

Friedrich Firsov

The VKP(b) and the Communist International

The All-Union Communist Party (of the Bolsheviks) (*Vsesojuznaja kommunističeskaja partija (bol'ševikov)*; VKP(b)) - from 1918-1925 the Communist Party of Russia (of the Bolsheviks) (*Rossijskaja kommunističeskaja partija (bol'ševikov)*; RKP(b)) and after 1952 the Communist Party of the USSR (*Kommunističeskaja partija Sovetskogo Sojuza*; KPSS) - has been the leading force of the Soviet state since it led the revolution in Russia and took power in October 1917. The creation of the party was announced at the first congress in 1898. It was actually founded at the second congress of the party in 1903 when its rules and programme were adopted. The party's goal was formulated as follows: to capture political power for the working class and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. The name of the party - the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party (*Rossijskaja social-demokratičeskaja rabočaja partija*) - was changed in 1917 when it became the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party (of the Bolsheviks) ([...] (*bol'ševikov*); RSDRP(b)). After the successful October Revolution the party governed all spheres of political, social, economic and cultural life in the country and its internal and foreign policy. Decisions adopted by the party leadership were binding on all state and voluntary organizations in the country. They determined the guidelines of development for Soviet society. The VKP(b) was the only legal political party in the country and its ideological dogmas constituted the basis on which the social and political system functioned.

Officially the VKP(b) was considered a section of the Third, the Communist International but actually it had acquired the leading role in it.

The main bulk of the documents on the history of the relations between the RKP(b) - from 1925 the VKP(b) - and the Comintern are to be found in the archives of the Communist International situated in the Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Modern History Documents (*Rossijskij Centr chranenija i izučanija dokumentov novejšej istorii*; RCChIDNI). The archives contain the minutes of the Comintern's Congresses, documents that highlight the activities of the leading bodies, in particular of the Comintern's Executive Committee (ECCI) and its subdivisions (the minutes of the ECCI's plenary meetings and sessions, correspondence with parties and their representatives, directives), as well as reports with information from different parties, etc. Other important sources on the given subject are the papers of the VKP(b) Central Committee, of its departments and divisions, personal papers of Lenin, Zinoviev, Stalin, etc., deposited in the RCChIDNI. Previously access to them was restricted, since the archives in general belonged to the KPSS. Researchers needed a special permit from the Communist Party in question to get access to the documents pertaining to its history. On 24 August 1991 all party archives were turned over to the state and restriction of access to their papers was lifted.

A significant number of sources on the attitudes of the VKP(b)'s leadership to the Comintern and on relations between the latter and various government departments of the Soviet state are deposited in the appropriate departmental archives and are not available to researchers.

Available published sources include minutes and verbatim records of the Comintern's Congresses (except for the Seventh Congress), and of the ECCI's plenary meetings (except for the VIIIth and IXth Plenums), documents published in Lenin's complete works, in the works of Zinoviev, Stalin and Trotsky and in collections of the works of Bukharin and Radek. Available publications also contain documents reflecting the Bolsheviks' struggle to create the Comintern, Lenin's role in the elaboration of the Comintern's political guidelines, as well as resolutions and decisions by Congresses and Plenums.

In Soviet historiography relations between the VKP(b) and the Comintern have not yet been subjected to special analysis. Soviet historians have for some time been dealing with the general and specific problems of the history of the Comintern. In literature published prior to 1987 the policy of the Comintern and the activities of the VKP(b) representatives in the ECCI were treated vindicatorily. (The author of this article did not avoid this approach either.) Sectarian trends in the Comintern and the negative results of the Stalin personality cult were discussed but the main focus was on the evidence of the positive role of the Comintern in the development of the various Communist Parties, in the creation of the United and Popular Fronts, in the uniting of anti-Fascist forces etc. Such one-sidedness resulted from the obligation to follow existing stereotypes when analysing the historic process, and also from the unavailability of sources or the limited access to those available.

Recently, in a number of publications, there have been attempts at a critical revision of the Comintern's history, including the history of the relations between the leaders of the VKP(b) and the ECCI and the influence of Stalinism upon the Comintern. This article summarizes the latest results of the development of Soviet historiography of the Comintern.

I. Lenin and the Creation of the Comintern as "the Headquarters of the World Revolution"

Lenin set himself the task of creating the Third International in the autumn of 1914.¹ Striving for the unity of socialists from different countries during World War I, Lenin and his supporters assumed that the future international organization would unite isolated groups of the proletariat to prepare and accomplish the World Socialist Revolution. Lenin's theoretical, political and practical work in the war period was aimed at creating the basis for such an organization.²

Lenin considered the successful October Revolution of 1917 in Russia as the starting point of the epoch of World Revolution, and Bolshevism as an ideological and political basis for a new Communist movement, "as a model of tactics for all".³ The Bolsheviks, together with the left-wing of the labour movements in other countries, pinned their hopes upon the success of World Revolution. They attached primary importance to founding an organization that could take the lead in the world revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie and to the creation of an International Soviet Republic.

From late 1917 onwards the Bolsheviks made several attempts to summon a conference to unite supporters of the idea of World Revolution.⁴ With the aim of uniting foreign working people living in Russia (former prisoners of war and immigrants) and educating them politically in the ideas of Bolshevism, the party organized special foreigners' groups and sections. In May 1918 they were united into a Federation of Foreign Groups of the RKP(b) Central Committee headed by Béla Kun. Members of these groups later returned to their home countries and took an active part in founding Communist parties.⁵

On 24 December 1918 the RKP(b) Central Committee addressed an appeal to parties and groups that supported the platform of the Third International. It urged them not to participate in the conference called by the British Labour Party in order to establish the Second International and instead to unite into a single international organization to promote World Revolution.

On 24 January 1919 *Pravda* published an appeal written by Trotsky urging the convening of the First Congress of the Communist International. This appeal was adopted at the internationalists' meeting held in Moscow. It briefly formulated the ideological and political aims, tactics and organizational principles of the future International.

At the First Congress of the Comintern, held 2-6 March 1919, the RKP(b) was represented by a delegation including - besides Lenin and Trotsky - Gregory Zinoviev, Joseph Stalin, Nikolai Bukharin and George Chicherin; Valerian Obolensky (Osinsky) and Vaclav Vorovsky had a voice without a vote.

Speeches, and drafts suggested by the delegation of the RKP(b), expressed confidence that the bourgeois order was on the verge of collapse and could not restore industry or overcome disruption. The Bolsheviks saw World Revolution as the only solution. They gave particular emphasis to the task of uniting all the revolutionary forces and stressed that world revolutionary objectives must have priority over the interests of any single country. They set down the motives for further confrontation with the Social Democrats. Moreover they considered the right-wing Social Democrats to be counter-revolutionary and set themselves to alienate all the revolutionary

¹ Ja.G. Temkin and B.M. Tupolev, *Ot Vtorogo k Tre'temu Internacionalu* (Moscow, 1978), p. 78.

² Jakov Temkin, *Lenin i meždunarodnaja socialdemokratija. 1914-1917* (Moscow, 1968), pp. 74-76; N.E. Korolev, *Lenin i meždunarodnoe rabočee dviženie. 1914-1918* (Moscow, 1968), pp. 23-37.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", in V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 45 vols., (Moscow, 1960-1970), 28, p. 293; Igor Krivoguz, "Sud'ba i nasledie Kominterna", *Novaja i novejšaja istorija*, 1990, no. 6, pp. 3-4.

⁴ Ruth Stoljarova, "V.I. Lenin i sozdanie Kommunističeskogo Internacionala", in B.M. Lejbzon and K.K. Širinja (eds.), *Iz istorii Kominterna* (Moscow, 1970), pp. 6-10.

⁵ Jurij Šerbakov, *Iskry Velikogo Oktjabrja. Vklad internacionalistov i raboče dviženie v stranach Centralnoj i Jugo-Vostočnoj Evropy (1917-1921 gg.)* (Moscow, 1982).

proletarian elements from the "centre".⁶

The RKP(b) was the only one of the few then existing Communist parties to be in power. Thus it naturally became the organizer of the Congress. The RKP(b) generously shared with other parties the vast experience of the revolutionary struggle it had accumulated. The founders of the Comintern regarded the theoretical, ideological and political arsenal of Lenin's party as a platform on which Communists could be united.

The Congress expressed its gratitude and admiration for the proletariat of Russia and its leading force - the Bolsheviks.⁷ It called for active support of the Soviet state and for the supplying of economic aid. Enthusiastic evaluation of the social and economic measures adopted by the Soviet state did not truly reflect the actual situation in its national economy. Later on, when the situation in the Soviet state was discussed at the Comintern's Congresses, participants would always look at it through "rose-coloured spectacles", willingly or unwillingly indulging in wishful thinking. Information spread by the Comintern on the Soviet situation was based upon data supplied by official representatives of the Soviet state and upon information from the Soviet press, so people abroad received an illusory and embellished picture of the life of the Soviet people.

The Congress decided that the Communist International should be led by an Executive Committee, with members from the parties of major countries. Before they arrived, the important posts were given to representatives of the party that hosted the ECCI. Thus the leading part played by the Bolsheviks in this international Communist organization was established.

After the Congress, mass meetings and rallies in Moscow and Petrograd took place, at which Soviet workers demonstrated their solidarity with the revolutionary movement in other countries. It was stressed that the founding of the Comintern was evidence of support for the Soviet Republic by the world proletariat. This idea was strongly supported by the party's propaganda. The Comintern itself was considered a symbol of the solidarity of working people in other countries with the Soviet state. Propaganda declared that assistance and support for the Soviet people from other countries was an indication of their readiness to follow the route already taken by the Soviet state. RKP (b) delegates to the ECCI usually made reports at party congresses on their activities within the Comintern. These reports also claimed that the international Communist movement approved of and supported the Bolsheviks' politics and policy.

The founding of the Third International was widely commented on at the VIIIth RKP(b) congress, held on 18-23 March 1919. A resolution stressed that the Congress "fully supported the platform of the Comintern". The RKP (b) would use all its influence to fulfil the grand aims of the Third International and it instructed its Central Committee "to give strong and comprehensive support to the organization and activities of the Third International".⁸ On 16 March the RKP(b) Central Committee confirmed the appointment of Zinoviev to the post of Chairman of the International Communist Bureau. The Propaganda Department of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs as well as the foreign Communist groups were put under the authority of the ECCI. Bukharin was appointed Zinoviev's vice-chairman. On 13 April the Central Committee sent a directive to all its organizations ordering them to support the Third International.

Besides Zinoviev and Bukharin, some other members of the RKP(b) joined the ECCI Bureau. Among them were Angelika Balabanova and Jan Berzin, who became the ECCI's secretaries, Gustav Klinger, the ECCI's business-manager, Waclaw Vorovsky, Maxim Litvinov, Leonid Karakhan and A. Menshoy.⁹ A significant number of the RKP(b) members who had been living in emigration and were acquainted with labour movements in other countries were appointed as officials of the ECCI.

The party gave financial support to the ECCI and through it to other Communist parties. On 7 May

⁶ Friedrich Firsov and Dina Kunina, "Razmeževanie v rabočem dviženii. Voprosy bor'by s opportunistami i čenristami za soždanie kommunističeskich partij i I kongress Kominterna", in K.K. Širinja, *et al.*, (eds.), *Pervyj kongress Kominterna. Velikij Oktjabr' i roždenie meždunarodnogo kommunističeskogo dviženija* (Moscow, 1986), pp. 365-366.

⁷ Grant Adibekov, "I kongress o roli Sovetskoj Rossii na mirovoj arene, o meždunarodnom položenii i protivorečijach imperializma", *ibid.*, pp. 279-280.

⁸ "O Kommunističeskom Internacionale", in *Kommunističeskaja partija Sovetskogo Sojuza v rezoljucijach i rešenijach s'ezdov, konferencij i plenumov CK, 1917-1922*, Vol. 2 (Moscow, 1983), p. 92.

⁹ Friedrich Firsov, *Lenin, Komintern i stanovlenie kommunističeskich partij* (Moscow, 1985), pp. 47-48.

1919 the RKP(b)'s Organizational Bureau allocated 3 million roubles to the Comintern.¹⁰ Subsequently the ECCI's budget was also subsidized in accordance with the RKP(b) leadership's decisions.

Supported by the RKP(b) the ECCI's Bureau sent its representatives to different countries to establish links with left-wing elements in the labour movement and to assist in organizing Communist parties. The West European ECCI Secretariat, headed by Jacob Reich (who worked under the nickname of Thomas), played a significant part in this process. Mikhail Borodin, Elena Stasova, Vladimir Degot', Elena Sokolovskaja and many other Bolsheviks participated in this type of ECCI activity.

A journal, *The Communist International*, was first on sale in May 1919. This journal regularly published articles and reports by the RKP(b) leaders, its propagandists and officials. These dealt mainly with the Bolsheviks' experience and with the trends of the revolutionary movement. They aimed at strengthening the Communist parties and at emphasizing the necessity of unity, especially in the light of the growing revolutionary crisis in the capitalist countries.

"Leftist" orientation influenced attitudes towards the trade-union movement. On 26 September the RKP(b) Central Committee's Plenum commissioned Bukharin and Zinoviev to work out a draft appeal from Soviet trade unions to trade unions in other countries calling on them to join the Communist International. On behalf of the Comintern Zinoviev suggested that trade unions which supported the revolutionary platform should become "a part (a section) of the Communist International".¹¹ Later on it was considered more practical to unite trade unions outside the framework of the Comintern and thus the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU or Profintern) was founded.

Those who participated in the creation of new Communist parties assumed that the masses were full of revolutionary enthusiasm and were only waiting for a signal to rise and fight resolutely. In spite of the fact that the Comintern, and Lenin in particular, strongly criticized the leftists, prevailing opinion in the Comintern was based on an overestimation of the degree of revolutionary zeal in the masses and on the trend towards all-round centralization in the Communist movement.

The Comintern leaders regarded as very dangerous the announcement that a number of "centrist" parties were ready to start negotiations for uniting with the Third International. Though eager to win rank-and-file members of these parties over to its side, the Comintern was strongly opposed to contacts with their leaders. At the request of the ECCI's Bureau, Lenin drafted the RKP(b)'s response to a suggestion from the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany. The RKP(b)'s Politburo considered that a response based on Lenin's draft should be made in the name of the ECCI's Bureau.¹² This draft, together with a text written by Zinoviev, was published as an ECCI letter dated 5 February 1920. The Comintern managed to attract a significant number of members from the "centrist" parties who subsequently joined Communist parties. The "centrist" parties, however, did not join the Communist International but founded an International Labour Cooperation of Socialist Parties, which Communists were to call the "2 1/2 International".

On 8 April 1920 the Plenum of the RKP(b) Central Committee accepted Lenin's suggestion and commissioned representatives of Russia in the Comintern to push through the decision on convening the Second Congress. All the questions concerning the convening of the Congress were to be discussed in the party's Politburo. Lenin, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Trotsky and Radek drafted the most important Congress resolutions, including those dealing with the national liberation movement.¹³ Zinoviev prepared "Conditions for joining the Communist International". At the time of the Congress Lenin's book *"Left-Wing" Communism - an Infantile Disorder* had just been published. The book presented an analysis of the heritage of the October Revolution and

¹⁰ "Dejatelnost' Centralnogo Komiteta partii v dokumentach (sobytija i fakty) 25 marta - 24 ijunja 1919 g.", *Izvestija CK KPSS*, 1989, no. 12, p. 160.

¹¹ Grigorij Zinov'ev, "Pis'mo k professional'nym sojuzam vsech stran", *Kommunističeskij Internacional*, 1920, no. 10, p. 1682.

¹² Friedrich Firsov, "Komintern i stroitel'stvo partii novogo tipa 1919-1920 gg.", in K.K. Širinja, et al., (eds.), *Vtoroj Kongress Komintern. Razrabotka kongressom idejnyh, taktičeskich i organizacionnyh osnov kommunističeskich partij* (Moscow, 1972), pp. 59-60.

¹³ A.B. Reznikov, *Strategija i taktika Kommunističeskogo Internacionala po nacional'no-kolonial'nomu voprosu. Problemy teorii i istorii* (Moscow, 1978), pp. 72-111; Eduard Matjunin, *Perebolevšie "leviznoj". V.I. Lenin i anglo-amerikanskije "levye" na II Kongresse Komintern* (Leningrad, 1990).

dwelt on the fundamental political problems of the Communist movement.

The spirit prevailing at the Second Congress of the Comintern (July - August 1920) was one of confidence that World Revolution was about to be achieved and that the task of preparing the working class and its parties for it was becoming more acute. The Congress strongly supported the foreign policy of the Soviet state, whose army was at that moment launching an offensive against Warsaw. The greetings addressed to the Red Army and the Red Fleet of the Russian Federation said: "You are fighting not only in the interests of Soviet Russia but in the interests of all the workers and for the Communist International".¹⁴ Combining as it did its hopes for World Revolution with the progress of the Soviet state, the Comintern believed in the priority of this country's interests over those of any other.

The central place in the Congress's work was devoted to the ideological, political and organizational principles on which to build a Communist party. The RKP(b) was considered to be a model, and problems of centralization and strict discipline were to the fore. "We must have an iron party as if made of a single piece," Zinoviev said. "You should borrow from the Russian workers' experience everything worth borrowing."¹⁵

Although some delegates were rather critical of taking the RKP(b) as a model for all the other parties, the Congress stressed that a Communist party should be organized on the principle of strict centralization. In the civil war period it should have iron discipline in its ranks. "Conditions for joining the Communist International" adopted at the Congress dealt with this question even more definitely. They said that parties were sections of a single world organization and must be subservient to common regulations and instructions from the centre. One condition demanded unilateral support for any soviet republic in its struggle against counter-revolution and imperialist intervention.

This document contained the following reservation: the Comintern and its Executive were obliged to take into consideration the diversity of existing situations under which different parties had to work. General resolutions and decisions were to be taken only on suitable issues.

However, the stress was on the absolute power of the centre and on the binding character for all the parties of decisions taken by the Congress and the Executive. The same thing was stressed in the Rules of the Comintern adopted at the Congress. The Rules said that the Third International was a World Communist Party and parties working in different countries were its sections.

The main burden of work in the ECCI was assigned to the party that hosted it, the RKP(b), which was assigned five posts in the Executive while other parties had only one representative each.

At the Congress Michael Tomsy, Zinoviev, Radek, Bukharin and Mikhail Kobetsky became the ECCI's members from the RKP(b) and Lenin, Trotsky, Berzin, Grigory Tsiperovich, Stalin and Mikhail Pavolvich were elected candidates to the ECCI.¹⁶

At the Xth RKP(b) congress in March 1921 Zinoviev admitted that the tempo of the international proletarian movement "had slowed down", though he still presumed that it was the eve of the proletarian revolution.¹⁷ Lenin evaluated the situation differently, calling it "an unsteady balance", with the Soviet republic having defended itself but the revolutionary movement abroad getting slower. He said it was madness to suppose that very shortly the Soviet state would be supported by a proletarian revolution in the West.¹⁸

The Soviet state made a transition from the policy of "military communism" to the new economic policy. Its analogy in the international labour movement was a transition to the defence of workers' everyday

¹⁴ "K Krasnoj Armii, k Krasnomu Flotu RSFSR", in *Vtoroj kongress Komintern. Ijul'-avgust 1920 g.* (Moscow, 1934), p. 586.

¹⁵ Grigorij Zinov'ev, "Doklad o roli i strukture kommunističeskoj partii do i posle zavoevanija vlasti proletariatom (23 ijulja 1920 g.)", *ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁶ Alexandr Tivel' and Mauno Chejmo, *10 let Komintern v rešenijach i cifrach* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1929), p. 49.

¹⁷ Grigorij Zinov'ev, "Doklad o Kommunističeskom Internacionale" (16 marta 1921 g.), in *Desjatyj s'ezd RKP(b), Mart 1921 goda. Stenografičeskij otčet* (Moscow, 1963), pp. 500-501, 505.

¹⁸ V.I. Lenin, "Report on the Political Work of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. (B.), March 8 [1921]", in Lenin, *Collected Works*, 32, p. 180.

interests and to the tactics of the United Front.¹⁹ The first step in this direction was made by the publication of an Open Letter from the German Communists to all the labour parties and organizations in the country. It proposed a joint struggle to protect the economic interests of the working people and to widen economic freedoms and rights. This letter was written by Radek, who at that time was the Comintern's representative in Germany.

However, this initiative was initially condemned, not only by the leftists, who claimed it to be a retreat from the goals of the revolutionary struggle, but also by Zinoviev and Bukharin.²⁰ Radek turned to Lenin for help and Lenin supported the guidelines of the "Open Letter". Lenin's interference determined the ECCI's standpoint on the question. Zinoviev and Bukharin had to give in.²¹

In Germany, after this proposal was rejected by the other parties, the Communist party leaders took a number of hazardous and sectarian steps. They came out with "a theory of the offensive" and in March 1921 pushed workers in Central Germany into open conflicts with the police. The then ECCI representative in Germany, Béla Kun, played a negative part in the situation. He urged the leadership of the party to run the offensive under the motto of overthrowing the government.²²

Kun thought that this offensive would help Soviet Russia by providing evidence that the working class in the West had not lost its revolutionary energy. When Lenin learned of Kun's standpoint he wrote to Clara Zetkin and to Paul Levi: "I readily believe that the representative of the Executive Committee defended the silly tactics, which were too much to the left - to take immediate action 'to help the Russians'; this representative is very often too left."²³ At the Third Congress (June-July 1921) Trotsky rejected claims that the Bolsheviks had the right to ask other parties to unleash revolutionary activities to support them at home. He said: "If we were capable of such treason we would deserve to be put up against a wall and shot one by one."²⁴

A discussion of the tactics of the Comintern and the situation in the Communist parties revealed differing opinions in the leadership of the RKP(b). Zinoviev, Bukharin and Radek were inclined to support the leftist trends within the Communist parties. Lenin and Trotsky stood for the idea of changes in the policy of the Comintern to keep it line with the current situation. They emphasized the growing threat of "leftism". The Politburo of the RKP(b) Central Committee obliged members of its delegation at the Third Congress of the Comintern to carry out a coordinated and common policy. As usual the RKP(b) delegation drafted out most of the Congress's resolutions, though representatives of other parties participated in this work too.

Controversy within the RKP(b) delegation on the tactics of the Comintern was on the whole avoided, though differences in the evaluation of a number of problems persisted. In his speech at the Congress Lenin warned that leftism might be disastrous to the Communist movement.²⁵ In spite of resistance from the leftists, and from a significant number of delegations, the policy of the RKP(b)'s delegation, supported by some of the most experienced and far-seeing Communist party representatives, was adopted.

¹⁹ I.M. Krivoguz and Ju.L. Molčanov, *Lenin i bor'ba za edinstvo rabočego dviženija* (Leningrad, 1967); Jakov Elfond, *Razrabotka V.I. Leninym taktiki edinogo fronta* (Saratov, 1967); Ju.L. Molčanov, *Komintern: U istokov politiki edinogo proletarskogo fronta* (Moscow, 1969).

²⁰ L.A. Slepov (ed.), *Lenin i međunarodnoe raboče dviženie* (Moscow, 1969), p. 474; Boris Ajzin, et al., (eds.), *Lenin v bor'be za revoljucionnyj Internacional* (Moscow, 1970), p. 511.

²¹ Kirill Shirinja, "Razrabotka V.I. Leninym i Kominternom kursa međunarodnogo kommunističeskogo dviženija v novych uslovijach", in Friedrich Firsov, et al., (eds.), *Tretij Kongress Kominterna. Razvitie kongressom političeskoj linii kommunističeskogo dviženija. Kommunisty i massy* (Moscow, 1975), pp. 31-32.

²² A.A. Galkin (ed.), *Kommunisty Zapadnoj Evropy v bor'be za edinyj front proletariata 1920-1923 gg.* (Moscow, 1977), pp. 37-42.

²³ V.I. Lenin to Clara Zetkin and Paul Levi, 16 April 1921, in Lenin, *Collected Works*, 45, p. 124.

²⁴ Lev Trockij, "Reč' po ital'janskomu voprosu" (29 ijunja 1921 g.), in *III Vsemirnyj kongress Kommunističeskogo internacionala. Stenografičeskij otčet* (Petrograd, 1922), p. 187.

²⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Speech in Defence of the Tactics of the Communist International, July 1 [1921]", in Lenin, *Collected Works*, 32, pp. 468ss.

The Congress brought to the fore the task of organizing all-round preparatory work, aimed at defence as well as at offence, at uniting the masses in this struggle, instead of organizing an immediate attack upon the bourgeois order. But in evaluating the general situation and the immediate prospects, the Congress kept a "leftist" vision. Its documents said that the restoration of capitalist equilibrium was impossible and that the situation remained favourable for overthrowing bourgeois society.²⁶

The RKP(b) tried to help new Communist parties in their development, to teach them methods and "contents of party work". Lenin suggested and helped to draft theses eventually written by Otto Kuusinen. These theses adopted at the Congress dwelt on the tasks that Communists faced in their organizational work. Questions of party development and methods of party work were analyzed mainly on the basis of the RKP(b)'s experience. Lenin later admitted that this approach was fraught with grave errors: "[...] we did not understand in what way we should approach foreigners with our Russian experience".²⁷

In his speech made at the Congress on 5 July Lenin explained the meaning of measures taken by the Soviet state in order to improve economic cooperation between the working class and the peasants and to promote unity between them, which was vital for the construction of the socialist society. The ultra-leftists criticized the policy of the RKP(b). They demanded that Soviet Russia should continue the permanent struggle against imperialism and should inspire revolution in other countries. Alexandra Kollontai, a representative of the "workers' opposition" within the RKP(b), said at the Congress that the NEP could contribute to the restoration of capitalism and the degeneration of the Soviet state.

In his answer to the ultra-leftists' criticism Radek quoted Lenin, who had said that the Soviet republic could survive surrounded by capitalist states only for a brief period. Radek commented: "We are constantly discussing this danger at our Congresses. Actually there is only one remedy to it: acceleration of the revolution [...]. The politics of the Soviet government and of the International should be adjusted to changes in the situation. The slogan of the moment is as follows: Win time to organize the victory, to organize it, as Lenin put it, not only by reading books, but on the basis of life experience, on the basis of the struggle prompted by life".²⁸

The Congress's resolution on the tactics of the RKP(b) was adopted unanimously. It approved of the party's activities and emphasized that the party "by its policy towards peasants, towards concessions and the restoration of industry, concentrates all the strength of the proletariat on preserving its dictatorship in Russia till the moment when the proletariat in Western Europe comes to the help of their brethren".²⁹ It was stressed that owing to the policy of the RKP(b) Soviet Russia remained the first and the most important stronghold of World Revolution. The Congress called on the proletariat of all the countries to stand up for the Russian workers and announced that unconditional support for Soviet Russia remained the main duty of Communists all over the world. Thus at its Third Congress the Comintern, which regarded the Soviet state as the centre of the movement for World Revolution, considered the economic development of that state to be an important part of this movement.

Zinoviev, Bukharin, Radek, Lenin and Trotsky were elected to the ECCI representing the RKP(b), Lev Kamenev and Kobetsky became vice-members. Zinoviev, Radek and Bukharin were elected to the ECCI's Small (7 member) Bureau. In September 1921 this Small Bureau was renamed as the ECCI's Presidium.

The First Extended Plenum of the ECCI, held 21 February - 4 March 1922, again demonstrated the Comintern's unconditional support for the RKP(b) and recognized its special place in this organization. A group of 22 RKP(b) members who supported "the workers' opposition" appealed to the ECCI with a complaint asking the Comintern to interfere in the party's affairs to revive democracy within it. The RKP(b) Central Committee sent a letter to the Plenum signed by Zinoviev and Trotsky. It confirmed that every party member had the right to appeal to the Comintern as the supreme party authority. A resolution of the Xth RKP(b) congress attached

²⁶ Vladimir Alexandrov, *Lenin i Komintern. Iz istorii razrabotki teorii i taktiki mezhdunarodnogo kommunističeskogo dviženija* (Moscow, 1972), pp. 349-351, 379-384.

²⁷ V.I. Lenin, ["Pyat' let rossijskoj revoljucii i perspektivi mirovoj revoljucii. Doklad na IV kongresse Kominterna 13 nojabr'a" (1922 g.)], in Lenin, *Collected Works*, 33, p. ...

²⁸ Karl Radek, "Reč' o taktike RKP" (5 ijulja 1921 g.), in *III Vsemirnyj kongress Kommunističeskogo Internacionala*, pp. 366-367.

²⁹ "Rezoljucija o taktike Rossijskoj kommunističeskoj partii (bol'shevikov)", in K.K. Širinja, *et al.*, (eds.), *V.I. Lenin i Kommunističeskaj Internacional* (Moscow, 1970), p. 313.

to this letter condemned "the workers' opposition" as an anarcho-syndicalist trend within the party.

The ECCI's Plenum set up a Commission which deemed the complaints of supporters of the "workers' opposition" to be incorrect and their behaviour contradictory to the "binding resolutions of the Xth RKP(b) congress on the party's unity and on the anarcho-syndicalist trend". The Commission's conclusion, adopted by ECCI's Plenum, stressed the necessity of unity and discipline within the RKP(b) and warned members of the opposition that activities which could damage the party would put them outside the Comintern's ranks.³⁰

The Third International not only upheld the position of non-interference in the RKP(b)'s affairs but voiced a priori unequivocal support for its policy. Thus it showed that though the Rules of the Comintern proclaimed the principle of this organization's supremacy over national sections this did not extend to the Bolsheviks' party.

At the XIth congress of the RKP(b), held 27 March - 2 April 1922, representatives of the "workers' opposition" were severely criticized for their complaint to the Comintern. Though the party members' right to turn to the Comintern for help was acknowledged such an action was considered as an anti-party deed harmful to the party's unity.³¹

Developing the guidelines of the Third Congress, the RKP (b) delegation in the ECCI prepared theses on the United Workers' Front. They were adopted by the ECCI on 18 December 1921. While working on the theses Lenin advised taking into account the morale and level of consciousness of the masses. According to him, united actions against the bourgeoisie would ultimately lead to the overcoming of reformism and would contribute to the masses' taking up revolutionary positions.³²

When attempting to justify the necessity of the United Front, Zinoviev and Bukharin did not bring to the fore the aim of uniting the masses against the offensive capital. This aim could have prepared the ground for the United Front. However, they resorted to stimulating a leftist orientation of the working class, using the rhetoric of the struggle for the United Front in order to criticize the Social Democrats and draw the masses to the Communist side.³³ This sectarian approach to the problems of the United Front doomed to failure any attempt to create it.

The XIth RKP(b) conference supported the Comintern's attitude to the United Front. A resolution adopted on 22 December 1921 (prepared by Zinoviev and Trotsky) also revealed a "leftist" approach to the United Front as a means of denouncing Social Democracy. This resolution said: "The experience of the whole pre-revolutionary epoch in Russia, particularly that of the struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, allows the conference to state with certainty that the tactics suggested by the Comintern's Executive would help the Communist parties in Europe and in America to attract broad sections of the working masses to the banner of Communism. On the basis of their own revolutionary experience these masses would be able to clearly expose the treachery of the leaders of and collaborators with the centrists."³⁴

The experience of relations between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia would hardly be applicable to the situation in Western Europe, where the working class was organized into trade unions and, to a great extent, supported Social Democracy. Representatives of the RKP(b) in the Comintern could not see it and would refer to the experience of the Bolsheviks, who in the pre-war years had resorted to the tactics of

³⁰ "Russkij vopros", in Bela Kun (ed.), *Kommunističeskij Internacional v dokumentach. Rešenija, tezisj i vozvzanija kongressov Kominterna i plenumov IKKI 1919-1932* (Moscow, 1933), p. 276.

³¹ "Otčet komissii XI s'ezda RKP o gruppe 'rabočej opozicii'", in *Odinnadcatyj s'ezd (RKP(b). Mart-aprel' 1922 g. Stenografičeskij otčet* (Moscow, 1961), pp. 702-710, 577-580.

³² Grigorij Zinov'ev, "Reč' po voprosam taktiki" (4 dekabnja 1921 g.), in *Dejatel'nost' Ispolnitel'nogo Komiteta i Prezidiuma CK Kommunističeskogo Internacionala ot 13-go ijulja 1921 g. do 1 fevralja 1922 g.*

³³ Friedrich Firsov, "IV kongress Kominterna i razvitie politika edinogo fronta" in Kirill Kirillovič Širinja and Friedrich Firsov (eds.), *IV kongress Kominterna: Razrabotka kongressom strategii i taktiki kommunističeskogo dviženija v novyx uslovijach: politika edinogo fronta* (Moscow, 1980), pp. 106-107; Iskander Nurtasovič Undasynov and Zinaida Pavlovna Jachimovič, *Kommunističeskij Internacional: dostiženija, proščety, uroki* (Moscow, 1990), pp. 67-68.

³⁴ "O taktike Kominterna", in *Kommunističeskaja Partija Sovetskogo Sojuza v rezoljucijach*, Vol. 2, p. 457.

"unity from below", and who now suggested this should be disseminated in European countries.

The first attempt at cooperation between international labour organizations in spring 1922 revealed these contradictions. The RKP(b) had not changed its internal policy, aimed at suppressing Mensheviks and the party of Socialist-Revolutionaries (SRs). Repressions against them and against the right-wing SRs were intensified. In summer 1922 some of them were brought to trial. This could not help influencing the relations between the Communists and the Social Democrats and the results of the April meeting between representatives of the Second, the 2 1/2 and the Third Internationals.³⁵

Though at this meeting an agreement was reached to promote cooperation in defending workers' interests, supporting Soviet Russia and organizing a World Labour Congress, it was not carried out. The RKP(b) Central Committee's plenary meeting on 16 May decided to issue an ultimatum. In the case of opposition from the Second International, Comintern representatives were to withdraw from the joint commission organized at the meeting. The imperative character of the resolution adopted at the RKP(b) Central Committee Plenum was evidence of the alignment of forces within the ECCL. The withdrawal of the Comintern's representatives from the joint commission and the failure of this first attempt to create a United Front led to an escalation of the struggle between the Communists and the Social Democrats.

2. The Trend towards Centralization within the Comintern

Changes in the international situation brought about a transformation of the Comintern's functions. Convened to guide the revolutionary struggle in the world, it began by guiding Communist parties. Activities and the situation within different parties were discussed at plenary sessions and in commissions of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern (November-December 1922) together with general problems of strategy and tactics, the prospects of the Communist movement etc. Decisions were taken not only on political problems but also on parties' structures and the composition of their leading bodies. For example, Trotsky acted as a custodian of the French party in the ECCL. He was the author of a political resolution on the French situation, of the Programme of the French Communist Party, and of resolutions of the French commission of the Congress that contained lists of the Central Committee's members.³⁶

Members of the RKP(b) delegation in the ECCI, Zinoviev, Lenin, Radek, Bukharin and Solomon Lozovsky prepared the main reports for the Congress.

The Congress placed a high value on the policy of the Soviet state in implementing the NEP, and announced that Soviet Russia was the greatest treasury of historical revolutionary experience on which the world proletariat could draw. Stating that the proletarian revolution would never fully succeed in a single country, that it could win only on an international scale when transformed into a World Revolution, the Congress called upon the world proletariat to perform its duty. The Congress described the Soviet state as a constant factor in the weakening of bourgeois society. It was stressed that the more Soviet Russia revived economically, the stronger would be the influence it exercised over international politics.³⁷

The task of giving proletarian support to Soviet Russia in to help restore its national economy was discussed at the Congress. It was proclaimed as the duty of workers' parties and organizations, especially of Communists. The Congress stressed that the latter should help the Soviet state not only by initiating revolutionary political struggle but also by giving extensive economic assistance. The Comintern considered its vanguard to be a combination of the prospect of World Revolution with the development of the Soviet state.

The RKP(b) delegation initiated, and the Congress made, a number of significant changes in the strategy the tactics of the Communist movement. These changes were connected with the continuing offensive of the bourgeoisie against the working people, and with the emergence of a new reactionary force - Fascism - on the

³⁵ Alexandr Vatlin, "Roždenie politiki edinogo fronta: russkoe izmerenie", *Rabočij klass i sovremenyj mir*, 1990, no. 1, pp. 148-166.

³⁶ Lev Trockij, "Rezoljucii Francuzkoj komissii", in Lev Trockij, *Pjat' let Kominternu* (Moscow, 1923), pp. 525-530.

³⁷ "Tezisy o taktike Kommunističeskogo Internacionala", in: Širinja, et al., *V.I. Lenin i Kommunističeskij Internacional*, p. 461.

political scene. Fascism fought not only against the proletariat but "against the bourgeois democracy as such".³⁸ Though the Comintern again confirmed its belief in a general trend towards World Revolution, at the same time it admitted the possibility of transitional stages. During these stages a new solution was put forward - that of a labour government as a coalition of labour parties, able to carry out general democratic tasks.

At the Congress, representatives of the Communist Party of Germany (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*; KPD) and of the RKP(b) discussed the question of creating a labour coalition government of Social-Democrats and Communists in Saxony. Representatives of the RKP(b) advised the German Communists against such a government. Trotsky said in this connection: "It would only be possible if revolution was so close that it was perceptible. Then it would mean holding a position in Germany before taking over the whole of it".³⁹

The Congress adopted a resolution on elections to the ECCI. The Executive now was to be elected at its session instead of consisting of delegates from the various parties. Since all the Comintern's sections acknowledged the leading role of the RKP(b), this meant that this delegation's opinions acquired an even greater significance. From the RKP (b) the Comintern's chairman, Zinoviev, Bukharin and Radek were elected to the ECCI. Lenin and Trotsky became candidates. George Safarov was elected to the ECCI from the parties of the countries of the East.

After the Fourth Congress the trend to centralization in the Comintern was intensified. The role of the ECCI officials in elaborating political guidelines for the parties and regulations for their internal policies increased. This led to further growth of the apparatus and, consequently, further bureaucratization. Communists got into the habit of waiting for the ECCI's directives. Bukharin mentioned this trend in his report at the XIIth RKP(b) congress in April 1923.⁴⁰

These negative trends had a strong influence on the situation in Germany in autumn 1923. Leaders of the RKP(b) and the Comintern concluded that time was ripe for revolution was ripe. In the middle of August Zinoviev wrote theses on "The situation in Germany and our tasks". Approved by the ECCI's leadership they formed the core of the letter sent to the KPD Central Committee. In their turn the KPD's leaders also considered that the decisive struggle was close and that it was time to start military and technical preparations for the uprising.

Zinoviev implied that the victory of the revolution in Germany would help Soviet Russia to overcome difficulties in its socialist economic development and would reduce the "dangers resulting from the NEP". He foresaw the such dangers in "the attempts of the new bourgeoisie to occupy leading positions in the national economy of the USSR".⁴¹ He was confident that Soviet Russia would inevitably see its future as bound up with the uprising of the German proletariat. Zinoviev assumed that "even the fate of the USSR, the first and as yet the only stronghold of the international proletarian revolution, could be put at risk".⁴²

Other leaders of the RKP(b) shared this view (due to a serious illness Lenin was not participating in the leadership of either the party or the country). Stalin wrote in his letter of September 20 to August Thalheimer, editor of *Die Rote Fahne* (The Red Flag): "The coming revolution in Germany is the most important event of our time. The success of the revolution in Germany would be more important for the proletariat of Europe and America than was the success of the Russian Revolution six years ago. The victory of the German proletariat would ensure the transference of the centre of World Revolution from Moscow to Berlin".⁴³

The RKP(b) Plenum of 23 September adopted Zinoviev's theses on "The future German revolution and the tasks of the RKP(b)". They stated that the future German revolution would bring closer the success of

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 463.

³⁹ Lev Trockij, "Doklad na zasedanii komunističeskoj frakcii X s'ezd Sovetov s učastiem bespartijnyh delegatov" (28 dekabnja 1922 g.), in Trockij, *Pjat' let Kominternu*, p. 556.

⁴⁰ Nikolaj Bucharin, "Otčet rossijskogo predstavitelstva v Ispolkome Kominternu" (20 aprilja 1923 g.), in *Dvenadcatyj s'ezd RKP(b) 17-25 aprilja 1923 g. Stenografičeskij otčet* (Moscow, 1968), p. 302.

⁴¹ Friedrich Firsov, "K voprosu o taktike edinogo fronta v 1921-1924 gg.", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1987, no. 10, p. 117.

⁴² Grigorij Zinov'ev, "Položenie v Germanii i naši zadači", RCChIDNI, 324/1/126, sheets 1, 2.

⁴³ Josef Stalin, "Redaktoru 'Die Rote Fahne'", *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 218, 10 October 1923.

revolution in Europe and consequently in the whole world. closer. The main slogan of the Bolsheviks, that of "World Revolution", was at last taking on a definite shape. The theses confirmed that the success of the proletarian revolution would mean the triumph of Bolshevism on an unprecedented scale. It was also stressed that the Bolsheviks had expected the World Revolution to prevail after the revolution in Russia but capitalism turned out to be stronger and more flexible than they thought it was. The theses also said that in spite of getting the actual date of the World Revolution wrong, the main forecast was right, and the main perspective to which Bolshevism was devoted was correct.

The fetish of World Revolution was detrimental to a realistic approach to the complicated and contradictory situation as it really was.

Leaders of the ECCI, representatives of the RKP(b) Central Committee, of the KPD and of some other Communist parties held a meeting in Moscow from 21 September - 5 October 1923. Decisions taken at the meeting urged the KPD to prepare the uprising and work out a plan for the revolution. At the meeting Zinoviev's and Stalin's plan to speed up the workers' estrangement from the Social Democrats was approved. Trotsky demanded that the date of the uprising be set and preparations be started immediately. At the meeting in Trotsky's office attended by Heinrich Brandler, Radek, Ernst Thälmann, Zinoviev, Hugo Eberlein and Trotsky, the uprising was scheduled for 9 November 1923, although it was specified that "the final decision would be taken in Germany".⁴⁴

The ECCI delegation including Radek, Georgi Piatakov and Vassily Shmidt was sent to Germany with the task of giving immediate assistance to the KPD. A group of military officers headed by Józef Unszlicht was also sent there.

Later on Zinoviev put all the blame on the KPD leadership, particularly on Brandler, and accused them of misinforming the Comintern on the actual situation in Germany. However, the leftist and sectarian tendencies of Zinoviev and Stalin influenced the ECCI's decisions on preparing for the uprising in Germany and setting the KPD the task of organizing soviets as organs of proletarian dictatorship. These leaders could not assess the actual situation in Germany and guided by the doctrine of the inevitability of World Revolution they imposed their subjective assumptions upon the Comintern. The negative effects of its centralized structure and of its being predominated by a single party were also telling on the Comintern.

However, events in Germany prompted a different conclusion. The trend towards centralization was intensified and slogans for a transition period adopted at the Fourth Congress were rejected. The Social Democrats were blamed for the defeat of the German proletariat. In January 1924 Zinoviev and Stalin, and after them the ECCI Presidium, demanded the unleashing of a "mortal struggle" against Social Democracy as a "trend of fascism". Left-wing Social Democracy was referred to as the main enemy.⁴⁵

3. The Comintern and the Struggle within the VKP(b)

The autumn of 1923 represented a borderline in the history of both the Comintern and the RKP(b). The latter, finding itself in a situation where expectation of the World Revolution was not justified, had to transform its policy. Bukharin and Stalin reached the conclusion that it was possible to construct socialism in a single country and justified this with references to Lenin's words. Because of his illness Lenin could no longer participate in active work. After his death an especially fierce struggle for power was launched in the party's leading bodies. It influenced to a major extent the situation within the Comintern.

The support of the Comintern, which in the eyes of the Soviet working people symbolized the international labour movement, had particular significance in this struggle. The ECCI's support would allow one of the conflicting sides to insist that it represented the RKP(b), the whole of the Communist movement and the world proletariat.

Mutual accusations of political errors that doomed the Comintern and the Communist movement to defeat were widely used in this struggle. Trotsky, and later on the opposition of Trotsky-Zinoviev, accused Stalin's majority in the VKP(b) Central Committee of employing an opportunistic policy, of turning the Comintern and the Communist parties into bureaucratic organizations, of manipulating them and making them an

⁴⁴ Friedrich Firsov, "K voprosu o taktike edinogo fronta", p. 120.

⁴⁵ Sobolev, *et al.*, *Kommunističeskij Internacional*, p. 214; Undasynov and Jachimovič, *Kommunističeskij internacional*, pp. 118-134.

instrument of the foreign policy of the USSR.⁴⁶

In his turn Stalin, in pursuing this struggle, was striving for personal power over the party and the country. He accused the opposition of either leftism and adventurism or of opportunism and "liquidatorship". He referred to the bugbear of "Trotskyism" by which he meant an ideology hostile to Leninism, allegedly imposed on the VKP(b) and the Communist movement. After defeating the opposition, Stalin described Trotskyism as "the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie fighting against the Soviet power and against the construction of Socialism in the USSR".⁴⁷ He resorted to this version in order to prepare the way for the terror he unleashed on the country and to camouflage it from public opinion abroad.

The Comintern was an instrument in Stalin's political struggle, a lever for political dictatorship, while the Communist parties regarded it as the heart of internationalism and revolutionary fraternity. This contradiction determined the subsequent tragedy of the Comintern.

Since they considered the Soviet state as the stronghold of World Revolution, the Communist parties felt obliged to clearly and unequivocally support the policy of the Bolsheviks, to express solidarity with the party's leaders and to vote approval for the policy of socialist construction. All the actions of the VKP(b) were assessed as implementations of the only true Marxist-Leninist policy. The resolution of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern held in June-July 1924 stressed that "the Russian Communist Party was the leading force in creating the Communist International and it still is one of the main factors predetermining the progress of the international Communist movement".⁴⁸

The Comintern fully approved any decision or any action by the VKP(b) leaders. Accordingly, those who were in opposition to the VKP(b) leadership were branded as deviationists, break-aways and fractionists. Lack of information, very often replaced by misinformation, also told on the Comintern.

Comintern and Communist party attitudes to what was happening within the USSR were one-sided and uncritical. The very real problems confronting the Soviet state were viewed as being caused only by backwardness and by the resistance put up by the class enemy. Neither the Comintern nor its sections saw the distortion of the social and political system in the post-Lenin years or the formation of the bureaucratic command-and-directive system of management, the regime of "barracks socialism" that shaped Stalin's totalitarian dictatorship.

Thus the Comintern and its sections, being advocates and propagandists of the October Revolution's ideas and of socialist construction in the USSR, fulfilled the function of an ideological cover-up for the Stalinist regime. Where the working people in the country were concerned, it sanctioned the policy of the VKP(b) in the name of the international proletariat.

The leading role of the VKP(b) in the Comintern predetermined the latter's attitude towards political controversy within the party. It was also based on the apprehension that a split would increase the threat of a counter-revolution. The state of relations within the party's leading bodies, the fight for power and the internal party regime were overshadowed by the ideological and political struggle and did not attract proper attention.

The trend towards further centralization was intensified. The Fifth Congress adopted new Comintern Rules, prepared by Ossip Piatnitsky. According to these the ECCI acquired the function of control and inspection of the parties and could change or cancel decisions by the parties' leading bodies and congresses. In fact, the ECCI representatives turned in fact into controllers of the activities of the parties' leading bodies.

The Congress recommended the "Bolshevization" of the Comintern's sections. Its aim was to enhance the organization and the fighting efficiency of the parties. The Congress's theses said that "Bolshevization of the parties implies the application to our sections of those features of Russian Bolshevism that have international significance".⁴⁹ The trend towards centralization within the Comintern, and the leading part played by a single party in it, inevitably led to the situation in which all the Comintern's sections would follow one and the same

⁴⁶ Ju. Fel'stinskij (ed.), *Kommunističeskaja opozicija v SSSR 1923-1927. Iz archiva L'va Trockogo v četyrech tomach*, Vol. 1 (1923-1926), Vol. 2 (1926-1927), Vol. 3 (1927; aprel'-ijul'), Vol. 4 (1927; ijul'-dekabr'), (Benson, 1988); Alexandr Vatlin, *Trockij i Komintern* (Moscow, 1991), p. 98.

⁴⁷ Josef Stalin, ["O nekotorych voprosach istorii bol'shevizma. Pis'mo v redakciju žurnala 'Proletarskaja Revoljucija'"], in J. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 1ss. (Moscow, 1952ss.), 13, p. ...

⁴⁸ "Russkij vopros", in Kun, *Kommunističeskij Internacional v dokumentach*, p. 462.

⁴⁹ "Voprosy taktiki. Tezisy", *ibid.*, p. 412.

pattern. With Stalinism dominating the party, the very interpretation of the Bolsheviks' experience would be of a narrow and one-sided character. Bolshevization was a means of imposing Stalinism on the Communist movement.

At the Fifth Congress the VKP(b) delegation in the ECCI's leadership was enlarged. Zinoviev, Bukharin, Stalin, Kamenev and Aleksei Rykov were elected members, and Sokolnikov, Trotsky, Lozovsky and Piatnitsky became candidates. Besides this, Dmitry Manuilsky and Mikhail Frunze were elected to the ECCI to represent the Ukrainian delegation. The ECCI Presidium now included Zinoviev, Bukharin, Stalin and Manuilsky as members and Kamenev, Rykov, Sokolnikov and Frunze as candidates. Owing to controversy within the VKP (b) at the VIIth Enlarged ECCI Plenum the post of Comintern Chairman was abolished and Zinoviev was removed from the ECCI. In September 1927 Trotsky was also expelled from the ECCI.

At the Sixth Congress (July - August 1928) Bukharin, Stalin, Viatcheslav Molotov, Rykov, Manuilsky, Piatnitsky, Lozovsky, Nikolai Skrypnik and Rafael Khitarov were elected to the ECCI, Varvara Moirova, Sergei Gusev, Serafima Gopner, Emelian Jaroslavsky became candidates. Bukharin, Stalin, Molotov, Manuilsky, Piatnitsky and Lozovsky joined the ECCI Presidium.

After Zinoviev, Bukharin headed the ECCI as a member of its collective organ - the Politsecretariat - set up instead of the post of Chairman. He played a most important part in preparing for the Congress. He wrote the draft of the Comintern's Programme (the subsequent co-author was Stalin); he elaborated the theses on the international situation and on the Comintern's tasks. At the Congress he reported on the ECCI's activities and the Comintern's programme. Other members of the VKP(b) delegation also made reports: Manuilsky and the Hungarian Communist Eugene Varga on the situation in the USSR and in the VKP(b), Piatnitsky on the Rules of the Comintern.

By that time Stalin had launched a campaign against Bukharin and his supporters in the VKP(b) leadership. Rumours were spread around that Bukharin would soon be replaced and he was already isolated at the Congress. At the Xth ECCI Plenum Bukharin was removed from the ECCI on the pretext that he attracted all the right-wing elements. During the next four years the ECCI was headed by Manuilsky and Piatnitsky.

4. Stalin's Dictatorship in the Comintern

As a rule the VKP(b) delegation met on the eve of any meeting of the Comintern's leading bodies and discussed and elaborated its standpoints, sometimes also preparing drafts of future ECCI resolutions. The most important issues were discussed at the VKP(b) Politbureau and in its commissions, then the VKP(b) delegation would inform the ECCI of decisions taken and the latter would approve them. The Decisions to remove Zinoviev and later Bukharin from the Comintern's leadership were taken at the VKP(b) Plenums.

In the first years of the Comintern's activities, issues connected with the policy of the RKP(b) were discussed at the Congresses and at the ECCI Plenums, and the party's representatives sometimes had to defend the party's standpoint. However, after the Sixth Congress reports on the situation in the VKP(b) were purely informative and discussions, if any, were vindictory. Any critical statement addressed to the VKP(b) was regarded as a retreat from the Comintern's policy. The Communist parties and their leaders' attitude towards the VKP(b) became a criterion of their revolutionary convictions, devotion to internationalism and class consciousness.

In December 1923 the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party voiced a protest against the methods of party work in the RKP(b) and against Trotsky's removal from its leadership. The RKP(b) Central Committee, and after it the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, regarded this as a manifestation of anti-Bolshevism. Stalin accused the Polish party leaders of representing "the Polish branch of the opportunist opposition within the R.C.P.(B)."⁵⁰ They were removed from the Polish party's Central Committee.

After the Fifth Congress Stalin started paying more attention to the Comintern. He took part in the meetings of the VKP(b) delegation to the ECCI and to the ECCI Commissions, especially when they dealt with party organization and with controversies within the parties. Stalin repeatedly emphasized the right and the duty of the Comintern to interfere in all parties' internal affairs.

⁵⁰ J. Stalin, "The Communist Party of Poland. Speech Delivered at a Meeting of the Polish Commission of the Comintern, July 3, 1924", in Stalin, *Works*, 6, p. 278.

According to Stalin, the party was "an order of swordbearers",⁵¹ a monolithic organization in which strict obedience was owed by the lower-ranking bodies to the higher-ranking. The latter had absolute power. Their instructions were to be carried out unconditionally. Stalin insisted that those who did not agree with the leaders' guidelines were to be "cut off" from the party. He assumed that relations between the leading bodies and rank-and-file members should be built upon fear and obedience, that party members were small screws in the impersonal party mechanism.⁵² As for the Communist Party itself, Stalin viewed it as a command-and-directive force in the labour movement, exercising control over the workers' mass organizations.

Stalinism was supported by the left-wing trends within the Communist movement. The leftists, full of "revolutionary impatience", continued to regard violence as a method of resolving problems. They tended towards simplification in the analysis of any given situation and always tried to find a definite culprit for any failure or defeat, alleging that his or her removal would open the way to success. The fact that Stalin's instructions became Comintern directives also contributed to the growth of leftist trends in the Communist movement.

The Comintern's analysis of the situation attempted to assess it as though World Revolution were drawing closer. Even the Fifth Congress ignored the fact of the stabilization of capitalism. It was admitted only at the Vth ECCI Plenum, which stated that "partial stabilization of the capitalist economy" had taken place.⁵³ But when speaking about this process both Stalin and other leaders of the Comintern called this stabilization temporary, partial, unstable and flabby. Stalin stressed that stabilization under capitalism, "while temporarily strengthening capital, at the same time inevitably leads to the aggravation of the contradictions of capitalism", that it "signifies the creation of conditions that lead to the defeat of capitalism".⁵⁴

Whereas Trotsky and Zinoviev assessed the general strike of 1926 in Britain as the end of the period of stabilization and the approach of the revolution, Stalin did not agree with the opposition but stated that the strike "signalled the new offensive of capital for the future and further revolutionizing of the working masses in Europe".⁵⁵

From the summer of 1927 Stalin insisted that the threat of war against the USSR had become "real and actual".⁵⁶ This interpretation fitted in with his political aims, enabling him to raise the issue of protection of the USSR and to label the opposition as defeatists trying to weaken the party and the country's defence and to split the Comintern apart in the face of the military threat.

In December 1927 Stalin concluded that "Europe is entering a period of new revolutionary upsurge".⁵⁷ This statement played an important part in the "left turn" of the Comintern in late 1927/early 1928. The leftist tendencies were intensified by Bukharin's call for "class against class" tactics. According to this, the main blow

⁵¹ Cf. J. Stalin, "The Political Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists. Synopsis of a Pamphlet", in Stalin, *Works*, 5, p. 73.

⁵² Cf. J. Stalin, "A Letter to Comrade Me-rt", 28 February 1925, in Stalin, *Works*, 7, pp. 42ss.

⁵³ Grigorij Zinov'ev, "Otčet Ispolkoma. Meždunarodnyje perspektivy i bol'shevizacija kompartij" (25 marta 1925 g.), in *Rasširenyj plenum Ispolkoma Kommunističeskogo Internacionala (21 marta - 6 aprilja 1925 g.). Stenografičeskij otčet* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1925), pp. 36-39.

⁵⁴ J. Stalin, "The Results of the Work of the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.). Report Delivered at a Meeting of the Active of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P.(B.), May 9, 1925", in Stalin, *Works*, 7, pp. 96, 101.

⁵⁵ F.I. Firsov, "Stalin i Komintern", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1989, nos. 8 and 9, no. 8, p. 18.

⁵⁶ J. Stalin, "Notes on Contemporary Themes", in Stalin, *Works*, 9, p. 328.

⁵⁷ J. Stalin, "Political Report of the Central Committee", December 3 [1927], in Stalin, *Works*, 10, p. 293.

was to be directed against Social Democracy as "a bourgeois labour party".⁵⁸ In the summer of 1928 Stalin stated that Social Democracy was "capitalism's main support among the working class in preparing for new wars and intervention".⁵⁹

In order to launch an attack on Bukharin, Stalin resorted to leftist claims that Social Democracy was preparing an anti-Soviet war and that the Communist movement was mainly threatened by its right-wing. Bukharin was called the leader of the "right-wing" opposition in the VKP(b) and in the Comintern. Stalin urged that the main blow should be aimed at Social Democracy, which he called "Social Fascism", deeming it a form of Fascism in the countries with strong Social-Democratic parties.⁶⁰ These claims were disastrous for the international labour movement.

The Comintern and the Communist parties were changed by several waves of purges. As a rule controversial problems were resolved by "cutting off" from the Communist movement persons who disagreed with Stalin's views. Debates now took the form of ideological battles leading to defeat. Those who criticized anything in the USSR were immediately called renegades and enemies of the USSR and the Communist movement. Stalin, personally and through Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich and Andrei Zdanov, controlled the most important sectors of the Comintern's activities. ECCI leaders were compelled to check their activities with Stalin and to obtain his sanction for all important decisions.

All this led to excessive leadership centralization, dogmatism, unequivocal obedience and passive waiting for the centre's directives. It also meant that the working out of effective measures for the struggle was delayed.⁶¹ In the spring of 1928 Clara Zetkin stated bitterly that "from a living political body the Comintern has turned into a dead mechanism capable only of swallowing orders in Russian and regurgitating them in different languages. This mechanism has reduced the great international and historical value of the Russian revolution to the rules of the Pickwick club".⁶²

In these circumstances revolutionary phrase-mongering became wide-spread. During the years of the world economic crisis the Comintern, on the basis of Stalin's thesis, analyzed the situation to take into account a new round of revolutions and wars. The offensive mounted by the forces of reaction and Fascism and the renewed growth of the danger of war all emphasized the importance of the anti-Fascist and democratic struggle in general. However, the Comintern set its course for socialist revolution, attempting to anticipate the Fascist offensive. The anti-Fascist struggle was identified with the struggle against the capitalist order, and the main blow was aimed at Social Democracy. Manuilsky admitted in his speech on 16 June 1934: "According to our directives, Social Democracy was our main enemy. The trouble was that, ignoring the struggle against Fascism, we concentrated our fire on Social Democracy and assumed that by fighting Social Democracy we fought against Fascism".⁶³

However, the work of the Comintern and its apparatus, though influenced by Stalin's directives, was generally determined by the practical needs of the Communist parties arising from the situations in the various countries and in the Communist movement. Both the parties and the Comintern tried to pay attention to the

⁵⁸ Friedrich Firsov, "N.I. Bucharin v Kominterne", in N.V. Žuravlev and A.N. Solopov (eds.), *Bucharin: čelovek, politik, učenyj* (Moscow, 1990), p. 188; Alexander Vatlin, "N.I. Bucharin i 'levyj povorot' Komintern", *ibid.*, pp. 201-222; Undasynov and Jachimovič, *Kommunističeskij Internacional*, pp. 140-150.

⁵⁹ J. Stalin, "Results of the July Plenum of the C.C., C.P.S.U. (B.). Report to a Meeting of the Active of the Leningrad Organisation of the C.P.S.U. (B.), July 13, 1928", in Stalin, *Works*, 11, p. 210.

⁶⁰ Friedrich Firsov, "Stalin i problemy politiki edinogo fronta", in Achmet Iskenderov and Nikolaj Popov (eds.), *Otkryvaja novye stranici... Meždunarodnije voprosy: sobytija i ljudi* (Moscow, 1989), pp. 356-362.

⁶¹ Friedrich Firsov and Kirill Širinja, "Komintern: opyt dejatel'nosti", *Kommunist*, 1988, no. 10, p. 112; Krivoguz, "Sud'ba i nasledie Komintern", p. 11.

⁶² Letter from Clara Zetkin to Jules Humbert-Droz, March 29, 1929, in Siegfried Bahne, et al., (eds.), *Archives de Jules Humbert-Droz, III: Les partis communistes et l'Internationale Communiste dans les années 1928-1932* (Dordrecht, etc., 1988), p. 165.

⁶³ Friedrich Firsov, "Vystuplenije v diskussii o tridcatykh godach", in Dmitry Volkogonov (ed.), *30-e gody, vzgljad na šegodnja* (Moscow, 1990), p. 61.

interests and needs of the working people and attempted to overcome various obstacles connected with Stalinist dogmas and revolutionary phrase-mongering. The parties worked out, and tried to pursue, a policy that would be in accord with the principles of the Communist movement and the tasks produced by the situation. The latter prompted the strategy of anti-Fascist unity initiated by the Communist parties and the leadership of the Comintern, which, in the spring of 1934, was headed by Georgi Dimitrov.⁶⁴

5. The Seventh Congress of the Comintern

Stalin had to take into account the international situation and the growth of the anti-Fascist movement. Since the Nazi dictatorship in Germany meant an increase in the danger of a new war, Stalin considered it necessary to adopt political measures to ensure peace. Though he did not change his views on Social Democracy, he was compelled to agree with changes in Comintern policy. Georgi Dimitrov was supported by most of the Communist party leaders capable of creative thought and he tried insistently, though cautiously, to convince Stalin of the necessity of rejecting sectarian ideas and refraining from bureaucratic methods in the Comintern's work.⁶⁵ The VKP(b) Political Bureau commissioned its ECCI delegation to participate in the internal restructuring of the Comintern and to urge the parties to pursue independent policies and develop initiative.⁶⁶

This line was developed in decisions made at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern (July - August 1935), which stressed that both the role of the parties and their responsibility were growing and that it was necessary to concentrate efficient management within the sections. The Congress called on Communists to organize United Workers' and Popular Fronts. These decisions were a sign of the growth of maturity in the Communist movement and showed that the Comintern was attempting to regain its role as a collective body. At the same time, although the Congress de facto rejected some Stalinist dogmas, it was held at a time when the cult of Stalin was reaching its climax and was in a way "hallowed" by his name.

The Congress adopted a resolution on the report "On the results of Socialist construction in the USSR", written by Manuilsky and corrected by Stalin. This resolution announced the victory of Socialism in the Soviet state.⁶⁷ By that time, owing to strenuous labour by the people, the country had actually become a strong political and economic power. Many people abroad, especially Communists, regarded the USSR as a stronghold of the struggle against Fascism. The Congress called for support for the Soviet Union by any means possible and for methods of fighting against the "enemies of the USSR". Propagating "the road to Socialism" as shown by the "living example" of the USSR, the Congress ignored the fact that instead of a majestic building called "Socialism", a gigantic pyramid of Stalinist terror was being constructed. The Congress and the Communist movement at large aided and abetted the embellishment of the regime's facade.

By approving of the Comintern's decisions on political and organizational activities Stalin made sure of securing control over the ECCI. He personally made the list of VKP (b) members to sit on the ECCI's official bodies. It included Manuilsky, Stalin and Mikhail Trilisser (a former OGPU official, who worked in the Comintern under the name of Moskvín) as members of the ECCI's Presidium, Manuilsky, Stalin, Zdanov, Nikolai Ezhov and Trilisser as members and Gopner, Lozovsky, Nikolai Popov, Vassily Tchemodanov as candidates.

Trilisser's responsibility on the ECCI was for the personnel department and so he had to carry out purges directed against the personnel. However, his own fate was no different. In 1938 he was arrested and shot.

⁶⁴ B.M. Lejbzon and K.K. Širinja, *Povorot v politika Kominternna (K 30-letiju VII kongressa)* (Moscow, 1965), pp. 34-100; Kirill Širinja, *Strategija i taktika Kominternna v bor'be protiv fašizma i vojny (1934-1939 gg.)* (Moscow, 1979), pp. 15-62.

⁶⁵ Dobrin Mičev, "Georgi Dimitrov i podgotovkata na Sedmija kongres na Kommunističeskija internacional (mart-juli 1934 g.)", *Vekove* (Sofia), 1972, no. 2, pp. 30-42.

⁶⁶ B.M. Lejbzon and K.K. Širinja, *Povorot v politike Kominternna. Istoričeskoe značenie VII kongressa Kominternna* (Moscow, 1975), p. 99.

⁶⁷ "Ob itogach socialističeskogo stroitel'stva v SSSR", in K.K. Širinja, et al., (eds.), *VII Kongress Kommunističeskogo Internacionala i bor'ba protiv fašizma i vojny. (Sbornik dokumentov.)* (Moscow, 1975), pp. 397, 396.

6. The Comintern as a cover-up for Stalin's politics

Contradictions in the Congresses' resolutions manifested themselves in the Comintern's subsequent activities. The leaders of the Comintern promoted a policy that was aimed at developing an anti-Fascist and anti-war movement and also at unifying all democratic forces and maintaining the independence of all the Communist parties. They started a campaign of solidarity with Spain⁶⁸ and with the peoples of Ethiopia and China. At the same time they obediently followed Stalin's instructions.

At this period Stalin's control over the ECCI was less strict than it had been. He kept his eye on the situation in Spain, France and China, but his attention was focused on the Comintern's attitude towards events in the USSR. The leaders of the Comintern were compelled to give public support to false trials and to repeat Stalin's allegations about Trotskyist-Bukharinist conspiracies. After the trial concerning the so-called Trotskyist Centre, Stalin spoke to Dimitrov on 11 February 1937. He demanded that the ECCI's letter to the Communist parties should stress that those convicted had fought against Lenin and that their activities had been aimed at preparing the defeat of the Soviet Union in the coming war. Stalin rejected the draft of the ECCI's resolution on the trial, calling it nonsense, and said threateningly: "All of you in the Comintern support our enemies".⁶⁹

Stalin and Ezhov made Dimitrov summon Comintern and Communist Party leaders to Moscow where usually arrest, torture and the death sentence awaited them. On 11 November Stalin told Dimitrov: "Trotskyists should be chased, shot down, exterminated. They are world provocateurs, the worst agents of Fascism".⁷⁰ The Comintern's prestige and influence in the labour movement were exploited to cover up Stalin's crimes.

The wave of terror unleashed by Stalin now engulfed the Comintern and its officials, foreign Communists and political emigrants who lived in the USSR.⁷¹ According to data published by the KGB, activists from 31 Communist parties became the victims of purges.⁷²

A letter from Varga to Stalin on 28 March 1928 conveys the atmosphere of the time and the feelings of political emigrants: "Those who are free, starting with the Comintern's employees and including members of the ECCI Secretariat, are completely demoralised and discouraged because of the mass arrests. Demoralisation results from their absolute helplessness in affairs connected with the arrests of political emigrants [...]. Many foreigners get their things ready every night expecting the likelihood of arrest. Many have become half-crazy with constant fear and cannot work".⁷³

On 2 December 1937 Stalin ordered the dissolution of the Communist party of Poland.⁷⁴ Arrests among Polish Communists had started back in the early thirties. The NKVD alleged that the party at that time was full of police spies and provocateurs and the Comintern accepted these allegations. Stalin shifted the responsibility for the dissolution of the party on to the ECCI, thus making the Comintern an accomplice in this secret action. It was made use of to justify politically one of the heinous crimes of the Stalinist reign of terror. This so undermined the Comintern that it could not re-attain its position. The ECCI leaders yielded to Stalin's pressure, setting at naught the Rules of the Comintern and the rights of the Communist parties. They sanctioned the dissolution of the Polish Communist Party by a resolution dated August 1938, after the party had actually already been dissolved.

⁶⁸ Marklen Mešerjakov, *Ispanskaja respublika i Komintern: Nacional'no-revoljucionnaja vojna ispanskogo naroda i politika Kommunističeskogo Internacionala (1936-1939 gg.)* (Moscow, 1981).

⁶⁹ Friedrich Firsov and Kirill Shirinja, "Komintern: vremja ispytanij", *Pravda*, no. 97, 7 April 1989.

⁷⁰ Anatolij Latyshev, "Tragedija Kominterna", in Iskenderov and Popov, *Otkryvaja novye stranici...*, pp. 403-409.

⁷¹ Evgenij Pirozkov, "I ešče o rehabilitacii", *Nedelja*, no. 20, 20 May 1990, p. 11.

⁷² "Mužestvo protiv bezzakonija. Dokumenty Archiva Kominterna o bor'be za spasenie kommunistov-internacionalistov ot stalinskich repressij", *Problemy mira i socializma*, 1989, no. 7, p. 90.

⁷³ Friedrich Firsov and Inessa Jazborovskaja, "Komintern i Kommunističeskaja partija Pol'si", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1988, no. 12, p. 59.

⁷⁴ "Komintern i sovecko-germanskij dogovor o nenapadenii", *Izvestija CK KPSS*, 1989, no. 12, p. 205.

In that tragic situation Dimitrov and some other Comintern leaders, including Wilhelm Pieck, Johann Kopenig and Palmiro Togliatti, tried to obtain discharges for the victims of Stalin's repressions. The Comintern's archives contain a great number of letters sent by Dimitrov to the NKVD, to the prosecutors' office and to the VKP(b) secretaries, as well as lists of prisoners whose discharge he sought. Sometimes, because of his intercession, certain cases were revised and prisoners were released.

Stalin used the Comintern as an instrument of his policy still more openly in connection with the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and the beginning of World War II. A resolution "On the anti-Soviet campaign concerning talks between the USSR and Germany" was adopted by the ECCI Secretariat on 22 August 1939, i.e. on the eve of the pact's being signed. It interpreted the pact as an action intended to frustrate plans of aggression against the USSR, to help the Baltic countries and to disunite the aggressors, thus maintaining peace. The stress laid on the necessity of fighting German Fascism and on the still existing possibility of signing a pact between the USSR, Great Britain and France, showed that the ECCI leaders did not foresee all the after-effects of this treaty.

The pact caused serious confusion within the Communist movement. However Dimitrov and Manuilsky wrote to Stalin on 27 August that the Communist parties "react properly to the feverish anti-Soviet campaign unleashed by the bourgeois and the Social-Democratic press properly".⁷⁵

When the war began, Stalin made the Comintern reject the guidelines of the Seventh Congress. He would not allow Fascism to be exposed as the initiator of war. During his meeting with Dimitrov on 7 September Stalin said that the division of capitalist countries into Fascist and Democratic had become meaningless. The implication was that the Comintern should direct its propaganda against imperialism in general. Stalin's directives led to the disappearance of even the term of "Fascism" from the Comintern's documents.

As a result, the Comintern's policy and the directives it sent to the parties did not relate to the complex and contradictory situation and sowed confusion in the practical policies of Communist parties trying to change the war into an anti-Fascist one. The Comintern's call for peace and against an imperialist war were purely abstract.

7. The Comintern Dissolved

In spite of Stalin's directives the Communist parties did not halt their struggle against Fascism. Anti-Fascism remained the main political guideline of the Communists, though, yielding to Stalin's pressure, the Comintern had to refrain from openly exposing Hitlerism. The Comintern's secret aid to parties participating in the Resistance movement caused Stalin anxiety. He strove to maintain friendly relations with Germany and probably thought that the Comintern was a hindrance to this. In April 1941 Stalin told Dimitrov to dissolve the Comintern.

This was prevented by Germany's attack on the USSR on 22 June. Under the circumstances, the Comintern leaders put all their effort into mobilizing the Communist parties and encouraging all anti-Fascists to struggle against Fascism and support the Soviet people. The policy of anti-Fascist unity was restored and developed. However, it turned out to be impossible to lead the activities of the various Communist parties during the war. The parties did not need it; they showed their maturity and their ability to organize the masses to resist Fascism. As for Stalin, in that period he came to the conclusion that the Comintern was an obstacle to relations with the allies of the anti-Hitler coalition. On 8 May 1943 Dimitrov and Manuilsky were summoned to Molotov where the decision was reached that it was necessary to dissolve the Comintern. The ECCI Presidium took a resolution on it on 10 June. Soon after that the Department of International Information of the VKP(b) Central Committee was set up. Its aims were to be in charge of anti-Fascist committees and underground broadcasting and to maintain relations with the Communist parties. Initially Alexander Sherbakov headed this Department, then he was replaced by Georgi Dimitrov.

Conclusion

In the post-October period the VKP(b) was the leading party of the Comintern. As such it participated in the formation and development of the Communist parties and deformation within the VKP(b) could not help influencing the Comintern and the Communist parties. The command-and-directive methods prevalent in the party

⁷⁵ Firsov, "Stalin i Komintern", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1989, no. 9, p. 18.

under Stalin's dictatorial rule were imposed on other parties. This led to a deformation of the policy and development of the Communist movement in general. It paralysed initiative, introduced conventional methods of party organization unsuitable to the historical conditions and the situations in the various countries and slowed down the independent development of the parties. The Comintern itself was distorted. Convened initially as a leading centre of the revolutionary proletarian struggle, it turned into the instrument of Stalin's foreign policy.

This inevitably led to conflicts between the developing Communist movement and the parties' attempts to respond to the real situation and to the Stalinist dogmas imposed on them. Stalinism meant the preservation of dogmatism and sectarianism. It prevented the parties from developing and made it difficult for them to understand that working people's social and class interests could not be secured without provision for the people's human and democratic needs within a broad popular democratic coalition.

TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİH ARAŞTIRMA
TÜSTAV