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SPECIAL FEATURE

(This is a new section in our paper where, from time to time, we shall publish material submitted by friends who would otherwise have no place to publish.)

The following analysis of Lenin's Will, sent to us by a friend, is the first serious effort that has ever been made to penetrate into this historic document. The Trotskyites did publish it, but their treatment of Lenin's final testament was in line with the rest of their political blindness to class forces, on the one hand, and concern with the rivalries of personalities, on the other hand. It is as if nothing more was involved than Stalin's robbery of the mantle of Lenin from Trotsky, to whom as the ablest man on the Central Committee it properly belonged. If even this were true, it destroys any possibility of a class and objective analysis of Lenin's Will. To this day the Trotskyists have not departed from this "private property" analysis of the mantle of Lenin.

LENIN'S WILL

There is no more amazing document in the annals of politics than the brief, two-page Will of Lenin. It is a combination of theory and practice expressed in its highest opposition -- the human personality. In personal terms, in which there is not a single personal word outside of the proper names, this political testament summarizes the achievements, shortcomings and dangers of the political party which led the Russian Revolution and established the first workers' state in history in the midst of world capitalism. In 1923, when Lenin writes his Will, this party is facing the greatest crisis of its life which is at the same time the life of the entire Russian population as well as the fate of the world revolution.

Lenin analyzes the leaders of the Russian Communist Party and of the Third International in a manner which leaves no division at all between politics and economics, history and philosophy, theory and practice, revolution and counter-revolution. First of all, he establishes the objective class basis of the subject under discussion: the specific dictatorship of the proletariat in the overwhelmingly peasant country, Russia. He states unequivocally that if the dual nature of the dictatorship is at the root of the dispute between the principal combatants -- Stalin and Trotsky -- then no force on earth can possibly stop the class division from bringing down the workers' state. Its fall is inevitable.

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SPECIAL FEATURE

Lenin limits the value of the Will. The trends implicit in the dispute are not yet the reality. Within that limitation, therefore, the "personal" analyses can help us see the objective forces at work.

The Characters

The characters in whom are concentrated the objective forces and the subjective will are: Stalin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Pyatakov:

1) Stalin is "rude and disloyal." That is to say, we have in this social personality the ruthlessness of the outright counter-revolution. He must be removed.

2) Trotsky's "non-Bolshevism" does not in any way detract from the fact that he is "the most able man in the present Central Committee" but he is "far too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs." In other words, there is here the inner danger in the establishment of proletarian planning: the propagandist who counterposes an administrative solution to the revolutionary solution -- the population "to a man" running production and the state.

3) Zinoviev and Kamenev, at the critical moment of taking power, ran to tell the bourgeois world. This is no accident. At every critical moment they can be expected to do the same.

4) Bukharin, the theoretician of the party, has "never fully understood the dialectic" and hence cannot be considered "fully a Marxist."

5) Pyatakov cannot be relied on "in a serious political question" because he is too much the practical administrator.

These then are the characters, the social personalities, whose subjective will reflects the objective movement at a critical juncture in world history. A seriously false turn at that juncture could unloose the disintegrative forces at work in a dual regime, surrounded by world capitalism from which, without the help of an advanced European proletariat, it cannot free itself. Yet they are all revolutionaries, revolutionary leaders who, when the energies of the million-headed masses smashed the old and created the new, could and did make profound contributions to the greatest single fact of world history: the creation of the Soviet type of state.

When the Russian proletariat itself is in crisis, however, these intellectuals, as individuals, do not stack up very high. If their differences do not yet reflect a full class division, if their individual traits can be made to complement rather than oppose one another, if the party can increase the membership of this leading body with more proletarian types, if the General Secretary can be replaced by someone in every respect different from Stalin -- "more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc." -- then a split in the party and the fall of the workers' dictatorship may still be avoided.

This, then, is Lenin's summation of a lifetime spent in the revolutionary movement and five years as leader of the workers' state. Note well the "ifs" he lists as the necessary foundation for the Soviet state's continued existence. These "ifs" are not trifles. They are life and death questions. For as individuals there was nothing in the philosophy and politics of the leaders to keep the passions that stirred in their breasts from being as "base and mean" as those that stirred the capitalists to their mission.