

deported, incorrigible), S. A. Frank (author of *Metodologiia*). The commission supervised by Mantsev, Messing et al. should present lists and several hundred such ladies and gentlemen must be deported without mercy. Let's purge Russia for a long while.

As for Lezhnev (former[ly associated with] *Den'*), let's think it over: shouldn't we deport him? He will always be the wiliest sort as far as I can judge based on his articles I have read.

Ozerov as well as all the *Ekonomist* contributors are the most ruthless enemies. All of them—out of Russia.

This must be done at once. By the end of the SRs' trial, no later. Arrest a few hundred and *without a declaration* of motives—get out, ladies and gentlemen!

Deport all authors of *Dom literatorov, Mysl'* from Piter [Petrograd]; ransack Kharkov, *we do not know it*, for us it is a "foreign country." We must purge *quickly, no later* than the end of the SRs' trial.

Pay attention to the writers in Piter (addresses, *Novaia Russkaia Kniga*, No. 4, 1922, p. 37) and to the list of private publishers (p. 29).

With communist greetings Lenin

RTsKhIDNI [Rossiiskii Tsetr Khraneniia i Izucheniia Dokumentov Noveishei Istorii] [now RGASPI (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'noi i Politicheskoi Istarii)], f. 2 op. 2. d. 1338, l. 1, lob, 2-4: translated in Diane P. Koenker and Ronald D. Bachman (eds.), *Revelations from the Russian Archives: Documents in English Translation* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1997), p. 232; and in Richard Pipes (ed.), *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive*, with the assistance of David Brandenberger, trans. by Catherine Fitzpatrick (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 168-169.

V. I. Lenin, "Letter to the Congress"

[Lenin's "Testament"]

December 23-31, 1922

*Incapacitated by a series of strokes, Lenin dictated a letter to the forthcoming Twelfth Party Congress in which he expressed his fears about the infighting among the top party leaders. His criticism was particularly harsh against Stalin, with whom he had deep differences over nationality policy and the form that the future Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would take. He called for Stalin's removal from his position as General Secretary. Lenin's notes on the nationality question were read to delegates of the congress in closed session, but it was not until a year later, after Lenin's death, that delegates to the Thirteenth Party Congress read the notes on Stalin and other party leaders. The Politburo had decided that Stalin should stay in his job and that Lenin's notes should not be published. The congress went along. An American Trotskyist, Max Eastman, was the first to reveal the "testament" in his *Since Lenin Died in 1925*, but Trotskil was forced to renounce Eastman and claim that his account was fabricated. Not until the early 1960s were these documents published in the Soviet Union.*

Continuation of the notes.

December 24, 1922. . . .

Our Party relies on two classes and therefore its instability would be possible and its downfall inevitable if there were no agreement between those two classes. In that

event this or that measure, and generally all talk about the stability of our C.C., would be futile. No measures of any kind could prevent a split in such a case. But I hope that this is too remote a future and too improbable an event to talk about.

I have in mind stability as a guarantee against a split in the immediate future, and I intend to deal here with a few ideas concerning personal qualities.

I think that from this standpoint the prime factors in the question of stability are such members of the C.C. as Stalin and Trotsky. I think relations between them make up the greater part of the danger of a split, which could be avoided, and this purpose, in my opinion, would be served, among other things, by increasing the number of C.C. members to 50 or 100.

Comrade Stalin, having become Secretary-General, has unlimited authority concentrated in his hands, and I am not sure whether he will always be capable of using that authority with sufficient caution. Comrade Trotsky, on the other hand, as his struggle against the C.C. on the question of the People's Commissariat for Communications has already proved, is distinguished not only by outstanding ability. He is personally perhaps the most capable man in the present C.C., but he has displayed excessive self-assurance and shown excessive preoccupation with the purely administrative side of the work.

These two qualities of the two outstanding leaders of the present C.C. can inadvertently lead to a split, and if our Party does not take steps to avert this, the split may come unexpectedly.

I shall not give any further appraisals of the personal qualities of other members of the C.C. I shall just recall that the October episode with Zinoviev and Kamenev was, of course, no accident, but neither can the blame for it be laid upon them personally, any more than non-Bolshevism can upon Trotsky.

Speaking of the young C.C. members, I wish to say a few words about Bukharin and Pyatakov. They are, in my opinion, the most outstanding figures (among the youngest ones), and the following must be borne in mind about them: Bukharin is not only a most valuable and major theorist of the Party; he is also rightly considered the favourite of the whole Party, but his theoretical views can be classified as fully Marxist only with great reserve, for there is something scholastic about him (he has never made a study of dialectics, and, I think, never fully understood it).

December 25. As for Pyatakov, he is unquestionably a man of outstanding will and outstanding ability, but shows too much zeal for administering and the administrative side of the work to be relied upon in a serious political matter.

Both of these remarks, of course, are made only for the present, on the assumption that both these outstanding and devoted Party workers fail to find an occasion to enhance their knowledge and amend their one-sidedness.

Lenin

December 25, 1922

Taken down by M.V.

Addition to the Letter

Of December 24, 1922

Stalin is too rude and this defect, although quite tolerable in our midst and in dealings among us Communists, becomes intolerable in a Secretary-General. That is why

I suggest that the comrades think about a way of removing Stalin from that post and appointing another man in his stead who in all other respects differs from Comrade Stalin in having only one advantage, namely, that of being more tolerant, more loyal, more polite and more considerate to the comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may appear to be a negligible detail. But I think that from the standpoint of safeguards against a split and from the standpoint of what I wrote above about the relationship between Stalin and Trotsky it is not a detail, or it is a detail which can assume decisive importance.

Lenin

Taken down by L. F.

January 4, 1923

Continuation of the notes.

December 30, 1922

THE QUESTION OF NATIONALITIES OR "AUTONOMISATION"

I suppose I have been very remiss with respect to the workers of Russia for not having intervened energetically and decisively enough in the notorious question of autonomisation, which, it appears, is officially called the question of the union of Soviet socialist republics.

When this question arose last summer, I was ill; and then in autumn I relied too much on my recovery and on the October and December plenary meetings giving me an opportunity of intervening in this question. However, I did not manage to attend the October Plenary Meeting (when this question came up) or the one in December, and so the question passed me by almost completely.

I have only had time for a talk with Comrade Dzerzhinsky, who came from the Caucasus and told me how this matter stood in Georgia. I have also managed to exchange a few words with Comrade Zinoviev and express my apprehensions on this matter. From what I was told by Comrade Dzerzhinsky, who was at the head of the commission sent by the C.C. to "investigate" the Georgian incident, I could only draw the greatest apprehensions. If matters had come to such a pass that Orjonikidze could go to the extreme of applying physical violence, as Comrade Dzerzhinsky informed me, we can imagine what a mess we have got ourselves into. Obviously the whole business of "autonomisation" was radically wrong and badly timed.

It is said that a united apparatus was needed. Where did that assurance come from? Did it not come from that same Russian apparatus which, as I pointed out in one of the preceding sections of my diary, we took over from tsarism and slightly anointed with Soviet oil?

There is no doubt that that measure should have been delayed somewhat until we could say that we vouched for our apparatus as our own. But now, we must, in all conscience, admit the contrary; the apparatus we call ours is, in fact, still quite alien to us; it is a bourgeois and tsarist hotch-potch and there has been no possibility of getting rid of it in the course of the past five years without the help of other countries

and because we have been "busy" most of the time with military engagements and the fight against famine.

It is quite natural that in such circumstances the "freedom to secede from the union" by which we justify ourselves will be a mere scrap of paper, unable to defend the non-Russians from the onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great-Russian chauvinist, in substance a rascal and a tyrant, such as the typical Russian bureaucrat is. There is no doubt that the infinitesimal percentage of Soviet and sovietised workers will drown in that tide of chauvinistic Great-Russian ruffraff like a fly in milk.

It is said in defence of this measure that the People's Commissariats directly concerned with national psychology and national education were set up as separate bodies. But there the question arises: can these People's Commissariats be made quite independent? and secondly: were we careful enough to take measures to provide the non-Russians with a real safeguard against the truly Russian bully? I do not think we took such measures although we could and should have done so.

I think that Stalin's haste and his infatuation with pure administration, together with his spite against the notorious "nationalist-socialism", played a fatal role here. In politics spite generally plays the basest of roles.

I also fear that Comrade Dzerzhinsky, who went to the Caucasus to investigate the "crime" of those "nationalist-socialists", distinguished himself there by his truly Russian frame of mind (it is common knowledge that people of other nationalities who have become Russified overdo this Russian frame of mind) and that the impartiality of his whole commission was typified well enough by Orjonikidze's "manhandling". I think that no provocation or even insult can justify such Russian manhandling and that Comrade Dzerzhinsky was inexcusably guilty in adopting a light-hearted attitude towards it.

For all the citizens in the Caucasus Orjonikidze was the authority. Orjonikidze had no right to display that irritability to which he and Dzerzhinsky referred. On the contrary, Orjonikidze should have behaved with a restraint which cannot be demanded of any ordinary citizen, still less of a man accused of a "political" crime. And, to tell the truth, those nationalist-socialists were citizens who were accused of a political crime, and the terms of the accusation were such that it could not be described otherwise.

Here we have an important question of principle: how is internationalism to be understood?*

Lenin

December 30, 1922

Taken down by M.V.

* After this the following phrase was crossed out in the shorthand text: "It seems to me that our comrades have not studied this important question of principle sufficiently."—Ed.

Continuation of the notes.

December 31, 1922

THE QUESTION OF NATIONALITIES OR "AUTONOMISATION" (CONTINUED)

In my writings on the national question I have already said that an abstract presentation of the question of nationalism in general is of no use at all. A distinction must necessarily be made between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and that of an oppressed nation, the nationalism of a big nation and that of a small nation.

In respect of the second kind of nationalism we, nationals of a big nation, have nearly always been guilty, in historic practice, of an infinite number of cases of violence; furthermore, we commit violence and insult an infinite number of times without noticing it. It is sufficient to recall my Volga reminiscences of how non-Russians are treated; how the Poles are not called by any other name than Polyachishka, how the Tatar is nicknamed Prince, how the Ukrainians are always Khokhols and the Georgians and other Caucasian nationals always Kapkasians.

That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or "great" nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as bullies), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality of the oppressor nation, the great nation, that must make up for the inequality which obtains in actual practice. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question, he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view.

What is important for the proletariat? For the proletariat it is not only important, it is absolutely essential that he should be assured that the non-Russians place the greatest possible trust in the proletarian class struggle. What is needed to ensure this? Not merely formal equality. In one way or another, by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust, for the suspicion and the insults to which the government of the "dominant" nation subjected them in the past.

I think it is unnecessary to explain this to Bolsheviks, to Communists, in greater detail. And I think that in the present instance, as far as the Georgian nation is concerned, we have a typical case in which a genuinely proletarian attitude makes profound caution, thoughtfulness and a readiness to compromise a matter of necessity for us. The Georgian who is neglectful of this aspect of the question, or who carelessly flings about accusations of "nationalist-socialism" (whereas he himself is a real and true "nationalist-socialist", and even a vulgar Great-Russian bully), violates, in substance, the interests of proletarian class solidarity, for nothing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice; "offended" nationals are not sensitive to anything so much as to the feeling of equality and the violation of this equality, if only through negligence or jest—to the violation of that equality by their proletarian comrades. That is why in this case it is better to overdo rather than underdo the concessions and leniency towards the national minorities. That is why, in this case, the fundamental interest of proletarian solidarity, and consequently of the proletarian class struggle, requires that we never adopt a formal attitude to the national question, but always take into account the specific atti-

tude of the proletarian of the oppressed (or small) nation towards the oppressor (or great) nation.

Lenin

Taken down by M.V.

December 31, 1922

Continuation of the notes.

December 31, 1922

What practical measures must be taken in the present situation?

Firstly, we must maintain and strengthen the union of socialist republics. Of this there can be no doubt. This measure is necessary for us and it is necessary for the world communist proletariat in its struggle against the world bourgeoisie and its defence against bourgeois intrigues.

Secondly, the union of socialist republics must be retained for its diplomatic apparatus. By the way, this apparatus is an exceptional component of our state apparatus. We have not allowed a single influential person from the old tsarist apparatus into it. All sections with any authority are composed of Communists. That is why it has already won for itself (this may be said boldly) the name of a reliable communist apparatus purged to an incomparably greater extent of the old tsarist, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements than that which we have had to make do with in other People's Commissariats.

Thirdly, exemplary punishment must be inflicted on Comrade Orjonikidze (I say this all the more regretfully as I am one of his personal friends and have worked with him abroad) and the investigation of all the material which Dzerzhinsky's commission has collected must be completed or started over again to correct the enormous mass of wrongs and biased judgements which it doubtlessly contains. The political responsibility for all this truly Great-Russian nationalist campaign must, of course, be laid on Stalin and Dzerzhinsky.

Fourthly, the strictest rules must be introduced on the use of the national language in the non-Russian republics of our union, and these rules must be checked with special care. There is no doubt that our apparatus being what it is, there is bound to be, on the pretext of unity in the railway service, unity in the fiscal service and so on, a mass of truly Russian abuses. Special ingenuity is necessary for the struggle against these abuses, not to mention special sincerity on the part of those who undertake this struggle. A detailed code will be required, and only the nationals living in the republic in question can draw it up at all successfully. And then we cannot be sure in advance that as a result of this work we shall not take a step backward at our next Congress of Soviets, i.e., retain the union of Soviet socialist republics only for military and diplomatic affairs, and in all other respects restore full independence to the individual People's Commissariats.

It must be borne in mind that the decentralisation of the People's Commissariats and the lack of co-ordination in their work as far as Moscow and other centres are concerned can be compensated sufficiently by Party authority, if it is exercised with sufficient prudence and impartiality; the harm that can result to our state from a lack

of unification between the national apparatuses and the Russian apparatus is infinitely less than that which will be done not only to us, but to the whole International, and to the hundreds of millions of the peoples of Asia, which is destined to follow us on to the stage of history in the near future. It would be unpardonable opportunism if, on the eve of the debut of the East, just as it is awakening, we undermined our prestige with its peoples, even if only by the slightest crudity or injustice towards our own non-Russian nationalities. The need to rally against the imperialists of the West, who are defending the capitalist world, is one thing. There can be no doubt about that and it would be superfluous for me to speak about my unconditional approval of it. It is another thing when we ourselves lapse, even if only in trifles, into imperialist attitudes towards oppressed nationalities, thus undermining all our principled sincerity, all our principled defence of the struggle against imperialism. But the morrow of world history will be a day when the awakening peoples oppressed by imperialism are finally aroused and the decisive long and hard struggle for their liberation begins.

Lenin

December 31, 1922

Taken down by M.V.

V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 4th ed. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), XXXVI, pp. 594–596, 605–611.

Bukharin and Dzerzhinskii Disagree About the Nature of Revolutionary Government

December 1924

There was no formal debate at party conferences on the nature of Soviet government or the internal party regime, but the issues of democracy and dissent, the powers of the police and censorship, were constantly discussed. The next two documents illustrate the range of views, all within an acceptance of "the dictatorship of the proletariat" and single-party rule, that leading Communists expressed in the mid-1920s. At the height of his power, Nikolai Bukharin, then a member of the Politburo and editor of the party newspaper, Pravda, wrote to Feliks Dzerzhinskii (1877–1926), head of the GPU,¹ in December 1924 to express his view that Soviet power should soon move toward "a more liberal form of rule." Dzerzhinskii conveyed this letter to his deputy, Viacheslav Menzhinskii (1874–1934), expressing grave doubts about the concessions that some Communists were willing to make.

LETTER FROM NIKOLAI BUKHARIN TO FELIX DZERZHINSKII, DECEMBER 1924

Dear Feliks Edmundovich,

I was not at the last meeting of the executive group. I heard that you, by the way, said there that I and Sokol'nikov are "against the GPU" etc. I was informed about the

1. The GPU [*Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie*] was the political police, the successor to the Cheka.

argument that took place the day before yesterday. And so, dear Feliks Edmundovich, lest you have any doubt, I ask you to understand *what* I do think.

I believe that we should move *more rapidly* toward a more liberal form of rule: fewer acts of repression, more rule by law, more discussion, self-government (under the direction of the party, naturally) and so on. In my article in *Bolshevik*, which you *approved*, I laid out the theoretical underpinnings of this course. *Therefore*, I occasionally come out against proposals that expand the powers of the GPU and so on. Understand, dear Feliks Edmundovich (you know how fond I am of you) that you do not have *the slightest* reason to suspect me of any sort of ill will, either toward you personally or toward the GPU as an institution. It's a question of *principle*—that is what is at issue.

Because you are a man deeply passionate about politics but at the same time [one who] can be impartial, you will understand me.

I warmly embrace you, warmly press your hand, and wish you a speedy recovery.

Yours,

N. Bukharin

RTSKhIDNI, fond 76, opis 3, delo 345, listy 2, 2ob; translated in Diane P. Koenker and Ronald D. Bachman (eds.), *Revelations from the Russian Archives: Documents in English Translation* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1997), pp. 18–19.

LETTER FROM DZERZHINSKII TO V. R. MENZHINSKII, DECEMBER 24, 1924

To Comrade Menzhinskii For your eyes only
(copying forbidden)

Here attached is Bukharin's letter to me which I would like you to return to me after reading.

We have to take into consideration that such attitudes exist among the Central Committee members, and [we have] to think it over. It would be the greatest political blunder if the party yielded on the fundamental question of the GPU and gave "new life" to the Philistines—as a line, as a policy, and as a declaration. It would mean a concession to Nepmanism, Philistinism, and tending toward a rejection of bolshevism; it would mean a victory for Trotskyism and a surrender of our positions. To counteract these attitudes we need to review our practices, our methods and eliminate everything that can feed such attitudes. That means that we (the GPU) must become quieter, more modest. We should use searches and arrests more carefully, with better incriminating evidence; some categories of arrests (Nepmanism, official misconduct) should be limited, and carried out under pressure, or by mobilizing popular party support for us; we must better inform the Moscow committee about all matters, more closely involving the party organization in these affairs. We need to review our policy on granting permission to go abroad and on visas. We must pay attention to the struggle for popularity among peasants, organizing help for them in the struggle against hooliganism and other crimes. And in general, we need to plan measures to gain support among workers and peasants and mass party organizations.

In addition, once again, we need to pay attention to our information summaries so that they provide the members of the Central Committee an accurate picture of