

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 Tsentri Khraneniia i Izucheniia Dokumentov Noveishei Istorii] [now RGASPI (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'noi i Politicheskoi Istorii)], 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. 168-69.

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 The Politburo decided that Stalin should stay in his job and that Lenin's notes should not be published.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 administrating 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