means, through canonized functionaries of the State.' The basis of the controversy is, therefore, this: shall we achieve Communism through the workers or over their heads, by the hands of Soviet officials? And let us, comrades, ponder whether it is possible to attain and build a Communist economy by the hands and creative abilities of the scions of the other class, who are imbued with their routine of the past. If we begin to think as Marxists, as men of science, we shall answer categorically and explicitly: 'No !'

2. New relations in production and the materialist conception of history

The root of the controversy and the cause of the crisis lies in the supposition that 'practical men', technicians, specialists, and managers of capitalist production can suddenly release themselves from the bonds of their traditional conceptions of ways and means of handling labour (which have been deeply ingrained into their very flesh through the years of their service to Capital) and acquire the ability to create new forms of production, of labour organization, and of incentives to work. To suppose that this is possible is to forget the incontestable truth that a system of production cannot be changed by a few individual geniuses, but through the requirements of a class.

Just imagine for a moment that during the transitory period from the feudal system (founded on slave labour) to the system of capitalist production (with its allegedly free hired labour in the industries), the bourgeois class, lacking at the time the necessary experience in the organization of capitalist production, had invited all the clever, shrewd experienced managers of the feudal estates who had been accustomed to deal with servile chattel slaves, and entrusted to them the task of organizing production on a new capitalist basis. What would happen? Would these specialists in their own sphere, depending on the whip to increase productivity of labour, succeed in handling a 'free', though hungry, proletarian, who had released himself from the curse of involuntary labour and had become a soldier or a day labourer? Would not these experts wholly destroy the newly-born and developing capitalist production? Individual overseers of the chattel slaves, individual former landlords and their managers, were able to adapt themselves to the new form of production; but it was not from their ranks that the real creators and builders of the bourgeois capitalist economy were recruited.

Class instinct whispered to the first owners of the capitalist establishments that it was better to go slowly and use common sense in place of experience in the search for new ways and means to establish relations between capital and labour? than to borrow the antiquated useless methods of exploitation of labour from the old, outlawed system. Class 'instinct quite correctly told the first capitalists during the first period of capitalist development that in place of the whip of the overseer they must apply another incentive - rivalry, personal ambition of workers facing unemployment and misery. And the capitalists, having grasped this new incentive to labour, were wise enough to use it in order to promote the development of the bourgeois capitalist forms of production by increasing the productivity of 'free' hired labour

to a high degree of intensity. Five centuries ago, the bourgeoisie acted also in a cautious way, carefully listening to the dictates of their class instincts. They relied more on their common sense than on the experience of the skilled specialists in the sphere of organised production on the old feudal estates. The bourgeoisie was perfectly right, as history has shown us.

We possess a great weapon that can help us to find the shortest road to the victory of the working class, 'diminish suffering along the way, and bring about the new system of production - Communism - more quickly. This weapon is the materialistic conception of history. However, instead of using it, widening our experience and correcting our researches in conformity with history, we are ready to throw this weapon aside and follow the encumbered, circuitous road of blind experiments.

Whatever our economic distress happens to be, we are not justified in feeling such an extreme degree of despair. It is only the capitalist governments, standing with their backs to the wall that need feel despair. After exhausting all the creative impulses of capitalist production, they find no solution to their problems. As far as toiling Russia is concerned, there is no room for despair: Since the October revolution, unprecedented opportunities of economic creation have opened new, , unheard-of forms of production, with an immense increase in the productivity of labours .

It is only necessary not to borrow from the past, but, on the contrary, to give complete freedom to the creative powers of the future. This is what the Workers' Opposition is doing. Who can be the builder and creator of Communist economy? that class - and not the individual geniuses of the past - which is organically bound with newly-developing, painfully-born forms of production of a more productive and perfect system of economy. Which organ can formulate and solve the problems in the sphere of organizing the new economy and its production - the pure class industrial unions, or the heterogeneous Soviet economic establishments? The Workers' Opposition considers that it can be done only by the former, that is, by the workers' collective, and not by the functional, bureaucratic, socially-heterogeneous collective with a strong admixture of the old capita 'hat elements, whoa mind is cloned with the refuse of capitalistic routine. "The workers' unions must be drawn from the present position of passive assistance to the economic institutions into active participation in the management of the entire economic structure"(from 'Theses of the Workers ' Opposition). To seek, find and create new and more perfect forms of economy, to find new incentives to the productivity of labour - all this can be done only by the workers' collectives that are closely bound with the new farms of production. Only these collectives from their everyday experience, are capable of drawing certain conclusions. At first glance, these conclusions appear to be only of practical importance, and yet exceedingly valuable theoretical conclusions may be drawn from them concerning the handling of new labour power in a workers' state where misery, poverty, unemployment and competition on the labour market cease to be incentives to work. To find a stimulus, an incentive to work - this is the greatest task of the working class standing on the threshold of Communism. None other, however, the working class itself in the form of its class collectives, is able to solve this great problem. The solution to this problem, as proposed by the industrial unions, consists in giving complete freedom to the workers as regards experimenting, class training, adjusting and discovering new forms of production, as well as expressing and developing their Creative abilities - that is, to that class which can alone be the creator of Communism.

This is how the Workers' Opposition sees the solution to this difficult problem, from which follows the most essential point of their theses: "organisation of control over the social economy is a prerogative of the All-Russian Congress of Producers, who are united in the trade and industrial unions which elect the central body directing the whole economic life of the republic" ('Theses of the Workers' Opposition '). This demand would ensure freedom for

the manifestation of creative class abilities, not restricted and crippled by the bureaucratic machine which is saturated with the spirit of routine of the bourgeois capitalist system of production and control. The Workers' Opposition relies on the creative powers of its own class: the workers. The rest of our programme follows from this premise.

3. Who will manage production?

But right at this point there begin the differences between the Workers' Opposition and the line that is followed by the Party leaders. Distrust towards the working class (not in the sphere of politics, but in the sphere of economic creative abilities) is the whole essence of the theses signed by our Party leaders. They do not believe that by the rough hands of workers, untrained technically, can be created those foundations of the economic forms which, in the course of time, shall develop into a harmonious system of Communist production.

To all of them - Lenin, Trotsky, Zinovieff, and Bukharin - it seems that production is touch a delicate thing' that it is impossible to get along without the assistance of 'directors'. First of all we shall 'bring up' the workers, 'teach them', and only when they have grown up shall we remove from the, all the teachers of the Supreme Council of National Economy and let the industrial unions take control over production. It is, after all, significant that all the theses written by the Party leaders coincide in one essential feature: for the present, we shall not give control over production to the trade unions; for the present we shall wait'. It is doubtless true that Trotsky, Lenin, Zinovieff, and Bukharin differ in their reasons as to why the workers should not be entrusted with running the industries just at present. But they unanimously agree that just at the present time, the management of the production must be carried on over the workers' heads by means of a bureaucratic system inherited from the past. On this point all the leaders of our Party are in complete accord.

'The centre of gravity in the work of the trade unions at the present moment' - assert the Ten in their Theses - "must be shifted into the economic industrial sphere. The trade unions as class organizations of workers, built up in conformity with their industrial functions, must take on the major work of organization of production." (Major work' is a too indefinite term. It permits of various interpretations. And yet it would seem that the platforms of the 'Ten' gives more leeway for the trade unions in running the industries than Trotsky's centralistic. Further, the theses of the 'Ten' do on to explain what they mean by 'major work' of the unions. "The most energetic participation in the centres which regulate production and control, register and distribute labour power, organic exchange between cities and villages, fight against sabotage, and carry out decrees on different compulsory labour obligations, etc." This is all. Nothing new. And nothing more than what the trade unions have already been doing. This cannot save our production nor help in the solution of the basic question - raising and developing the productive forces of our country. In order to make clear the fact that the programme of the 'Ten' does not give to the trade unions any of the directing functions, but assigns to them only an auxiliary role in the management of production, the authors say: "In a developed stage (not at present, but at a developed stage) , the trade unions in their process of social transformation must become organs of a social authority. They must work as such, in subordination to other organizations, and carry out the new principles of organization of economic life.' By this they mean to say that the trade unions must work in subordination to the Supreme Council of National Economy and its branches.

4. Trotsky's view

What is the difference, then, with that and 'joining by growth' which was proposed by Trotsky? The difference is only one of method. The theses of the *Ten* strongly emphasize the educational nature of the trade unions. In their formulation of problems for the trade unions (mainly in the sphere of organization. industry and education), our Party leaders as clever politicians suddenly Convert themselves into 'teachers'.

This peculiar controversy is revolving not around the system of management in industry, but mainly around the system of bringing up the masses. In fact, when one begins to turn over the pages of the stenographic minutes and speeches made by our prominent leaders, one is astonished by the unexpected manifestation of their pedagogic proclivities. Every author of the theses proposes the most perfect system of bringing up the masses. But all these systems of 'education' lack provisions for freedom of experiment, for training and for the expression of creative abilities by those who are to be taught. In this respect also all our pedagogues are behind the times.

The trouble is that Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin and others see the functions of the trade unions not as the control over production or as the taking over of the industries, but merely as a school for bringing up the masses. During the discussion it seemed to some of our comrades that Trotsky stood for a gradual 'absorption of the unions by the state' - not all of a sudden, but gradually and that he wanted to reserve for them the right of ultimate control over production, as it is expressed in our programme. This point, it seemed at first, put Trotsky on a common ground with the Opposition at a time when the group represented by Lenin and Zinovieff, being opposed to the 'absorption of the state', saw the object of union activity and their problem as 'training for Communism'. 'Trade Unions', thunder Trotsky and Zinovieff, are necessary for the rough work' (p. 22 of the report, Dec. 30). Trotsky himself, it would seem, understands the task somewhat differently. In his opinion, the most important work of the unions consists in organizing production. In this he is perfectly right. He is also right when he says, 'inasmuch as unions are schools of Communism, they are such schools not in carrying on general propaganda (for such activity would mean they were playing the part of clubs), not in mobilizing their members for military work or collecting the produce tax, but for the purpose of all-round education of their members on the basis of their participation in production (Trotsky's report, Dec. 30). All this is true, but there is one grave omission: the unions are not only schools for Communism, but they are its creators as well.

Creativeness of the class is being lost sight of. Trotsky replaces it by the initiative of 'the real organizers of production', by Communists inside the unions (from Trotsky's report, Dec. 30). What Communists? According to Trotsky, by the Communists appointed by the Party to responsible administrative positions in the unions (for reasons that quite often have nothing in common with considerations of industrial and economic problems of the unions). Trotsky is quite frank. He does not believe that the workers are ready to create Communism, and through pain, suffering and blunder still seek to create new forms of production. He has expressed this frankly and openly. He has already carried out his system of 'club education' of the masses, of training them for the role of 'master' in the Central Administrative Body of Railways adopting all those methods of educating the masses which were practised by our traditional journeymen upon their apprentices. It is true that a beating on the head by a boot-stretcher does not make an apprentice a successful shopkeeper after he becomes a 'Journeyman'. And yet as long as the boss-teacher's stick hangs over his head, he works and produces.

This, in Trotsky's opinion, is the whole essence of shifting the central point 'from politics to industrial problems'. To raise, even temporarily, productivity by every and ill means is the whole crux of the task. The whole course of training in the trade unions must be, in Trotsky's opinion, also directed towards this end.

5. The views of Lenin, Zinoviev and Bukharin

Comrades Lenin and Zinovieff, however, disagree with him. They are 'educators' of the modern trend of thought'. It has been stated many a time that the trade unions are schools for Communism. What does that mean - 'schools for Communism'?

If we take this definition seriously, it will mean that in schools for Communism, it is necessary first of all to teach and bring up, but not to command (this allusion to Trotsky's views meets with applause. Further on, Zinovieff adds: the trade unions are performing a great task, both for the proletarian and the Communist cause. This is the basic part to be played by the trade unions. At present, however, we forget this, and think that we may handle the problem of trade unions too recklessly, too roughly, too severely.

It is necessary to remember that these organizations have their own particular tasks - these are not tasks of commanding, supervising or dictating, but tasks in which all may be reduced to one : drawing of the working masses into the channel of the organised proletarian movement. Thus, teacher Trotsky went too far in his system of bringing up the masses. But what does Comrade Zinovieff himself propose? To give, within the unions, the first lessons in Communism: (to teach them (the masses) the basic facts about the proletarian movement' . How? Through practical experience, through practical creation of the new forms of production? Just what the Opposition wants? Not at all. Zinovieff-Lenin's group favours a system of bringing up through reading, giving moral precepts and good, well- chosen examples. We have 500,000 Communists (among whom, we regret to say, there are many (strangers' - stragglers from the other world) to seven million workers.

According to Comrade Lenin, the Party 'has drawn to itself 'the proletarian vanguard'. The best Communists, in co-operation with specialists from the Soviet economic institutions, are searching hard in their laboratories for the new forms of Communist production. These Communists, working at present under the care of 'good teachers' in the Supreme Council of National Economy or other centres, these Peters and Johns are the best pupils it is true. But the working masses in the trade unions must look to these exemplary Peters and Johns and learn something from them without touching with their own hands the rudder of control, for it is '(too early'as yet'. They have 'not yet learned enough'.

In Lenin's opinion the trade unions - that is, the working class organizations - are not the creators of the Communist forms of people' economy, for they serve only as a connecting-link between the vanguard and the masses: 'the trade unions in their everyday work persuade masses, masses of that class ... ' etc.

That is not Trotsky's 'club system', not a mediaeval system of education. This is the Froebel-pestalozzi's German system founded on studying examples. Trade must do nothing vital in the industries. But they persuade the masses. They must keep the masses in touch with the vanguard, with the Party which (remember this!) does not organize production as a collective, but only creates Soviet economic institutions of a heterogeneous composition , whereto it appoints Communists. Which system is better? This is the question. Trotsky's system, whatever it may lack in other respects, is clearer and therefore more real. On reading books and studying examples taken from downhearted Peters and Johns, one cannot advance education too far. This must be remembered, and remembered well.

Bukharin's group occupies the middle ground. Or rather, it attempts to co-ordinate both systems of upbringing. We must notice, however, that it too fails to records the principle of independent creativeness of the unions in industry. In the opinion of Bukharin's group, the trade unions play a double role (so it is proclaimed in their thesis). On the one hand it (obviously (the role') takes on itself the function of a 'school for Communism'. And, on the other hand, it takes on the functions of an intermediary between the Party and the masses (this is from Lenin's group). It takes on, in other words, the role of a machine: injecting the wide proletarian masses into the active life (notice, comrades - 'into the active life' - but not into the creation of a new form of economy or into a search for new forms of production). Besides that they (obviously the unions) in ever increasing degree, must become the

component part both of the economic machine and of the State authority. This is Trotsky's joining together'.

The controversy again revolves not around the trade union problems but around the methods of educating the masses by means of the unions. Trotsky stands, or rather stood, for a system which, with the help of that introduced among the railway workers, might hammer into the organised workers' heads the wisdom of Communist reconstruction. By means of 'appointees', 'shake-ups', and all kinds of miraculous measures promulgated in conformity with 'the shock system', it would re-make the unions so that they might join the Soviet economic institutions by growth, and become obedient tools in realising economic plans worked out by the Supreme Council of National Economy, Zinovieff and Lenin are in no hurry to join up the trade unions to the Soviet economic machine. The unions, they say, shall remain unions. As regards production, it will be run and managed by men whom we choose. When the trade unions have brought up obedient and industrious Peters and Johns, we will 'inject' them into the Soviet Economic institutions. Thus the unions will gradually disappear, dissolve.

The creation of new forms of national economy they entrust to the Soviet bureaucratic institutions. As to the unions, they leave them the role of 'schools'. Education, education and more education. Such is the Lenin-Zinovieff slogan. Bukharin, however, wanted 'to bank' on radicalism in the system of union education, and, of course, he fully merited the rebuke from Lenin together with the nickname of 'simidicomist'. Bukharin and his group, while emphasizing the educational part to be played by the unions in the present political situation, stand for the most complete workers' democracy inside the unions, for wide elective powers to the unions - not only for the elective principle generally applied, but for non-conditional election of delegates nominated by the unions. What a democracy! This smacked of the very Opposition itself, if it were not for one difference. The Workers Opposition sees in the unions the managers and creators of the Communist economy, whereas Bukharin, together with Lenin and Trotsky, leave to them only the role of 'schools for Communism' and no more. Why should Bukharin not play with the elective principle, when everybody knows that will do no good or bad to the system of running industry? For, as a matter of fact, the control of industry will still remain outside the unions, beyond their reach, in the hands of the Soviet institutions. Bukharin reminds us of those teachers who carry on education in conformity with the old system by means of 'books'. 'You must learn that far and no further', while encouraging 'self-activity' of the pupils . . . in organizing dances, entertainments etc.

In this way, the two systems quite comfortably live together and square up with one another. But what the outcome of all this will be, and what duties will the pupils of these teachers of eclectics be able to perform - that is a different question. If Comrade Lunacharsky were to disapprove at all the educational meetings of 'eclectic heresy' like this, the position of the People's Commissariat on Education would be precarious indeed.

6. Restricting creativeness

However, there is no need to underestimate the educational methods of our leading comrades in regard to the trade unions. They all, Trotsky included, realise that in the matter of education, 'self-activity' of the masses is not the least factor. Therefore, they are in search of such a plan where trade unions, without any harm to the prevailing bureaucratic system of running the industry, may develop their initiative and their economic creative powers. The least harmful sphere where the masses could manifest their self-activity as well as their 'participation in active life' (according to Bukharin) is the sphere of betterment of the workers' lot. The Workers' Opposition pays a great deal of attention to this question, and yet it knows that the basic sphere of class creation is the creation of new industrial economic forms, of which the 'betterment of the workers' lot is only a part.

In Trotsky and Zinovieff's opinion, all production must be initiated and adjusted by the Soviet institutions, while the trade unions are advised to perform a rather restricted, though useful: work of improving the lot of the workers. Comrade Zinovieff, for instance, sees in distribution of clothing the 'economic role' of the unions, and explains: 'there is no more important problem than that of economy; to repair one bathhouse in Petrograd at present is ten times more important than delivering five good lectures.

What is this? A naive, mistaken view? Or a conscious substitution of organizing creative tasks in the sphere of production and development of creative abilities, by restricted tasks of home economics, household duties, etc.? In somewhat different language, the same thought is expressed by Trotsky. He very generously proposes to the trade unions to develop the greatest initiative possible in the economic field.

But where shall this initiative express itself In 'putting glass' in the shop window or filling up a pool in front of the factory (from Trotsky's speech at the Miners' Congress)? Comrade Trotsky, take pity on us! For this is merely the sphere of house-running. If you intend to reduce the creativeness of the unions to such a degree, then the unions will become not schools for Communism, but places where they train people to become janitors. It is true that Comrade Trotsky attempts to widen the scope of the 'self-activity of the masses' by letting them participate not in an independent improvement of the workers' lot, on the job (only the 'insane' Workers' Opposition goes that far), but by taking lessons from the Supreme Council of the National Economy on this subject.

Whenever a question concerning workers is to be decided, as for instance about distribution of food or labour power, it is necessary that the trade unions should know exactly, not in general outline as mere citizens, but know thoroughly the whole current work that is being done by the Supreme Council of National Economy (speech of Dec. 30). The teachers from the Supreme Council of National Economy not only force the trade unions 'to carry out' plans, but they also 'explain to their pupils their decrees'. This is already a step forward in comparison with the system that functions at present on the railways. To every thinking worker, it is clear, however, that putting in glass, useful as it may be, has nothing in common with running industry', productive forces and their development do not find expression in this work. The really important question still is: how to develop the productive forces. How to build such a state of economy by squaring the new life with production, and how to eliminate unproductive labour as much as possible. A Party may bring up a Red soldier, a political worker or an executive worker to carry out the projects already laid out. But it cannot develop a creator of Communist economy, for only a union offers an opportunity for developing the creative abilities along new lines.

Moreover, this is not the task of the Party. The Party task is to create the conditions - that is, give freedom to the working masses united by common economic industrial aims - so that workers can become worker-creators, find new impulses for work, work out a new system to utilise labour power, and discover how to distribute workers in order to reconstruct society, and thus to create a new economic order of things founded on a Communist basis. Only workers can generate in their minds new methods of organizing labour as well as running industry.

7. Technique and organisation

This is a simple marxist truth, and yet at present the leaders of our Party do not share it with us. Why? Because they place more reliance on the bureaucratic technicians, descendants of the past, than on the healthy elemental class-creativity of the working masses. In every other sphere we may hesitate as to who is to be in control - whether the workers' collective or the bureaucratic specialists, be it in the matter of education, development of science,

organization of the Army, care of Public Health. But there is one place, that of the economy, where the question as to who shall have control is very simple and clear for everyone who has not forgotten history. It is well known to every marxist that the reconstruction of industry and the development of the creative forms of a country depend on two factors: on the development of technique and on the efficient organization of labour by means of increasing productivity and finding new incentives to work. This has been true during every period of transformation from a lower stage of economic development to a higher one throughout the history of human existence.

In a workers' republic the development of the productive forces by means of technique plays a secondary role in comparison with the second factor, that of the efficient organization of labour, and the creation of a new system of economy. Even if Soviet Russia succeeds in carrying out completely its project of general electrification, without introducing any essential change in the system of control and organization of the people's economy and production, it would only catch up with the advanced capitalist countries in the matter of development. Yet, in the efficient utilization of labour power and building up a new system of production, Russian labour finds itself in exceptionally favourable circumstances. These give her the opportunity to leave far behind all bourgeois capitalist countries in the question of developing the productive forces. Unemployment as an incentive to labour in socialist Russia has been done away with. New possibilities are open for a working class that had been freed from the yoke of capital, to have its own creative say in finding new incentives to labour and the creation of new forms of production which will have had no precedent in all of human history.

Who can, however, develop the necessary creativeness and keenness in this sphere? Is it the bureaucratic elements, the heads of the Soviet institutions or the industrial unions, whose members in their experience of regrouping workers in the shop come across creative, useful, practical methods that can be applied in the process of re-organizing the entire system of the people's economy? The Workers' Opposition asserts that administration of the people's economy is the trade unions' job and, therefore, that the Opposition is more marxist in thought than the theoretically trained leaders.

The Workers' Opposition is not so ignorant as wholly to underestimate the great value of technical progress or the usefulness of technically trained men. It does not, therefore, think that after electing its own body of control over industry it may safely dismiss the Supreme Council of National Economy, the central industrial committees, economic centres, etc. Not at all. The Workers' Opposition thinks that it must assert its own control over these technically valuable administrative centres, give them theoretical tasks, and use their services as the capitalists did when they hired the technicians in order to carry out their own schemes. Specialists can do valuable work in developing the industries, they can make the workers' manual labour easier; they are necessary, indispensable, just as science is indispensable to every rising and developing class. But the Bourgeois specialists, even when Communist labels are pasted on them, are powerless physically and too weak mentally to develop the productive forces in a non-capitalist state; to find new methods of labour organization and to develop new incentives for intensification of labour. In this, the last word belongs to the working class - to the industrial unions. When the rising bourgeois class, having reached the threshold leading from mediaeval to modern times, entered into the economic battle with the decaying class of feudal lords, it did not possess any technical advantages over the latter.

The trader - the first capitalist - was compelled to buy goods from that craftsman or journeyman who by means of hand files, knife, and primitive spindles was producing goods both for his 'master' (the landlord) and for the outside trader, with whom he entered into a 'free' trade agreement. Feudal economy having reached a culminating point in its

organization, ceased to give any surplus, and there began a decrease in the growth of productive forces. Humanity stood face to face with the alternatives of either economic decay or of finding new incentives for labour! of creating, consequently, a new economic system which would increase productivity, widen the scope of production, and open new possibilities for the development of productive forces.

Who could have found and evolved the new methods in the sphere of industrial reorganization? None but those class representatives who had not been bound by the routine of the past, who understood that the spindle and cutter in the hands of a chattel slave produce incomparably less than in the hands of supposedly free hired workers, behind whose back stands the incentive of economic necessity.

Thus the rising class, having found where the basic incentive to labour lay, built on at a complex system great in its own way: the system of capitalist production. The technicians only come to the aid of capitalists much later. The basis was the new system of labour organization, and the new relations that were established between capital and labour.

The same is true at present. No specialist or technician imbued with the routine of the capitalist system of production can ever introduce any new creative motive and vitalising innovation into the yields of labour organization, in creating and adjusting a Communist economy. Here the function clangs to the workers' collectives. The great service of the Workers' Opposition is that it brought up this question of supreme importance frankly and openly before the Party.

Comrade Lenin considers that we can put through a Communist plan on the economic field by means of the Party. Is it so? First of all, let us consider how the Party functions. According to Comrade Lenin, "it attracts to 'itself the vanguard of workers' s then it scatters them over various Soviet institutions (only a part of the vanguard gets back into the trade unions, where the Communist members, however, are deprived of an opportunity of directing and building up the people's economy). These well-trained, faithful, and perhaps very talented Communist-economists disintegrate and decay in the general economic institutions. 'in such an atmosphere, the influence of these comrades is weakened, marred', or entirely lost. Quite a different thing with the trade unions, There, the class atmosphere is thicker, the composition more homogeneous, the tasks that the collective is faced with more closely bound with the immediate life and labour needs of the producers themselves, of the members of factory and shop committees, of the factory management and the unions' centres. Creativeness and the search for new forms of production, for new incentives to labour, in order to increase productivity, may be generated only in the bosom of this natural class collective. Only the vanguard of the class can create revolution, but only the whole class can develop through its everyday experience the practical work of the basic class collectives.

Whoever does not believe in the basic spirit of a class collective - and this collective is most fully represented by the trade unions - must put a cross over the Communist reconstruction of society. Neither Krestinsky or Preobrajensky, Lenin or Trotsky can infallibly push to the forefront by means of their Party machine those workers able to find and point out new approaches to the new system of production. Such workers can be pushed to the front only by life-experience itself, from the ranks of those who actually produce and organise production at the same time. This consideration, which should be very simple and clear to every practical man, is lost sight of by our Party leaders: it is impossible to decree Communism. It can be treated only in the process of practical research, through mistakes, perhaps, but only by the creative powers of the working class itself.

8. The programme of the opposition

The cardinal point of the controversy that is taking place between the Party leaders and the

Workers' Opposition is this: to whom will our Party entrust the building of the Communist economy - to the Supreme Council of National Economy with all its bureaucratic branches? Or to the industrial unions? Comrade Trotsky wants 'to join' the trade unions to the Supreme Council of People's Economy, so that, with the assistance of the latter, it might be possible to swallow up the former. Comrades Lenin and Zinovieff, on the other hand, wanted to 'bring up' the masses to such a level of Communist understanding that they could be painlessly absorbed into the same Soviet institutions. Bukharin and the rest of the factions express essentially the same view. Variations exist only in the way they put it ; the essence is the same. Only the Workers' Opposition expresses something entirely different, defends the proletarian class viewpoint in the very process of creation and realization of its tasks. The administrative economic body in the workers' republic during the present transitory period must be 'a body directly elected by the producers themselves. All the other administrative economic Soviet institutions should serve only as executive centres of the economic policy of the all-important economic body of the workers' republic. ' All else is goose-stepping, that shows distrust towards the creative abilities of the workers, distrust which is not compatible with the professed ideals of our Party, whose very strength depends on the perennial creative spirit of the proletariat. There will be nothing surprising if at the approaching Party congress, the sponsors of the different economic reforms, with the single exception of the Workers' Opposition, will come to a common understanding through mutual compromise and concessions, since there is no essential controversy among them.

The Workers' Opposition alone will not and must not compromise. This does not, however, mean that it is aiming at a split'. Not at all. Its task is entirely different. Even in the event of defeat at the Congress, it must remain in the Party, and step by step stubbornly defend its point of view, save the Party, clarify its class lines.

Once more in brief : what is it that the Workers' Opposition wants?

- (1) To form a body from the workers - producers themselves - for administering the people's economy.
- (2) For this purpose, (i.e. for the transformation of the unions from the role of passive assistance to the economic bodies, to that of active participation and manifestation of their creative initiative) the Workers' Opposition proposes a series of preliminary measures aimed at an orderly and gradual cessation of this aim.
- (3) Transferring of the administrative functions of industry into the hands of the union does not take place until the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the trade unions has found the said unions to be able and sufficiently prepared for the task.
- (4) All appointments to the administrative economic positions shall be made with consent of the union. All candidates nominated by the union to be non-removable. All responsible officials appointed by the unions are responsible to it and may be recalled by it.
- (5) In order to carry out all these proposals, it is necessary to strengthen the rank and file nucleus in the unions, and to prepare factory and shop committees for running the industries.
- (6) By means of concentrating in one body the entire administration of the public economy (without the existing dualism of the Supreme Council of National Economy and the All-Russian Executive Committee of the trade unions) there must be created a singleness of will which will make it easy to carry out the plan and put 'to life the Communist system of production. Is this syndicalism? Is not this, on the contrary, the same as what is stated in our Party programme, and are not the elements of principles signed by the rest of the comrades deviating from it?

On bureaucracy and self-activity of the masses

1. Initiative... and the roots of apathy

Is it to be bureaucracy or self-activity of the masses? This is the second point of the controversy between the leaders of our Party and the Workers' Opposition. The question of bureaucracy was raised and only superficially discussed at the eighth Soviet Congress. Herein, just as in the question on the part to be played by the trade unions and their problems, the discussion was shifted to a wrong channel. The controversy on this question is more fundamental than it might seem.

The essence is this: what system of administration in a workers' republic during the period of creation of the economic basis for Communism secures more freedom for the class creative powers? Is it a bureaucratic state system or a system of wide practical self-activity of the working masses? The question relates to the system of administration and the controversy arises between two diametrically opposed principles: bureaucracy or self-activity. And yet they try to squeeze it into the scope of the problem that concerns itself only with methods of animating the Soviet institutions'.

Here we observe the same substitution of the subjects discussed as the one that occurred in the debates on the trade unions. It is necessary to state definitely and clearly that half-measures, changes in relations between central bodies and local economic organizations, and other such petty non-essential innovations (such as responsible officials or the injection of Party members into the Soviet institutions, where these Communists are subjected to all the

bad influences of the prevailing bureaucratic system, and disintegrate among the elements of the former bourgeois class) will not bring 'democratisation' or life into the Soviet institutions.

This is not the point however. Every child in Soviet Russia knows that the vital problem is to draw the wide toiling masses of workers, peasants and others, into the reconstruction of economy in the proletarian state, and to change the conditions of life accordingly. The task is clear: it is to arouse initiative and self-activity in the masses. But what is being done to encourage and develop that initiative? Nothing at all. Quite the contrary. At every meeting we call upon the working men and women to 'create a new life, build up and assist the Soviet authorities'. But no sooner do the masses or individual groups of workers take our admonition seriously and attempt to apply it in real life than some bureaucratic institution, feeling ignored, hastily cuts short the efforts of the over-zealous initiators.

Every comrade can easily recall scores of instances when workers themselves attempted to organise dining-rooms, day nurseries for children, transportation of wood, etc. Each time a lively, immediate interest in the undertaking died from the red tape, interminable negotiations with the various institutions that brought no results, or resulted in refusals, new requisitions etc. Wherever there was an opportunity under the impetus of the masses themselves - of the masses using their own efforts - to equip a dining-room, to store a supply of wood, or to organise a nursery, refusal always followed refusal from the central institutions. Explanations were forthcoming that there was no equipment for the dining-room, lack of horses for transporting the wood, and absence of an adequate building for the nursery. How much bitterness is generated 'Among working men and women when they see and know that if they had been given the right, and an opportunity to act, they could themselves have seen the project through. How painful it is to receive a refusal of necessary material! when such material had already been found and procured by the workers themselves. Their initiative is therefore slackening and the desire to act is dying out. 'If that is the case', people say, 'let officials themselves take care of us.' As a result, there is generated a most harmful division: we are the toiling people, they are the Soviet officials, on whom everything depends. This is the whole trouble.

2. The essence of bureaucracy

Meanwhile, what are our Party leaders doing? Do they attempt to find the cause of the evil? Do they openly admit that their very system which was carried out into life through the Soviets, paralyses and deadens the masses, though it was meant to encourage their initiative? No, our Party leaders do nothing of the kind. Just the opposite. Instead of finding means to encourage the mass initiative which could fit perfectly into our flexible Soviet institutions, our Party leaders all of a sudden appear in the role of defenders and knights of bureaucracy. How many comrades follow Trotsky's example and repeat that 'we suffer, not because we adopt the bad sides of bureaucracy, but because we have failed so far to learn the good ones' ('On one common plan', by Trotsky).

Bureaucracy is a direct negation of mass self-activity. Whoever therefore accepts the principle of involving the masses in active participation as a basis for the new system of the workers' republic, cannot look for good or bad sides in bureaucracy. He must openly and resolutely reject this useless system. Bureaucracy is not a product of our misery as Comrade Zinovieff tries to convince us. Neither is it a reflection of blind subordination' to superiors, generated by militarism, as others assert. This phenomenon has deeper roots. It is a by-product of the same cause that explains our policy of double-dealing in relation to the trade unions, namely, the vowing influence in the Soviet institutions of elements hostile in spirit not only to Communism, but also to the elementary aspirations of the working masses. Bureaucracy is a scourge that pervades the very marrow of our Party as well as of the Soviet

institutions. This fact is emphasised not only by the Workers' Opposition. It is also recognised by many thoughtful comrades not belonging to this group.

Restrictions on initiative are imposed, not only in regard to the activity of the non-party masses (this would only be a logical and reasonable condition, in the atmosphere of the civil war). 'the initiative of Party members themselves is restricted. Every independent attempt, every new thought that passes through the censorship of our centre, is considered as 'heresy', as a violation of Party discipline, as an attempt to infringe on the prerogatives of the centre, which must 'foresee' everything and 'decree' everything and anything. If anything is not decreed one must wait, for the time will come when the centre at its leisure will decree. Only then, and within sharply restricted limits, will one be allowed to express one's 'initiative'. What would happen if some of the members of the Russian Communist Party - those, for instance, who are fond of birds - decided to form a society for the preservation of birds? The idea itself seems useful. It does not in any way undermine any Estate project'. But it only seems this way. All of a sudden there would appear some bureaucratic institution which would claim the right to manage this particular undertaking. That particular institution would immediately 'incorporate' the society into the Soviet machine, deadening, thereby, the direct initiative. And instead of direct initiative, there would appear a heap of paper decrees and regulations which would give enough work to hundreds of other officials and add to the work of mails and transport.

The harm in bureaucracy does not only lie in the red tape as some comrades would want us to believe - they narrow the whole controversy to the sanitation of Soviet institutions'. The harm lies in the solution of all problems, not by means of an open exchange of opinions or by the immediate efforts of all concerned, but by means of formal decisions handed down from the central institutions. These decisions are arrived at either by one person or by an extremely limited collective, wherein the interested people are quite often entirely absent. Some third person decides your fate: this is the whole essence of bureaucracy. In the face of the growing suffering in the working class, brought about by the confusion of the present transitory period, bureaucracy finds itself particularly weak and impotent. Miracles of enthusiasm in stimulating the productive forces and alleviating working conditions can only be performed by the active initiative of the interested workers themselves, provided it is not restricted and repressed at every step by a hierarchy of 'permissions' and 'decrees'. Marxists, and Bolsheviki in particular, have been strong and powerful in that they never stressed the policy of immediate success of the movement (This line, by the way, has always been followed by the opportunists- compromisers). Marxists have always attempted to put the workers in such conditions as would give them the opportunity to temper their revolutionary will and to develop their creative abilities. The workers' initiative is indispensable for us, and yet we do not give it a chance to develop. Fear of criticism and of freedom of thought, by combining together with bureaucracy, often produce ridiculous results. There can be no self-activity without freedom of thought and opinion, for self-activity manifest itself not only in initiative, action and work, but in independent thought as well. We give no freedom to class activity, we are afraid of criticism, we have ceased to rely on the masses: hence we have bureaucracy with us. That is why the Workers' Opposition considers that bureaucracy is our enemy, our scourge, and the greatest danger to the future existence of the Communist Party itself.

3. Against the bureaucracy in the party

In order to do away with the bureaucracy that is finding its shelter in the Soviet institutions, we must first get rid of all bureaucracy in the Party itself. That is where we face the immediate struggle. As soon as the Party - not in theory but in practice - recognised the self-activity of the masses as the basis of our State, the Soviet institutions will again automatically become living institutions, destined to carry out the Communist project. They will cease to be

the institutions of red tape and the laboratories for still-born decrees into which they have very rapidly degenerated.

What shall we do then in order to destroy bureaucracy in the Party and replace it by workers' democracy? First of all it is necessary to understand that our leaders are wrong when they say: 'Just now we agree to loosen the reins somewhat, for there is no immediate danger on the military front, but as soon as we again feel the danger we shall return to the military system in the Party. We must remember that heroism saved Petrograd, more than once defended Lugansk, other centres, and whole regions. Was it the Red Army alone that put up the defence? No. There was, besides, the heroic self-activity and initiative of the masses themselves. Every comrade will recall that during the moments of supreme danger, the Party always appealed to this self-activity, for it saw in it the sheet-anchor of salvation. It is true that at times of threatening danger, Party and class discipline must be stricter. There must be more self-sacrifice, exactitude in performing duties, etc. But between these manifestations of class spirit and the 'blind subordination' which is being advocated lately in the Party, there is a great difference.

In the name of Party regeneration and the elimination of bureaucracy from the Soviet institutions, the Workers' Opposition, together with a group of responsible workers in Moscow, demand complete realization of all democratic principles, not only for the present period of respite but also for times of internal and external tension. This is the first and basic condition for the Party's regeneration, for its return to the principles of its programme, from which it is more and more deviating in practice under the pressure of elements that are foreign to it.

The second condition, the vigorous fulfilment of which is insisted upon by the Workers' Opposition, is the expulsion from the Party of all non-proletarian elements. The stronger the Soviet authority becomes, the greater is the number of middle class, and sometimes even openly hostile elements, joining the Party. The elimination of these elements must be complete and thorough. Those in charge of it must take into account the fact that the most revolutionary elements of non-proletarian origin had joined the Party during the first period of the October revolution. The Party must become a Workers' Party. Only then will it be able vigorously to repeal all the influences that are now being brought to bear on it by petty-bourgeois elements, peasants, or by the faithful servants of Capital - the specialists.

The Workers' Opposition proposes to register all members who are non-workers and who joined the Party since 1919, and to reserve for them the right to appeal within three months from the decisions arrived at, in order that they might join the Party again .

At the same time, it is necessary to establish a 'working status' for all those non-working class elements who will try to get back into the Party, by providing that every applicant to membership of the Party must have worked a certain period of time at manual labour: under general working conditions, before he becomes eligible for enrolment into the Party.

The third decisive step towards democratization of the Party is the elimination of all non-working class elements from administrative positions. In other words, the central, provincial, and county committees of the Party must be so composed that workers closely acquainted with the conditions of the working masses should have the preponderant majority therein. Closely related to this demand stands the further demand of converting all our Party centres, beginning from the Central Executive Committee and including the provincial county committees, from institutions taking care of routine, everyday work, into institutions of control over Soviet policy. We have already remarked that the crisis in our Party is a direct outcome of three distinct crosscurrents, corresponding to the three different social groups: the

working class, the peasantry and middle class, and elements of the former bourgeoisie - that is, specialists, technicians and men of affairs.

Problems of State-wide importance compel both the local and central Soviet institutions, including even the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, to lend an ear to, and conform with, these three distinct tendencies, representing the groups that compose the population of Soviet Russia. As a result, the class line of our general policy is blurred, and the necessary stability is lost. Considerations of State interests begin to outweigh the interests of the workers.

To help the Central Committee and Party Committees stand firmly on the side of our class policy, to help them call all our Soviet institutions to order each time that a decision in Soviet policy becomes necessary (as, for instance, in the question of the trade unions) it is necessary to disassociate the prerogatives of such responsible officials who, at one and the same time, have responsible posts both in the Soviet institutions and in the Communist Party centres. We must remember that Soviet Russia has not so far been a socially homogeneous unit. On the contrary, it has represented a heterogeneous social conglomeration. The State authority is compelled to reconcile these, at times mutually hostile, interests by choosing the middle ground.

The Central Committee of our Party must become the supreme directing centre of our class policy, the organ of class thought and control over the practical policy of the Soviets, and the spiritual personification of our basic programme. To ensure this, it is necessary, particularly in the Central Committee, to restrict multiple office-holding by those who, whilst being members of the Central Committee, also occupy high posts in the Soviet government. For this purpose, the Workers' Opposition proposes the formation of Party centres, which would really serve as organs of ideal control over the Soviet institutions, and would direct their actions along clear-cut class lines. To increase Party activity, it would be necessary to implement everywhere the following measure: at least one third of Party members in these centres should be permanently forbidden to act as Party members and Soviet officials at the same time.

The fourth basic demand of the Workers' Opposition is that the Party must reverse its policy in relation to the elective principle. Appointments are permissible only as exceptions. Lately they have begun to prevail as a rule. Appointments are very characteristic of bureaucracy, and yet at present they are a general, legalized and well-recognised daily occurrence. The procedure of appointments produces a very unhealthy atmosphere in the Party. It disrupts the relationship of equality amongst the members by rewarding friends and punishing enemies, and by other no less harmful practices in Party and Soviet life. Appointments lessen the sense of duty and responsibility to the masses in the ranks of those appointed, for they are not responsible to the masses. This makes the division between the leaders and the rank and file members still sharper. Every appointee, as a matter of fact, is beyond any control. The leaders are not able closely to watch his activity while the masses cannot call him to account and dismiss him if necessary. As a rule every appointee is surrounded by an atmosphere of officialdom: servility and blind subordination, which infects all subordinates and discredits the Party. The practice of appointments completely rejects the principle of collective work. It breeds irresponsibility.

Appointments by the leaders must be done away with and replaced by the elective principle at every level of the Party. Candidates shall be eligible to occupy responsible administrative positions only when they have been elected by conferences or congresses. Finally, in order to eliminate bureaucracy and make the Party more healthy, it is necessary to revert to the state of affairs where all the cardinal questions of Party activity and Soviet policy were submitted

to the consideration of the rank and file, and only after that were supervised by the leaders. This was the state of things when the Party was forced to carry on its work in secret - even as late as the time of the signing of the Brest-Litovsk treaty.

4. Discuss the problems openly

At present, the state of things is altogether different. In spite of the widely circulated promises made at the All Russian Party Conference held in September (1920) a no less important question than that of concessions was quite arbitrarily decided for the masses. Only due to the sharp controversy that arose within the Party centres themselves was the question of the trade unions brought out into the open, to be thrashed out in debate.

Wide publicity, freedom of opinion and discussion, the right to criticise within the Party and among the members of the trade unions - such are the decisive steps that can put an end to the prevailing system of bureaucracy. Freedom of criticism, right of different factions freely to present their views at Party meetings, freedom of discussion - are no longer the demands of the Workers' Opposition alone. Under the growing pressure from the masses, a whole series of measures that were demanded by the rank and file long before the Party Conference are now recognised and officially promulgated. One need only read the proposals of the Moscow Committee in regard to Party structure to be proud of the great influence that is being exerted on the Party centres. If it were not for the Workers' Opposition, the Moscow Committee would never have taken such a sharp 'turn to the left'. However, we must not overestimate this 'leftism', for it is only a declaration of principles to the Congress. It may happen, as it has many a time with decisions of our Party leaders during these years, that this radical declaration will soon be forgotten. As a rule, these decisions are accepted by our Party centres only just as the mass impetus is felt. As soon as life again swings into normal channels, the decisions are forgotten.

Did not this happen to the decision of the eighth Congress which resolved to free the Party of all elements who joined it for selfish motives, and to use discretion in accepting non-working class elements? What has become of the decision taken by the Party Conference in 1920, when it was decided to replace the practice of appointments by recommendations? Inequality in the Party still persists, in spite of repeated resolutions passed on this subject. Comrades who dare to disagree with decrees from above are still being persecuted. There are many such instances. If all these various Party decisions are not enforced, then it is necessary to eliminate the basic cause that interferes with their enforcement. We must remove from the Party those who are afraid of publicity, strict accountability before the rank and file, and freedom of criticism.

Non-working class members of the Party, and those workers who fell under their influence, are afraid of all this. It is not enough to clean the Party of all non-proletarian elements by registration or to increase the control in time of enrolment, etc. It is also necessary to create opportunities for the workers to join the Party. It is necessary to simplify the admission of workers to the Party, to create a more friendly atmosphere in the Party itself, so that workers might feel themselves at home. In responsible Party officials they should not see superiors but more experienced comrades, ready to share with them their knowledge, experience and skill, and to consider seriously workers' needs and interests. How many comrades, particularly young workers, are driven away from the Party just because we manifest our impatience with them by our assumed superiority and strictness, instead of teaching them bringing them up in the spirit of Communism? Besides the spirit of bureaucracy, an atmosphere of officialdom finds a fertile ground in our Party. If there is any comradeship in our Party it exists only among the rank and file members.

5. Historical necessity of the opposition

The task of the Party congress is to take into account this unpleasant reality. It must ponder over the question: Why is the Workers' Opposition insisting on introducing equality, on eliminating all privileges in the Party, and on placing under a stricter responsibility to the masses those administrative officials who are elected by them? In its struggle for establishing democracy in the Party, and for the elimination of all bureaucracy, the Workers' Opposition advances three cardinal demands:

- (1) Return to the principle of election all along the line with the elimination of all bureaucracy, by making all responsible officials answerable to the masses.
- (2) Introduce wide publicity within the Party, both concerning general questions and Where individuals are involved. Pay more attention to the voice of the rank and file (wide discussion of all questions by the rank and file and their summarizing by the leaders; admission of any member to the meetings of Party centres, except when the problems discussed require particular secrecy). Establish freedom of opinion and expression (giving the right not only to criticise freely during discussions, but to use funds for publication of literature proposed by different Party factions).
- (3) Make the Party more of a workers' Party. Limit the number of those who fill offices, both in the Party and the Soviet institutions at the same time.

This last demand is particularly important. Our Party must not only build Communism, but prepare and educate the masses for a prolonged period of struggle against world capitalism, which may take on unexpected new forms. It would be childish to imagine that, having repelled the treason of the White Guards and of Imperialism on the military fronts, we will be free from the danger of a new attack from world capital, which is striving to seize Soviet Russia by roundabout ways, to penetrate into our life, and use the Soviet Republic for its own ends. This is the great danger that we must stand guard against. And herein lies the problem for our Party : how to meet the enemy well-prepared, how to rally all the proletarian forces around clear-cut class issues (the other groups of the population always gravitate to capitalism). It is the duty of our leaders to prepare for this new page of our revolutionary history

It will only be possible to find correct solutions to these questions when we succeed in uniting the Party all along the line, not only together with the Soviet institutions, but with the trade unions as well. The filling up of offices in party and trade unions not only tends to deviate Party policy from clear-cut class lines but also renders the Party susceptible to the influences of world capitalism during this coming epoch, influences exerted through concessions and trade agreements. To make the Central Committee one that the workers feel is their own is to create a Central Committee wherein representatives of the lower layers connected with the masses would not merely play the role of upgrading generals', or a merchant's wedding party, The Committee should be closely bound with the wide non-party working masses in the trade unions. It would thereby be enabled to formulate the slogans of the time, to express the workers' needs, their aspirations, and to direct the policy of the Party along class lanes. Such are the demands of the Workers' Opposition. Such is its historic task. And whatever derisive remarks the leaders of our Party may employ, the Workers' Opposition is today the only vital active force with which the Party is compelled to contend, and to which it will have to pay attention.

Is the Opposition necessary? Is it necessary, on behalf of the liberation of the workers throughout the world from the yoke of capital, to welcome its formation? Or is it an undesirable movement, detrimental to the fighting energy of the Party, and destructive to its ranks? Every comrade who is not prejudiced against the Opposition and who wants to

approach the question with an open mind and to analyse it, even if not in accordance with what the recognised authorities tell him, will see from these brief outlines that the Opposition is useful and necessary. It is useful primarily because it has awakened slumbering thought. During these years of the revolution, we have been so preoccupied with our pressing affairs that we have ceased to appraise our actions from the stand-point of principle and theory. We have been forgetting that the proletariat can commit grave mistakes and not only during the period of Struggle for political power. It can turn to the morass of opportunism. Even during the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat such mistakes are possible, particularly when on all sides we are surrounded by the stormy waves of imperialism and when the Soviet Republic is compelled to act in a capitalist environment. At such times, our leaders must be not only wise, (statesman-like' politicians. They must also be able to lead the Party and the whole working class along the line of class creativeness. They must prepare it for a prolonged struggle against the new forms of penetration of the Soviet Republic by the bourgeois influences of world capitalism. Be ready, be clear - but along class lines' ; such must be the slogan of our Party, and now more than ever before.

The Workers' Opposition has put these questions on the order of the day, rendering thereby an historic service. The thought begins to move. Members begin to analyse what has already been done. Wherever there is criticism, analysis, wherever thought moves and works, there is life, progress, advancement forward towards the future. There is nothing more frightful and harmful than sterility of thought and routine. We have been retiring into routine, and might inadvertently have gone off the direct class road leading to Communism, if it were not for the Workers' Opposition injecting itself into the situation at a time when our enemies were about to burst into joyful laughter. At present this is already impossible. The Congress, and the Party, will be compelled to contend with the point of view expressed by the Workers' Opposition. They will either compromise with it or make essential concessions under its influence and pressure. The second service of the Workers' Opposition is that it has brought up for discussion the question as to who, after all, shall be called upon to create the new forms of economy. Shall it be the technicians and men of affairs, who by their psychology are bound up with the past, together with Soviet officials and some Communists scattered among them, or shall it be working class collectives, represented by the unions?

The Workers' Opposition has said what has long ago been printed in the Communist Manifesto by Marx and Engels: the building of Communism can and must be the work of the toiling masses themselves. The building of Communism belongs to the workers. Finally, the Workers' Opposition has raised its voice against bureaucracy. It has dared to say that bureaucracy binds the wings of self-activity and the creativeness of the working class; that it deadens thought, hinders initiative and experimenting in the sphere of finding new approaches to production ; in a word that it hinders the development of new forms for production and life. Instead of a system of bureaucracy, the Workers' Opposition proposes a system of self-activity for the masses. In this respect, the Party leaders even now are making concessions and 'recognising' their deviations as being harmful to Communism and detrimental to working class interests (the rejection of centralism), The Tenth Congress, we understand, will make another series of concessions to the Workers' Opposition. Thus, in spite of the fact that the Workers' Opposition appeared as a mere group inside the Party only a few months ago, it has already fulfilled its mission. It has compelled the leading Party centres to listen to the workers' sound advice. At presents whatever might be the wrath toward the Workers' Opposition, it has the historical future to support it.

Just because we believe in the vital forces of our Party, we know that after some hesitation, resistance and devious political moves, our Party will ultimately again follow that path which has been blazed by the elemental forces of the proletariat. Organised as a class, there will be

no split. If some groups leave the Party, they will not be the ones who make up the Workers' Opposition. Only those will fall out who attempt to evolve into principles the temporary deviations from the spirit of the Communist programme, that were forced upon the Party by the prolonged civil war, and hold to them as if they were the essence of our political line of action.

All those in the Party who have been accustomed to reflect the class viewpoint of the ever-growing proletariat will absorb and digest everything that is wholesome, practical and sound in the Workers' Opposition. Not in vain will the rank-and-file worker speak with assurance and reconciliation: 'Ilyich (Lenin) will ponder, he will think it over, he will listen to us. And then he will decide to turn the Party rudder toward the Opposition. Ilyich will be with us yet'

The sooner the Party leaders take into account the Opposition's work and follow the road indicated by the rank-and-file members, the quicker shall we overcome the crisis in the Party. And the sooner shall we step over the line beyond which humanisms having freed itself from objective economic laws and taking advantage of all the richness and knowledge of common working-class experience, will consciously begin to create the human history of the Communist epoch.