

COPYRIGHT 1926
BY THE DAILY WORKER PUBLISHING CO.
Printed in the U. S. A.



290

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	7
I. Where to Begin?	49
(From "Where to Begin," "Iskra" No. 4, May 1901)	
II. Literature Distribution	57
(From "A Letter to a Comrade on Our Problems of Organization," 1902)	
III. The Amateurness of the Economists and an Organization of Revolutionaries.....	59
(From "What Is to Be Done?" 1902)	
IV. General Types of Organization.....	111
(From "A Letter to a Comrade on Our Problems of Organization")	
V. Party Membership	127
(From "One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward")	
VI. Opportunism in Organization Questions....	193
(From "One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward")	
VII. Why the Proletariat Must Train Its Own Leaders	195
VIII. On the Road.....	199
(From "The Social Democrat," No. 2, 1909)	
IX. The Liquidation of Liquidationism.....	205
(From "Proletarii," No. 46, 1909)	
X. A Fundamental Reason for the Success of the Bolsheviks	209
(From "Infantile Sickness of Leftism," 1920)	

CONTENTS (Continued)

	Page
XI. Party Unity Resolution of 10th Congress of the R. C. P. (1921).....	215
XII. The Party Cleansing.....	221
(From "Pravda," No. 210, 1921)	
XIII. "A Letter to a German Comrade".....	225
(Extract 1921)	
XIV. Lenin's Behest to the Sections of the Comintern on the Question of Organ- ization	227
(From his speech on Organization at the 4th Congress of the Comintern, 1922)	
Notes	231

INTRODUCTION.

Lenin on the Formation of the Bolshevik Party.

No one now questions the truth that the Russian proletariat in alliance with the peasantry was able to emerge victorious from the struggle with the bourgeoisie and the landlords, to hold out against intervention and blockade, against unparalleled economic ruin, famine and cold, and to set to work to restore the economic life of Russia only because it was led by an excellent, monolithic, Bolshevik Party, closely welded with the masses. The great founder of this party was V. I. Lenin. Consequently every section of the Communist International must learn how this party was formed and what organizational principles were introduced by V. I. Lenin in its formation. Towards this end the Organisation Department of the Executive Committee of the Communist International is striving to bring to the knowledge of all the sections of the Communist International V. I. Lenin's fundamental ideas on the question of organization.

Of course the Russian Communist Party did not become what we see it now all in one day. It developed in the struggle and in this book we will endeavor, by means of extracts from the articles and other works of Lenin, to make our comrades acquainted with this struggle.

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

The Conditions Under Which the Boishhevik Party was Formed.

The proletarian party in Russia was formed under conditions which differed from those in which the proletarian parties in the Western countries were formed. In the West the Socialist Parties were formed under legal conditions, when legal labor organizations (trade unions, etc.), bourgeois parliaments and a minimum at least of liberty for the labor movement existed; in Russia, however, the proletarian party was formed prior to the bourgeois democratic revolution, under the severest absolutism, the absence of all liberties, but amidst an existing mass labor movement.

The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party was formed in 1898.

Up to the '90's, owing to the backwardness of Russia, the Social Democratic movement was maintained principally by intellectuals. Although the workers took part in the movement, they did not yet have their vanguard in the form of a revolutionary labor party and the importance of the developing labor movement was not sufficiently appreciated by the revolutionary intellectuals. Among the most progressive section of the intellectuals predominated the ideas of the so-called Narodniki (Populists) who denied that capitalism was developing in Russia and who argued that Russia would progress towards Socialism by other and less painful paths than will the West, i. e., not through capitalism and large-scale machine production, but through the peasant commune. Hence, in the '90s,

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

when Marxism began to beat a path for itself in Russia, bourgeois intellectuals, totally alien to the spirit of revolutionary Marxism, began to adopt Marxism in order to disperse the petty-bourgeois Narodniki's conception of the progress of the revolutionary movement in Russia and to prove that Russia must inevitably pass through the stage of capitalist production. This gave rise to the so-called "legal Marxism". Meanwhile, the best Social Democrats were being systematically plucked out of the ranks of the Social Democratic organizations by the Czarist gendarmerie. The intellectuals had managed to permeate the labor movement, to reduce it to a mere trade union movement (economism) and to convert it into an auxiliary weapon in the struggle of the liberal bourgeoisie. The revolutionary Social Democrats were therefore obliged to take up the fight against the intellectuals. The Social Democrats aimed so to train cadres of experienced professional revolutionaries who were to devote their lives entirely to party work, to give them a definite Marxian program and definite tactics, and finally to gather these cadres into a united militant party sufficiently secret to be able to evade the raids of the gendarmerie, but at the same time having sufficient contact with the masses to be able to lead them into the battle at the required moment.

V. I. Lenin clearly saw these tasks as early as the end of the '90's and the beginning of the 20th century, and consistently advocated them in "Iskra", the organ of the Russian revolutionary Social De-

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

mocracy. (Between 1900 and 1903 "Iskra" [the Spark], which later became known as the "old Iskra," expressed the revolutionary policy of the left wing of Social Democracy, whereas after 1903 "Iskra" was conducted by the Mensheviks.) At about this time Comrade Lenin's remarkable pamphlet "What is to be Done?" (1902) appeared, which played a notable part in the history of the construction and development of the Russian Communist Party. In this pamphlet Comrade Lenin delivered crushing blows to the opportunistic tendency in the Russian Social Democracy—the so-called economists, who appeared in the middle of the '90's. The "economists," who were kindred to the "legal Marxists," were typical opportunists, akin to the West European revisionists. They gave way to the spontaneity of the labor movement and actually reduced it to mere trade unionism. They denied the necessity for a centralized Social Democratic Party and argued that organizations for the protection of the economic interests of the workers (benefit societies, strike funds, etc.) were sufficient. In "Iskra" and the pamphlet "What is to be Done?" Lenin was the first to give a profoundly reasoned argument in favor of the plan of organization of so-called "professional revolutionaries" which he had put forward already in 1901. We reproduce several chapters of this pamphlet devoted to the question of organization in the present book.

The organizational forms which the Social Democratic organizations in Russia assumed at that time can be seen from Lenin's "Letter to a Com-

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

rade" (September 1902) which served as the basis of the organization of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. At the head of the local organization was a committee to which were subordinated the district groups and circles. Some of these, after confirmation by the committee, joined the party. Others were regarded merely as associates. Later on, in large towns, district committees sprang up. According to the rules adopted at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (1903), only the committees, as actual organizations of "professional revolutionaries," had the right to send representatives to Party Congresses, in addition to the Central Committee of the Party and the editorial board of the central organ. The latter played a predominant part in the formation of the Social Democratic Party in Russia: it was "not only a collective propagandist and collective agitator, but also a collective organizer." (Lenin, 1901, in "Iskra," No. 4).

The Split Between the Bolsheviki and the Mensheviki.

Prior to the Second Congress of the Party, Martov and Paul Axelrod worked together with Lenin. At the end of the '90's in an introduction to Lenin's pamphlet, "The Tasks of Russian Social Democrats," Axelrod wrote that "Lenin happily combined in himself the experience of a good practitioner with theoretical training and a wide political outlook." At the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1903, however, they parted company. The differences arose principally over ques-

tions of organization, to which, already at that time, Comrade Lenin attached enormous and even decisive importance.

The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party at that time was only in the process of formation and it was particularly important to determine on what basis it was being formed. Martov, P. Axelrod and several other old "Iskra-ists" were carried away by the tide of petty-bourgeois influence and desired to form the Party on a wide basis: They proposed that even those who did not directly belong to any branch of the party, but merely helped the party, be regarded as party members. By this they opened wide the doors to the near-the-Party petty-bourgeois intellectuals, who shrank from Party discipline and active revolutionary struggle. They were of the opinion that every man that went on strike could declare himself a Party member. They subordinated the element of consciousness in the proletarian struggle to the element of spontaneity. This explains the fact that the Mensheviks always dragged at the tail of the movement and did not lead it. Holding this point of view the Mensheviks were quite consistent when, in 1908-1909, the period of black reaction which followed the revolution of 1905, they advocated the liquidation of the illegal party and the formation as a substitute for it of an amorphous body "at all costs working within the bounds of legality."

At the Second Congress Lenin said: "The Party must be really the vanguard, the leader of the enormous masses of the working class, the whole of

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

which (or almost the whole) works under the control and guidance of the Party organization, but which does not as a whole belong to the Party." This imposes still greater demands upon Party members: Only those who directly belong to one of the Party organizations and work in it actively can be regarded as Party members. In this manner Lenin laid a firm foundation to the Party of "professional revolutionaries" and rendered difficult the penetration of petty-bourgeois elements. Thanks to this the Bolshevik Party was saved from being swamped by petty-bourgeois intellectuals, as was the fate of the Mensheviks, and was helped to remain true to its program and tactics in the most difficult years of the reaction.

After the Second Congress the Mensheviks revealed similar opportunism on the questions of centralism, local autonomy for branches and democracy. The Bolsheviks advocated centralism, the absolute subordination of the local organizations to the leading centre, the appointment of committeemen, and cooption (while the reaction raged). On these questions the Mensheviks followed the economists. They were opposed to the absolute subordination of local organization to the leading center, they were opposed to strict Party discipline and in favor of wide autonomy for local organization. In spite of the weakness of the local organization, in spite of the raging Czarist reaction, and the strict secrecy in which the Party organizations had to be maintained, the Mensheviks insisted upon dem-

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

ocracy in the Party, the unconditional election of local committees and strongly opposed "appointment" (the cooption of committeemen). They howled about the autocracy and bureaucracy of the Bolsheviks, about "blind submission" and ridiculed Party discipline. Lenin had already exposed the opportunism of the Mensheviks on these questions in 1904, in his pamphlet "One Step Forward, Two Backward" and showed how closely their views were related to the views on these questions of the opportunist wing of the Social Democracy in all countries (the reformists).

Thus, at the Second Congress, the Mensheviks, on the question of organization, proved to be the opportunists in the ranks of the Social Democracy. By uniting with the ex-economists, soon after the Second Congress, they became finally submerged in the quagmire of opportunism.

Lenin's pamphlet "One Step Forward, Two Backwards", (written in 1904) gives an analysis of the decisions of the Second Congress, and of the conduct of the Mensheviks after the Congress. Several chapters of this pamphlet are included in the present work describing the fundamental differences between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks on the question of organization.

The Organization of Factory Nuclei.

All the time Lenin did not for a moment lose sight of the fundamental idea expressed by him in 1902 in his "Letter to a Comrade," viz., that only by maintaining the closest contact with the masses of the

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

workers will the Party be able to lead them into the battle at the necessary moment. Already in 1902 he recommended that "factory circles" be formed in the various enterprises, which later on became the factory nuclei. "Every factory must be our fortress"—he wrote, and returned again and again to this question.

However, it was not possible at one stroke to make the factory nuclei the basis of the Party organization even in the Bolshevik Party. In 1907, in an article entitled "The Petersburg Split" Lenin wrote as follows concerning the then existing Petersburg organization:

"We see that in St. Petersburg (and probably in a majority of towns in Russia), district, sub-district, and subordinate nuclei are formed not only on territorial (local) lines, but also on industrial and on national lines. For example, in St. Petersburg there is a railway district; it is organized on the industrial basis. Also there are Lettish and Esthonian district and military organizations."

Thus we had various forms of subordinate Party organization which were preserved right up to 1917. This shows how difficult it is to overcome old organizational forms. It was decided to liquidate the special Party organizations of the railwaymen, postal workers, and the military only at the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (March 1919). It must be admitted that these organizations, in their time, played an extremely important role in the effort to spread the influence of

the Bolshevik Party among the respective categories of workers.

But the Bolshevik Party always concentrated its attention on the work in the factories, and on establishing nuclei in them. Already in the period of the 1905 revolution and after, the Party Committee knew precisely how many workers there were employed at a particular factory, what were their conditions, and how many members of the Bolshevik Party, the Menshevik Party, and Social Democrats, and the sympathisers with the respective Parties there were in the factory. It was in the factories that the Bolsheviks conducted their work principally. There they led the strikes and all the conflicts of the workers with the employers (mass trade unions arose in Russia only at the time of the 1905 revolution). This gave the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party the opportunity to take the lead of the working class struggle and induce the masses of the workers to follow it. The Party organized meetings in the factories, or at the factory gates, and it was from the factories that the workers streamed out to demonstrations or to the barricades.

With the commencement of the black reaction, after the 1905-06 revolution, the Party, after a brief period of semi-illegal existence, was again forced to go underground. Again it had to reorganize itself. Referring to the new conditions, Lenin in 1908 wrote:

“Strongly organized underground Party centres, systematic illegal publication of literature and espe-

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

cially territorial and particularly factory party nuclei, guided by the most progressive of the workers themselves living in direct contact with the masses—this is the basis upon which we are building and will complete an unshakable nucleus of the revolutionary and Social Democratic labor movement. And this illegal nucleus will incomparably more widely than in previous times extend its ramifications, and spread its influence through the Duma, through the trade unions, the cooperatives, and educational societies.”

This is extremely important for all the Sections of the Communist International.

Some Sections of the Communist International rightly point out that they cannot openly organize nuclei in the factories because their members are immediately discharged; under these conditions it is necessary to form nuclei hidden from the eyes of the employers' sleuths, but the work of which must be visible to the workers in the factories. These nuclei must have their ramifications in the factory committee, among the members of the trade union, in cooperative societies, sport clubs and other organisations connected with the factory in the same way as the Bolshevik Party had 20 years ago.

Lenin at that time had already raised the question of forming Bolshevik fractions in the trade unions, cooperatives and educational societies. This helped the Bolsheviks in their long and stubborn fight to win over these organizations from within.

At the present time, the basis, the foundation of

the Bolshevik Party is the factory nuclei. To these nuclei the Party devotes most of its attention. At all non-Party Congresses, conferences and on elected bodies, Communist fractions are organized, the task of which is to increase the Party's influence and to secure the acceptance of its policy by the non-Party organizations. Hence we see that Comrade Lenin's fundamental idea of factory nuclei and fractions in non-Party institutions and organizations is carried to its logical conclusion.

The Reorganization of the Party.

As we saw above, prior to 1905, Lenin stood for the narrow, exclusive organization of professional revolutionaries and was against the election of committeemen. Owing to the necessity for extreme secrecy, in those days the election of committeemen was impossible.* In 1905 conditions changed, and Lenin raised the question of the reorganization of the Party. He suggested a wider form of organization of the Party nucleus "less strictly defined" and "freer", but only in comparison with the previous "circles of professional revolutionaries." The Party was made democratic and placed on the elective basis. Nevertheless, the illegal apparatus of the party was preserved, and this enabled it to go back

* At the present time, even under illegal conditions in some places, it is possible to elect Party officials, for not everywhere where the Party is compelled to exist underground, is there such a political regime as existed in Russia under the Czar.

again without difficulty to illegal conditions when circumstances demanded it.

What form of organization the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party assumed at that time can be seen from the following description of the St. Petersburg organization written by Comrade Lenin in an article entitled: "The St. Petersburg Split in 1907". He wrote:

"The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party is organized democratically. This means that the business of the Party is conducted by its members, directly or through representatives, and that all members are equal without exception. All the officials, all the leading bodies, all the institutions of the party are elected, responsible and may be recalled. The business of the Petersburg organization is conducted by the elected Petersburg Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. The supreme body of the Petersburg organization, in view of it being impossible to gather all the members together at one time, (nearly 6,000 members), is a delegate conference of the organization. All the members of the party have the right to send delegates to this conference: one delegate for a definite number of Party members. For example, at the last conference, it was decided to elect one delegate for every 50 members. These delegates must be elected by all the members of the Party, and the decision of the delegates is the supreme and final decision obligatory for the whole of the local organization. But this is not all. In order

to make sure that a decision shall be really democratic, it is not sufficient to gather together delegates of the organization. It is necessary that all the members of the organization, in electing the delegates, shall independently and each one for himself express their opinion on all controversial questions which interest the whole of the organization. Democratically organized parties and leagues cannot, on principle, avoid taking the opinion of the whole of the membership without exception, particularly in important cases, when the question under consideration is of some political action in which the mass is to act independently as for example, a strike, elections, the boycott of some local establishment, etc.

“A strike cannot be conducted with enthusiasm, elections cannot be intelligently conducted, unless every worker voluntarily and intelligently decides for himself whether he should strike or not, whether he should vote for the Cadets* or not, etc. Not all political questions can be decided by a referendum of the whole Party membership. This would entail continuous, wearying and fruitless voting. But the important questions, especially those which are directly connected with definite action by the masses themselves, must be decided democratically, not only by a gathering of delegates, but by a referendum of the whole membership.

“That is why the Petersburg Committee has re-

* Cadets is the abbreviated title of the Constitutional Democrats, i. e., the bourgeois liberals.—Translator.

solved that the election of delegates to the conference shall take place after the members of the party have discussed the question as to whether an alliance should be concluded with the Cadets, after all the members of the party have voted on this question. Elections are a business in which the masses directly take part. Hence, every Party member must intelligently decide the question as to whether we should vote for Cadets at the elections, or not. And only after an open discussion of this question, after all the members of the Party will have got together, will it be possible for each one of us to take an intelligent and firm decision."

Here, as in many other places, Lenin particularly stresses the activity and participation of the whole of the membership in the decision of Party questions. It is they who at the conferences and congresses elect all the leading party bodies, which are responsible to their constituents. At the same time, the decisions of the higher party organs are obligatory for the subordinate Party organs. This is the application of the principle of democratic centralism, which, already at that time, was practised by Lenin, with some modifications made necessary by the factional struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. We shall refer to this again.

In the severely illegal conditions in the period of the reaction and of the imperialist war, it was impossible normally to convene Party congresses and conferences. In the period between the Fifth Congress (1907) and the Sixth Congress (1917) confer-

ences had sometimes to take the place of congresses. Such was the case for example with the Bolshevik Conference, held in January 1912. It was not always possible to elect the local committees. The principle of cooption of committeemen had to be applied again.

This illustrates the flexibility of the Bolshevik Party. Democracy for it did not present a principle applicable to all times and all conditions. The guiding factor in this was revolutionary expediency. The Bolshevik Party at one moment extends democracy in its ranks and at another it diminishes it (in periods of reaction). In the period of the civil war, and of war communism, the whole of the Bolshevik Party was converted into a military camp, and frequently, the decisions of the Central Committee were carried out as military orders. But, when the Civil War ended and the immediate danger of military intervention passed away, the Bolshevik Party again adopted the principle of democratic centralism.

The Fight Against the Liquidators.

With the inception of the reaction after the revolution of 1905-06, the intellectuals left the Party. The Menshevik hangers-on of the Party revealed their true petty-bourgeois physiognomy and commenced to liquidate the revolutionary slogans and the revolutionary proletarian Party. For the latter, they proposed to "substitute an amorphous body within the limits of legality even at the price of abandoning the program, the tactics and tradi-

tions of the Party." (Extract from resolution of the Party Conference, 1908). The Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Lenin, conducted a determined ideological and organizational fight against these attempts at liquidation. At the All-Russian Conference held in 1908, at which the Mensheviks were still represented, Lenin secured the passage of a resolution which regarded the illegal organization as the corner-stone, but which at the same time, recognized the necessity for taking advantage of all legal possibilities. The resolution particularly emphasized the necessity for organizing factory nuclei, to which it still referred as "committees."

The Mensheviks voted for this resolution, which we reproduce in this volume. The Mensheviks at this conference condemned liquidation as a retreat from revolutionary Marxism. This, however, did not prevent them from following in the footsteps of the liquidators. Only a small group of Mensheviks led by the founder of Russian Marxism, Plechanov, repudiated the majority of the Mensheviks.

A group of "liquidators turned inside out," as Lenin described them, was left in the Bolshevik faction, but Lenin resolutely repudiated them. These were: the Otzovisti (Recallers—from the work "otzvat," meaning to recall, Tr.) who demanded the recall of the Social Democratic deputies from the Duma; the Ultimatists, who demanded that the Social-Democratic faction in the Duma be presented with an ultimatum, calling upon it to be a strictly Party faction and to submit to all the

all
legal
possibilities

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

instructions of the Party centres, or else, resign their membership of the Duma, and the Bogostroyitelli (God Creators, Tr.), who, together with the bourgeois intelligentsia, began to create a "Socialist god" in the period of the reaction. In the resolution passed at an enlarged conference of the editors of the Bolshevik central organ "Proletarii" and representatives from the largest proletarian centres, held in 1909, we read that "in the ranks of the Bolshevik fraction there are elements which are not sufficiently imbued with a proletarian point of view. These elements more and more reveal their lack of Social Democratic consistency, and come more and more sharply in opposition to the fundamental revolutionary Social Democratic tactics. During the past year they have been creating a tendency to formulate a theory of Otzovism and Ultimatism, but which, in fact, reduces to a principle and renders more profound the false impressions concerning Social Democrats, parliamentarism and Social Democratic work in the Duma . . . In spite of their revolutionary phraseology, Otzovism and Ultimatism, to a considerable degree, represent the reverse sides of constitutional illusions inspired by the hope that the Duma itself can satisfy the pressing needs of the people and are actually substituting proletarian ideology by petty-bourgeois tendencies. So-called Ultimatism is causing no less harm to the cause of Social Democracy than open Otzovism. Politically Ultimatism at the present time, in no way differs from Otzovism. By

their attempts to present the individual cases of boycott of representative institutions which have occurred at various periods of the revolution in a manner as to make it appear that the boycott is a distinguishing feature of the tactics of Bolshevism also in the period of counter-revolution, the Ultimatsists and Otzovists show that their tendencies are nothing more than the reverse side of Menshevism, which advocates the wholesale participation in all representative institutions irrespective of the stage of development of the revolution, and irrespective of the existence or absence of a revolutionary movement . . ."

In view of this, the enlarged conference of the Editorial Board of "Proletarii" declares, "that Bolshevism, as a definite tendency in the R. S. D. L. P. has nothing in common with Otzovism and Ultimatism and that the Bolshevik fraction must most determinedly combat these departures from the path of revolutionary Marxism."

Similarly, the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, repudiated the "god creators" in philosophy; from the Makhists and similar empiro-critics who abandoned proletarian philosophy—historical materialism, and brought to the working class a hash of bourgeois idealism. Many Social Democrats, even some of the best in Western Europe, strongly condemned Lenin's irreconcilable attitude, and called him a schismatic and disruptor of the labor movement. It is quite evident today, however, that it was precisely this intolerance on Lenin's part towards all

the falsificators of revolutionary Marxism, that enabled him to mould the monolithic Bolshevik Party, without which the Russian proletariat could never have achieved its brilliant victory.

In 1910, the last effort was made to come to an understanding with the Mensheviks. A plenary meeting of the Central Committee was convened at which the Menshevik liquidators were present. Lenin had already given up all hope of coming to an understanding with them, but the illusion still prevailed in the Bolshevik faction that it would be possible to bring the Menshevik Liquidators to the path of a revolutionary Social Democracy. That is why Lenin agreed to this joint meeting being called. At this meeting, a resolution was passed unanimously, and in this resolution we read:

"The historical conditions of the Social-Democratic movement in the epoch of bourgeois counter-revolution inevitably give rise, as a manifestation of the bourgeois influence on the proletariat, to a repudiation of the illegal Social Democratic Party, to a desire to minimize its role and significance, to attempts to modify the program and tactics, the tasks and the slogans of revolutionary Social Democracy, etc., on the one hand, and on the other hand, it gives rise to a repudiation of Social Democratic work in the Duma, and the utilization of legal possibilities, to the failure to understand the importance of both these forms of activity, to lack of ability to adapt revolutionary democratic tactics

to the special historical conditions of the present moment, etc.

“An immutable element of Social Democratic tactics under these conditions is the defeat of both these deviations by extending and intensifying Social-Democratic work in all spheres of the class struggle of the proletariat and by explaining the dangers of these deviations.”

This resolution, which regarded Liquidatorism, Otzovism, Ultimatism and “god creation” as “bourgeois influence upon the proletariat”* and called for the deviations both from the right and the “left” to be combatted, was passed unanimously, including the Mensheviks and the “Vperodists” (the followers of the “Vperod”—Forward; Otzovists, etc.). But this was only a pretense at agreement; as a matter of fact, the Mensheviks and the others had no intention of repudiating these deviations.

Ultimately, this led the Bolsheviks, at a conference held in January, 1912, to expel the liquidators from the Party and to repudiate them finally.

Thus ten years of struggle passed by before the Bolshevik Party broke with the Menshevik Liquidators.

Up to that moment, as we saw, a certain wavering occurred even on the Bolshevik Central Committee, on which there were so-called “reconcilers”; but Lenin clearly saw that the Mensheviks were the

* The bourgeoisie gave whole-hearted support to every idea directed towards the liquidation of the revolutionary Party of the working class, to the modification of its slogans, etc.

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

representatives of another class and the only attitude to be adopted towards them was determined opposition. In 1908 Lenin wrote that at the moment when the final struggle will take place between Labor and Capital, the Mensheviks will be found side by side with the bourgeoisie on the opposite side of the barricade and will then employ different means than they employ in peace-time. Very soon, during the imperialist war, after the revolution—in March, 1917—and more particularly during the October Revolution, this forecast was completely confirmed in the eyes of all.

Lenin revealed this irreconcilability also towards the Western European Parties, practically in periods of decisive conflicts with capital. In an article entitled: "False Talk About Liberty," written in 1920, he wrote:

"If the Mensheviks are retained in the ranks it will be impossible to secure the victory of the proletarian revolution and to protect it. This is obvious on principle. This has been confirmed by experience in Russia and in Hungary In Russia difficult situations frequently arose in which the Soviet regime would for certain have been overthrown had the Mensheviks, reformists and petty-bourgeois democrats remained in our Party It is generally admitted that in Italy things are developing towards a decisive battle between the proletariat and the bourgeois for the capture of political power. At such a moment it is not only absolutely necessary to remove the Mensheviks,

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

Reformists, and Turatti-ists from the Party, but it may be useful even to remove Communists, who waver and reveal inclinations towards 'unity' with the Reformists, from all responsible posts On the eve of revolution and in the midst of severe fighting for its victory; the slightest wavering within the Party may lead to the loss of all, to the defeat of the revolution and to power being torn out of the hands of the proletariat; for this power has not yet been consolidated, and the pressure of the enemy upon it is still too strong. If wavering leaders retire at such a moment it will not weaken, but on the contrary, it will strengthen the Party, the labor movement and the revolution."

Unfortunately, this was not done in time in Italy and we saw the deplorable consequences of this lack of determination.

In order to illustrate the views of V. I. Lenin on the question of organization in the period of the fight against the Liquidators, we reproduce the resolution of the Conference of Dec., 1908, extracts from an article written by Lenin, entitled "On the Road,"—a review of the resolution of the December Conference,—extracts from another article entitled "Liquidation of the Liquidators"—resolution of the Bolshevik Conference of January, 1912, on the question of organization and the Liquidators, at which the Bolsheviks expelled the Liquidators from the Party and finally repudiated them.

Party Unity and Party Discipline.

The Bolshevik Party grew up in the course of an

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

irreconcilable struggle against all deviations from the revolutionary Marxian policy. Lenin never glossed over differences of opinion, never tried to conceal them by a screen of outward well being, peace and harmony. On the contrary, with revolutionary passion he fought to the end against all retreats and deviations and did not hesitate even before splits and expulsions, not only of Mensheviks and Liquidators, but also of revolutionary phrasemongers like the Otzovists, Ultimatists, and "god creators." However, he was not in favor of splits at all costs. He first of all explored all possibilities of directing the erring comrades on the path of revolutionary Marxism, and only when all his efforts produced no favorable results did he decide to break with them. After the first split, when, in 1905, the Mensheviks, as a result of the pressure of the masses, moved to the Left and in the practical revolutionary himself advocated unity. Subsequently, in the Spring of 1905, the Fourth Congress of the R. S. D. L. P., known as the Unity Congress, was held. At this Congress the Mensheviks obtained a majority, but Lenin did not leave the Party. He continued the fight within its ranks in order to win it from within. By the time the Fifth Congress of the R. S. D. L. P. was held in 1907, the Bolsheviki had managed to secure a majority. The leadership of the Party passed into the hands of the Bolsheviki. The Mensheviks had a definitely formed fraction in the Party. In 1908 they came forward openly as the liquidators of the revolutionary Party.

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

What was Lenin's attitude at that time,—finding himself in one Party side by side with the Mensheviks,—towards the principles of democratic centralism, Party discipline and Party unity? Of course, he insisted on the freedom of factional conflict; he demanded freedom of discussion, and criticism of the Central Committee. At that time he most energetically championed the rights of the local organizations against the Menshevik Central Committee. At the same time, however, he recognized as immutable—except for some slight reservation—the principles of democratic centralism and strict Party discipline. In an article entitled "The Fight Against the Pro-Cadet Social Democrats and Party Discipline," he wrote:

"We have more than once, on principle, defined our views on the significance of discipline and the conception of discipline in the ranks of the Labor Party. We defined it as: unity of action, freedom of discussion and criticism. Only such a form of discipline is worthy of a democratic Party of the progressive class. The strength of the working class is organization. Without organization the mass of the proletariat is nothing. Organized, it is all. Organization is unity of action, but of course, all action is useful only because and to the extent that it advances and does not retreat, to the extent that it intellectually combines the proletariat and lifts it up and does not degrade and weaken it. Organization without ideas is an absurdity which in practice converts the workers into miserable

hangers-on of the bourgeoisie in power. . . Consequently, without the freedom of discussion and criticism, the proletariat does not recognize unity of action. For that reason, intelligent workers must never forget that sometimes serious violations of principles occur, which make the break-off of organizational relations absolutely necessary."

Subsequently, this led to a complete split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. In 1906-1907, however, Lenin regarded a complete split as premature, and therefore, sometimes made very far-reaching concessions to the Mensheviks. For example, the Menshevik Central Committee insisted upon a bloc with the liberals at the time of the elections to the Second Duma. Lenin was strongly opposed to this bloc, but in order to avoid something worse he took up the position that the Party Conference, which had just been held, left it to the local organizations to solve this question for themselves. In the article referred to, entitled: "The Fight against Pro-Cadet Social Democrats and Party Discipline," Lenin wrote:

"Before the Party there are two platforms: one proposed by 18 delegates of the Conference—Mensheviks and Bundists; the other proposed by 14 delegates—Bolsheviks, Poles and Letts. The competent bodies of the local organizations must select, amend, add to or substitute these platforms by some other. After the competent organs have come to a decision, we, all the members of the Party, will act as one man. A Bolshevik in Odessa must go

to the ballot box and vote for a Cadet even if that action makes him vomit. A Menshevik in Moscow must vote a pure Social-Democratic ticket, however much his soul may long for the Cadet."

In this instance Lenin had to employ strategy against the Mensheviks; nevertheless, even then he insisted upon Party discipline. This insistence naturally became stronger when the Bolsheviks finally broke off all connections with the Mensheviks and particularly when the Bolshevik Party came to power.

In his concluding speech at the 11th Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1922 (this was the last Congress of the Russian Communist Party at which Lenin was able to be present) he said:

"We must always bear in mind that the army (our Party) of 600,000 men must be the vanguard of the working class, that without iron discipline it will be impossible to fulfill our task. The fundamental condition for the maintenance and preservation of our strict discipline is loyalty. All the old methods and resources for creating discipline have been destroyed. At the basis of all our activity we have laid only a high degree of thoughtfulness and intelligence. This has enabled us to maintain a discipline that stands higher than the discipline of any other State, and which rests on a basis totally different from that upon which the discipline of capitalist society is barely maintained, if it is maintained at all."

Lenin frequently took up the question of disci-

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

pline. And it is thanks to him that in the Russian Communist Party we have a voluntary, intelligent discipline, which has not its equal in any other mass Party. More than once the enemies of the Party have rejoiced (during the Party discussion, for example) at the impending collapse of the discipline of the Russian Communist Party. But on each occasion the Party emerged from these trials stronger than ever. The fundamental idea running through this discipline has been hitherto, and will remain, the following: the interests of the proletarian revolution and of the Communist Party stand above all.

However, in order that such a discipline may be really maintained, complete unity of views on fundamental questions is necessary. We know that Lenin created this unity of views first of all in the Bolshevik section of the Party, and later throughout the whole Party, and resolutely fought against all those who strove to disturb this unity. He was a determined opponent of all groupings and factions within the Bolshevik Party; for they inevitably lead to the weakening of the Party, and represent a fatal danger to its unity and to the rule of the Soviet government. When certain deviations were revealed during the discussion on the trade unions in 1921, Lenin, at the 10th Congress of the R. C. P., demanded that these deviations be resolutely condemned. "We," he said, "are a Party fighting amidst acute difficulties. We must say: in order that unity may be preserved certain deviations must

be condemned." And the Congress by an overwhelming majority of votes, condemned them. The 10th Congress also passed a resolution on Party unity,—which Lenin supported,—which resolutely condemned factions and groupings.

The prohibition of factions and groupings does not imply, of course, the prohibition of the discussion of controversial questions and criticism of the activity of the leading Party organs. On the contrary, in the nuclei, at general meetings, at Party conferences and congresses, every member has a right to discuss controversial questions, criticize the activity of the leading Party organs, and bring forward his own suggestions. But as the resolution of the 13th Conference of the R. C. P. says: "Freedom of discussion inside the Party under no circumstances implies the freedom to undermine Party discipline. The Central Committee of the Party and all local Party centres must immediately take the sternest measures to preserve iron, Bolshevik discipline everywhere where attempts are being made to shake it."

Thus, freedom of criticism must not be converted into freedom to disturb Party discipline with impunity.

At the 10th Congress Lenin said: "We are not a debating club. We, of course, can and will publish collections of articles, special literature, etc., but we have to fight under most difficult conditions and therefore we must be combined."

The discussion of controversial questions is por-

missible only up to the moment that they are decided. After these questions have been decided by the leading organs of the Party conferences or congresses, these decisions must be carried out without any reservation, even if a given member, or a whole organization, does not agree with the decision. Absolute subordination of the minority to the majority,—this is the fundamental principle of the Party discipline of the R. C. P., as carried out in it by Lenin.

To acquaint the reader with Lenin's views on Party discipline and Party unity, we include in this volume extracts from Lenin's pamphlet: "Infantile Diseases of Left Wing Communism," which contains an excellent description of the qualities of the Bolsheviks which enabled them to capture power and retain it under the most difficult conditions: extracts from Lenin's speeches at the 10th Congress of the R. C. P.,—giving his views on the heated discussions on the Trade Union Movement which arose at that time—and the resolution of the 10th Congress on Party unity.

The Party as the Vanguard of the Working Class and the Instrument of Proletarian Dictatorship.

We have already seen above that Lenin, as Marx did in the Communist Manifesto, defined the Party as the vanguard of the working class. In chapter two of the Communist Manifesto by Marx and Engels, we read the following: "The Communists in the proletarian movement in various

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

countries put forward and champion the common interests of the whole of the proletariat, irrespective of national interests in the various stages of development through which the proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie is proceeding; they always champion the common interests of the movement as a whole. Thus, the Communists practically represent the most determined and the most progressive section of the Labor Parties of all countries, and with regard to theory they have this advantage over the rest of the masses of the proletariat, that they understand the conditions, the progress, and the general results of the Labor movement. They have no interests other than those which coincide with the interests of the whole of the proletariat."

This is expressed with exceptional clarity in the theses passed by the Second Congress of the Communist International on the Role of the Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution. In these theses we read:

"The Communist Party is a section of the working class; its most progressive, most class conscious, and therefore, its most revolutionary section. A Communist Party is formed by the selection of the most class conscious, most courageous, and most far-sighted workers. The Communist Party has no interests differing from the interests of the working class. A Communist Party differs from the rest of the mass of the workers in that it sees the whole of the historical path of the working class

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

as a whole, and strives at all the turning points of this path to champion, not individual groups, not individual trades, but the interests of the working class as a whole. The Communist Party is the organizational-political lever by the aid of which the most progressive section of the working class directs the mass of the proletariat and semi-proletariat along the right path."

This is a condensed expression of the principles of the teachings of Lenin on the Party. In his speech at the Second Congress of the Communist International Lenin said:

"A political Party can combine only a minority of the class, in the same way as the really class conscious workers throughout the whole of capitalist society represent only a minority of all the workers. For that reason we are compelled to admit that only a class conscious minority can guide the vast masses of the workers and get them to follow it If the minority is really class conscious, if it succeeds in getting the masses to follow it, if it is able to reply to every question that comes up on the order of the day, then it is in essence a Party If the minority is not able to lead the masses, link itself closely up with them, then it is not a Party and is good for nothing even if it calls itself a Party."

Thus the Communist Party combines only a minority of the working class. Until the capture of power by the proletariat, and a long time after that, it cannot embrace the majority of the working

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

class. But it must be most closely connected with the working class, it must represent and champion the interests of the working class as a whole, and not those of any individual group or trade. It speaks and acts in the name of the whole of the working class. It is the vanguard of the working class, "the most progressive, the most class conscious, and therefore the most revolutionary section of the working class." For that reason the Communist Party must never drag at the tail of the movement, but must take the lead of it. It must lead the whole labor movement.

To capture power, the Communist Party must win over to its side the majority of the working class. In order to be able to do this, in order to become the real expression of the interests of the working class, the Party must take an active part in all the conflicts between Labor and Capital, in the whole of the struggle of the working class and the poor peasantry against their exploiters and oppressors, and to lead this struggle. It must be most closely connected with all the organizations of the working class: trade unions, cooperative societies, factory committees, parliamentary and municipal fractions, working women's organizations, educational organizations, youth leagues, and Soviet and State organs if the proletariat is in power. In these organs and organizations the Communists must form fractions and through these fractions lead them.

In "Infantile Diseases of Leftism" Lenin says:

"The Party is the highest form of the class organization of the proletariat; it should lead all the other forms of proletarian organizations, and take a most active part in their struggles. This it does through Communist fractions."

That is why Lenin so determinedly opposed the so-called "neutrality" of trade unions, and other labor organizations, the "independence" of parliamentary fractions, etc. As a matter of fact this "neutrality" and "independence" is a most reprehensible dependence upon the bourgeoisie and its agents.

Lenin taught that the proletariat cannot bring about a victorious proletarian revolution without having its own independent, political Party. This revolution cannot be brought about by trade unions, or by cooperative societies, although these organizations play an important part in the struggle of the working class for its emancipation from capitalism. Only because it had a strong Bolshevik Party was the Russian proletariat able to secure victory over the capitalists and landowners. Only thanks to the existence of this Party was it possible to retain these gains. On the other hand, if the Party had not had such auxiliary mass organizations like the trade unions, if it had not won over to its side the millions of trade unionists, it could never have captured power, and still less retain it in its hands throughout this difficult period. That is why work in the trade unions and winning them over to our side is of such enormous importance.

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

Lenin taught that the Communist Party is not only an instrument for bringing about the dictatorship of the proletariat, but also an instrument for retaining, strengthening, and extending this dictatorship. It is the general staff of the proletarian revolution. Unless such an organizing and leading staff exists, the victory of the proletariat and the maintenance of power is impossible. Hence, the enormous importance of Party organization, of unity of view and singleness of will, the strictest Party discipline, and the expulsion from its ranks of all opportunist and alien elements.

The Bolshevik Party became a ruling Party and began to attract to itself elements alien to it. This became particularly dangerous at the time of the transition to N. E. P., when the civil war had come to an end. Lenin then raised the question of purging the Party and proposed that 99% of the ex-Mensheviks be expelled. Of course this was not meant to be taken literally. In suggesting this, Lenin had in mind principally, the intellectuals, who joined the Bolshevik Party after the victory of the October Revolution. He suggested that special attention should be paid to these, to see whether they did not come into the Party in pursuit of selfish aims, and whether they had not brought with them corrupting elements, or deviations alien to a Bolshevik Party. Such elements must be ruthlessly driven from the Party. Lenin's motto was: "Little and Good."

Lenin taught that in the period of transition from capitalism to Communism the proletariat can retain

power only in alliance with the peasantry. For this period he put forward the slogan: Dictatorship of the proletariat in reliance upon the peasantry. Only a Party like the Bolshevik Party could carry out this dictatorship. But to achieve it the Russian Communist Party had to link up closely with the peasantry and prove to it that only in alliance with the working class through the proletarian revolution could the peasant, once and for all, throw the landlord from his back. By this means, the Party is able to win a reliable ally in the fight to establish and consolidate the proletarian dictatorship. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party devoted considerable attention to this. Organizationally, the Party strengthened its influence in the villages by establishing Communist nuclei among the peasantry and among the Red Army men in the Red Army, the majority of whom are peasants temporarily removed from the land, and by means of Communist fractions in non-Party peasant organizations and various organs like the Soviets, Peasant Mutual Aid Committees, cooperative societies, in which the peasants are organized.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is exercised through the Soviet government of workers and peasants the general guidance of which is in the hands of the Party, exercised through the various Communist fractions.

In the last years of his life, being absorbed entirely in the general political leadership of the Party and the Soviet government, Comrade Lenin was able to devote little attention to the special question

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

of organization. However, all the valuable work which had been done with regard to organization in the Russian Communist Party, all that which is of enormous importance for all the Sections of the Communist International, was done with the direct participation of Comrade Lenin and sometimes on his instructions, as for example the recruiting of as many workers and peasants as possible—including the more backward sections,—the working women, and peasant women, for the work of administering the country; putting forward workers from the bench to occupy responsible positions, the introduction of plan in Party work, the establishment of a control commission, etc., etc.

Lenin's Testament.

Lenin left to us the fundamental organizational principles of Party organization which have remained in force to this day and which should be learned thoroughly by all the Sections of the Communist International.

These fundamental principles are as follows:

1) The doctrine that the Communist Party is the vanguard of the working class. This doctrine, taken from Marx and Engels, was emphasized by Lenin, developed and excellently applied in modern conditions.

2) The old doctrine, but one which has not yet been carried out by the overwhelming majority of the Communist Parties, namely: the formation of the principle cadres of the Party, so-called professional revolutionaries.

3) Activity of all the members of the Party, their direct participation in the work of the organization.

4) The basis of the Party organization, its "fortresses," are the factory nuclei.

5) The Communist Party, through Communist fractions in non-Party workers' and peasants' organizations, must link up closely with the masses of the workers and peasants and take an active part in all their struggles against their exploiters and oppressors and lead the struggles through the Communist nuclei and Communist fractions.

6) Democratic centralism in the Party and in the Communist International.

7) Iron discipline for the proletarian Party.

To carry out these fundamental organizational principles of Leninism, the Sections of the Communist International have enormous work to do. With regard to the Communist Parties of Western Europe and America, it may be said today what Lenin wrote in 1900 in No. 1. of the Social Democratic newspaper "Iskra." He wrote:

"The question of organization is one of our most painful questions. In this respect we have lagged behind considerably from the old workers in the Russian revolutionary movement. We must frankly confess this defect. We must train men and women who will devote to the revolution, not merely their spare evenings, but the whole of their lives. We must build up an organization so large as to enable us to introduce division of labor in the various spheres of our work."

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

In 1901 in an article entitled "Where to Begin," Lenin wrote:

"We must work at forming a militant organization and conducting political agitation even in 'drab' and peaceful conditions, and even in the period of 'declining revolutionary spirit.' More than that, it is precisely in such conditions and in such a period that this work is necessary, because in the moment of outbreaks and outbursts it will be too late to set up an organization. The organization must be ready, in order to be able to develop its activity immediately." This also applies completely to the Communist Parties of Western Europe and of America.

Old illegal apparatus in times of peace

The Communist Parties of Western Europe and America will be able to fulfill Lenin's will in the sphere of organization only when they have set up proletarian Parties closely linked up with the masses of the workers and the toiling peasantry, similar to the Bolshevik Party; Parties capable under difficult conditions of leading the struggle of the working class and the toiling peasantry.

In order to establish the closest possible connection between the Communist Party and the masses of the workers, it is essential to reorganize the Parties on the basis of factory nuclei. In non-party worker and peasant organizations, Communist fractions must be formed. It is necessary that every member of the Party be active and that the local organizations show initiative.

"In the present epoch of acute class war," wrote

LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

Lenin in "Conditions for Affiliation to the Comintern"—"the Communist Party will be able to fulfill its duty only if it will be organized in the most centralized manner, if it will be governed by an iron discipline, bordering on military discipline, and if the Party centre will be an authoritative organ with extensive powers enjoying the general confidence of the Party.

"Even in the present 'normal times' it is necessary to put forward the principle of democratic centralism. At the same time, however, in view of the temporary ebb of the revolutionary tide and the appearance of right and left wing deviations in various Parties, it is necessary, with more determination than ever, to combat every distortion of Marxism and Leninism, every deviation from the strict consistent Marxist-Leninist line of policy. The unity of the Party, internal compactness and strict revolutionary discipline in its ranks, are not less necessary now than in the period of civil war. Finally, flexibility of organization, the ability quickly to adapt it to changing conditions,—while preserving the fundamental principles of Bolshevik organization,—are necessary."

This is the testament left by Lenin to all the Sections of the Communist International as given in his speeches at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International at the end of 1922. The task of all the Sections of the Communist International is speedily to fulfill it.

V. Mitzkovitch-Kapsukas.