

A Letter to the Central Committee of the Party from exile in Solvychegodsk

December 31, 1910

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Comrade Semyon! Yesterday I received your letter from the comrades. First of all, hearty greetings to Lenin and the others. Next about your letter and, in general, about the "vexed questions."

In my opinion, the line of the bloc (Lenin-Plekhanov) is the only correct one: 1) this line, and it alone, answers to the real interests of the work in Russia, which demand that all real Party elements should rally together; 2) this line, and it alone, will expedite the process of emancipation of the legal organisations from the yoke of the Liquidators, by digging a gulf between the Menshevik workers and the Liquidators, and dispersing and disposing of the latter. A fight for influence in the legal organisations is the burning question of the day, a necessary stage on the road towards the regeneration of the Party; and a bloc is the only means by which these organisations can be cleansed of the garbage of Liquidationism.

The plan for a bloc reveals the hand of Lenin—he is a shrewd fellow, and knows a thing or two. But this does not mean that any kind of bloc is good. A Trotsky bloc (he would have said "synthesis") would be rank unprincipledness, a Manilov amalgam of heterogeneous principles, the helpless longing of an unprincipled person for a "good" principle. The logic of things, by its nature, adheres strictly to principle and abhors an amalgam. A Lenin-Plekhanov bloc is practical because it is thoroughly based on principle, on unity of views on the question of how to regenerate the Party. But precisely because it is a bloc and not a merger—precisely for that reason, the Bolsheviks must have their own group. It is quite possible that in the course of their work the Bolsheviks will completely tame the Plekhanovites, but that is only a possibility. At all events, we must not go to sleep and wait for such a result, even if it is a very probable one. The more unitedly the Bolsheviks act, the more organised they are in their actions, the greater will be the chances of taming. We must, therefore, tirelessly hammer away on all anvils. I shall say nothing about the Feryod-ists, because they are now of less interest than the Liquidators and the Plekhanovites. If they do wake up one of these days—all to the good, of course; but if not—well, never mind, let them stew in their own juice.

That is what I think about things abroad.

But that is not all, nor even the most important. The most important thing is to organise the work in Russia. The history of our Party shows that disagreements are ironed out not in debates, but mainly in the course of the work, in the course of applying principles. Hence, the task of the day is to organise work in Russia around a strictly defined principle. The Liquidators at once realised what was in the wind (their scent is highly developed) and have begun to penetrate (have already penetrated) the legal workers' organisations, and it appears that they already have their underground centre in Russia, which is directing, etc., the work. We, however, are still only "preparing," still in the stage of rehearsals. In my opinion, our immediate task, the one that brooks no delay, is to organise a central group (in Russia), to co-ordinate the illegal, semi-legal and legal work at first in the main

centres (St. Petersburg, Moscow, the Urals, the South). Call it what you like—the "Russian section of the Central Committee" or auxiliary group of the Central Committee—it makes no difference, but such a group is as essential as air, as bread. At the present time lack of information, loneliness and isolation reign among the Party workers in the localities and they are all becoming discouraged. This group could give fresh stimulus to the work and introduce clarity. And that would clear the road for the actual utilisation of legal possibilities. And that, in my opinion, will start the revival of the Party spirit. To begin with, it would do no harm to arrange a conference of the Party workers who accept the decisions of the plenum,¹ under the guidance of the Central Committee, of course. But all this after the "reform" of the central bodies,² and provided the Plekhanovites agree. It is quite possible that such a conference will produce the people suitable for the above-mentioned central group. I think that the benefits of such a conference are obvious in many other respects too. But we must act firmly and relentlessly and not fear reproaches from the Liquidators, Trots-kyites and Vperyod-ists. If the Plekhanovites and Leninites unite on the basis of work in Russia, they can afford to ignore all reproaches, no matter from what quarter they come.

That is what I think about work in Russia.

Now about myself. I have another six months to go here.³ When the term expires I shall be entirely at your service. If the need for Party workers is really acute, I could get away at once. I have read No. 1 of Mysl.⁴ I can picture to myself how much clarity and encouragement the workers will gain even from the mere fact that yesterday's opponents are acting together, and how much confusion and chaos this will cause in the ranks of the Liquidators. And every honest person will say that this will not be bad.

There is a decent crowd here in exile, and it would be a very good thing if they could be supplied with the illegal periodicals. Send us *Sotsial-Demokrat* No. 17 and onwards, and also the "Supplement" to *Sotsial-Demokrat*. We have not received *Rabochaya Gazeta*,⁵ neither No. 1 nor No. 2, nor have we received *Golos So-tzial-Demokrata*. I suppose we shall receive *Zvezda*.⁶ Send to the following addresses: 1) Solvychevodsk, Vologda Gubernia, for Ivan Isaakovich Bogomolov; 2) Solvychevodsk, Vologda Gubernia, for Pyotr Mikhailovich Serafimov. The address for correspondence with me is: Solvychevodsk, Vologda Gubernia, the house of Grigorov, for Nikolai Alexandrovich Voznesensky.

With comradely greetings, **K. S.**

Don't send by registered mail. Write about how things are going on your side, I beg of you.

Written : December 31, 1910

Notes

¹. This refers to the plenum of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. that was held in Paris on January 2-23 (January 15-February 5), 1910. The plenum adopted a resolution on the necessity of "abolishing a l l more or less organised groups and of transforming them into trends that will not disrupt the unity of Party activities." On the insistence of V. I. Lenin, the plenum condemned Liquidationism and Otzovism, although the terms "Liquidationism" and "Otzovism" were not used in the resolution. The predominance of conciliatory elements at the plenum rendered possible the adoption of a number of anti-Leninist decisions. In spite of V. I. Lenin's protests, several Liquidator Mensheviks were elected to the central bodies of the Party. After this plenum the Liquidators intensified their struggle against the Party.

². This refers to the decision to reorganise ("reform") the central bodies of the Party, i.e., the Central Committee, the editorial board of the Central Organ, the Bureau of the Central Committee Abroad, and the Collegium of the Central Committee in Russia. This decision was adopted by the plenum of the Central Committee of the

R.S.D.L.P. held in January 1910 (see *Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U.(B.) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, Part I, 6th Russ. ed., 1940, pp. 157, 158). p. 217 95 J V. Stalin's term of exile was to expire at the end of June 1911.

[3.](#) J V. Stalin's term of exile was to expire at the end of June 1911.

[4.](#) *Mysl (Thought)*—a legal Bolshevik monthly magazine of philosophical and social-economic questions, published in Moscow from December 1910 to April 1911. Five numbers were issued. The magazine was founded by V. I. Lenin, and he was its actual director. Nos. 1-4 contained articles by him. Among the contributors were V. V. Vorovsky, M. S. Olminsky and I. I. Skvortsov-Stepanov. In addition to Bolsheviks, Plekhanov and other pro-Party Mensheviks contributed to the magazine.

[5.](#) *Rabochaya Gazeta (The Workers' Newspaper)*—a popular Bolshevik newspaper published in Paris from October 30 (November 12), 1910 to July 30 (August 12), 1912. It was organised and directed by V. I. Lenin. The Prague Conference of the Party held in January 1912 noted the services rendered by *Rabochaya Gazeta* in defending the Party and the Party principle and recognised it as the official organ of the Central Committee of the Party.

[6.](#) *Zvezda (The Star)*—a legal Bolshevik newspaper published in St. Petersburg from December 16, 1910 to April 22, 1912, first as a weekly and later two or three times a week. Its activities were directed by V. I. Lenin, who regularly sent articles for it from abroad. Regular contributors to the paper were V. M. Molotov, M. S. Olminsky, N. G. Poletayev, N. N. Baturin, K. S. Yeremeyev, and others. Contributions were also received from Maxim Gorky. In the spring of 1912, when J. V. Stalin was in St. Petersburg, the paper came out under his direction, and he wrote a number of articles for it which are reproduced in the present volume. The circulation of individual issues of the paper reached 50,000 to 60,000. *Zvezda* paved the way for the publication of the Bolshevik daily *Pravda*. On April 22, 1912, the tsarist government suppressed *Zvezda*. It was succeeded by *Nevskaya Zvezda (The Neva Star)*, which continued publication until October 1912.

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