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ZINOVIEV: POPULIST LENINIST

> What we need to do is get to the point where the widest circles of the masses of the *narod* understand that a communist is not someone who wears a leather jacket and sneers at everybody (applause). . . . Any person in the *narod* – the most backward little old lady, a toiling peasant – who regards us as in league with the devil [even though] they haven't read the party program and are not going to read it, they're not interested in the Third International and we can't expect them to be – in their hearts they are more of a communist than the communist in a leather jacket who looks down his nose at them.
>
> Zinoviev, March 1919

> The worst thing that can happen to a revolutionary party is to lose its [revolutionary] perspective.
>
> Zinoviev, May 1925

In terms of historical reputation, G. E. Zinoviev undoubtedly would have the right to repeat the words of the old song: "I've been 'buked and I've been scorned'." No one seems to have a kind word for him. Among the many charges laid against him is intellectual and political inconsistency. Trotsky summed it up in a memorable wisecrack: "Luther said, Here I stand – I can do no other. Zinoviev says, Here I stand – but I can do otherwise."

Zinoviev was not in the least a systematic thinker who could state a coherent outlook in propositional form. On the other hand, he was an inspirational speaker who very often told stories – small anecdotes from daily life, large narratives about the revolution as a whole – in order to impress his audience. An assessment of the coherence and consistency of his outlook therefore requires a systematic survey of his many speeches during his time in the top leadership of the ruling Bolshevik party.

Using Zinoviev's speeches as basic material, this essay examines his outlook as revealed in two interconnected themes: the relationship of the party to the working class as a whole, and the battle Zinoviev thought was being waged for the soul of the peasantry. I have found a striking and demonstrable consistency in Zinoviev's outlook in the period 1918-1925, manifesting itself

in rhetoric, focus of attention, and policy preferences. The transition from so-called "war communism" to NEP did not lead to any fundamental changes in the way Zinoviev presented the basic Bolshevik message. In my view, Zinoviev's relatively populist version of Bolshevism has its attractive features. I am thus willing to join the small group of observers with something positive to say about Zinoviev (the only others I know in this select group are Anatoly Lunacharsky and Myron W. Hedlin).[1]

I should reassure my readers that I am not going to challenge the general impression that Zinoviev was far from *vozhd* material. On the contrary, my investigation has brought home to me his anti-charisma, his tactical errors, and his inability to present his views in organized fashion. I am not going to argue anything like "if only Zinoviev's views had been taken seriously. . . ." I take it for granted that his solutions to intractable problems were simplistic and would not have worked. This simplistic outlook was one reason – but not the only one! – for the political ineptitude that was revealed in the Bolshevik infighting of the 1920s.[2]

Two comments by Lunacharsky seem to me to hit the right note: he called Zinoviev a "person who had a profound understanding of the essence of Bolshevism" and one who was "romantically" devoted to the party.[3] I will present Zinoviev as someone who was under the spell of the Leninist drama of hegemony, but with a decided populist bent.

Lenin's drama had three basic characters: the proletarian vanguard, the hegemonic rivals, and the wavering classes. The best description of the vanguard is in Robert Tucker's classic article "Lenin's Bolshevism as a Culture in the Making." I will cite Tucker at length in order to give the Leninist context for Zinoviev's outlook:

> To understand Lenin's political concept in its totality, it is important to realize that he saw in his mind's eye not merely the militant organization of professional revolutionaries of which he spoke, but the party-led popular *movement* "of the entire people." The "dream" was by no means simply a party dream although it centered in the party as the vanguard of

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1. Lunacharsky wrote sympathetically about Zinoviev in 1920 (reprinted in Lunacharskii, Radek and Trotskii, *Siluety: politicheskie portrety* [Moscow: Gosizdat, 1991]). Myron Hedlin wrote two excellent articles on Zinoviev that appeared in the 1970s: "Grigorii Zinoviev: Myths of the Defeated," in *Reconsideration on the Russian Revolution,* ed. Ralph Carter Elwood (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1976) and "Zinoviev's Revolutionary Tactics in 1917," *Slavic Review* 34 (1975): 19-43.

2. For a recent discussion of Zinoviev's weakness as a political leader, see Alexis Pogorelskin, "Kamenev in Early NEP: The 12 Party Congress," in *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom Revisited: Essays in Honor of Robert O. Crummey* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2008).

3. *Siluety*, pp. 296, 298.

> conscious revolutionaries acting as teachers and organizers of a much larger mass following in the movement. The dream was a vision of an anti-state popular Russia raised up by propaganda and agitation as a vast army of fighters against the official Russia headed by the tsar; and of this other, popular Russia as an all-class *counter-community of the estranged*, a mass of people trained to revolutionary consciousness by its party tutors and dedicated to the goal of a revolution that would rid Russia of its "shame and curse," as Lenin called the autocracy.[4]

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To get the full dramatic structure of Lenin's outlook, we need to introduce two other characters. The first is the petty bourgeois with his or her "two souls," one leading toward proletarian socialism and the other toward capitalism; the conflict between these tendencies produces the key feature of the petty bourgeois, namely, wavering (*kolebanie*). The other character is the hegemonic rival, the alternative leadership trying to lead the waverers down the wrong path.

The word "populist" is used here in its American sense: someone who has genuine concern for the problems of ordinary people, who has a simplistic tendency to blame those problems on the machinations of elites, and who sees full democratization as the ultimate solution to all issues. We shall examine Zinoviev's message on three levels: the overall historical narrative or background story, the implied definition of specific stages of the Russian revolution, and the policy recommendations that flowed from his definition of the situation.

Party and class

Civil War (1919-1921)

We should start with Zinoviev's background story: what he thought was the *natural* course of events, the way things should go without disturbances, the story created by deep historical forces. According to this story, the party was in the vanguard not so much in the sense of a permanent officer corps but in the strict sense that it was the first to go where the rest of the working class would soon be going. Zinoviev assumed that the influence of the party would be steadily growing and that the proletarians and semi-proletarians who didn't join today would be joining tomorrow. A category essential to his outlook – the "nonparty" worker or peasant – could really be labeled as the "not-yet-party." At any one time, the bourgeoisie might have influence over a certain portion of the masses, but all in all there will be a steady movement away from bourgeois influence. This fundamental assumption is set out in a resolu-

4. Robert C. Tucker, *Political Culture and Leadership in Soviet Russia* (New York: Norton, 1987), p. 39.

tion Zinoviev drafted for the Comintern in 1920 that he often referred back to later with pride:

> Before the conquest of power and during the transition period, the Communist Party – given favorable circumstances – can make use of an undivided ideological and political influence on all proletarian and semi-proletarian strata of the population, but it cannot unite them organizationally in its own ranks. Only after the dictatorship of the proletariat has deprived the bourgeoisie of such mighty tools of influence as the press, the schools, parliament, the church, administrative machinery and so on – only after the decisive defeat of the bourgeois system has become evident to all – will *all or almost all workers begin to join the ranks of the Communist party*.[5]

Just as the party is the most coherent organizational expression of basic class interests, so the party program is just a more sophisticated expression of class instinct. It was good for the party to spend time on its program in 1919, because each party member "wants to have his own view on things, he wants to know how our world came to be, he needs an integral and thought-out world-view."[6] But knowledge of the program should not be a necessity for participation in the soviet system. Zinoviev wanted VTsIK to have fewer commissars and more representatives of the people: "Let peasants come to us from somewhere out on the Volga or from the Ukraine and other places – peasants who do not yet grasp all the inner secrets of communism, who know only the basics, that they are against the rich, that the land should belong to the peasants and not the *pomeshchik*, and so on."[7]

As the last citation shows, Zinoviev's background story led to an optimism that made him always come down on the side of expanding membership of the party and "enlisting" (*privlekat'*) "nonparty elements" into the soviets. He assured his party audience that expansion would not mean that "our party dissolves into fragments and stops consisting of a single whole."[8]

The party's expanding influence did not manifest itself primarily in passive assent but in active participation in government. This participation promised benefits for both state and population. For the population, it ultimately offered a cheap and transparent state apparatus: one of the key promises of

5. Text taken from Zinoviev's self-quotation in 1924; see *Trinadtsatyi s"ezd RKP(b): Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1963) (Zinoviev's emphasis).

6. Grigorii Zinoviev, "Ob itogakh VIII s''ezda RKP(b)," *Izvestiia TsK*, no. 8 (1989), pp. 187-91 (remarks of March 29, 1919 to a meeting of party *aktiv* in Petrograd).

7. *Ibid*.

8. *Ibid*., pp. 196-97.

the revolution. For the state, it offered the only long-term solution to inefficiency and bureaucratism. Thus the end result of the party's steadily expanding influence would be not only a party that embraced the entire working class, but the commune-state (*gosudarstvo-kommuna*).

We now turn to Zinoviev's analysis of what Mary McAuley has labeled "the wall": the barrier that seemed inevitably to grow up between the vanguard party and its constituency, much to the distress of the former.[9] Zinoviev himself used this imagery when he stated that even some party collectives in Petrograd "have been able to fence themselves off from the masses with a wall."[10] The wall also grew up within the party itself, leading to the 1920 crisis of the "lower-downs vs. the higher-ups" [*nizy i verkhi*].

Zinoviev's analysis of the wall cannot be understood without keeping in mind the background story I have just discussed. The wall was a betrayal of the vanguard's mission of leadership, so that "people look on these [party] collectives as the people running things [*nachal'stvo*] rather than looking on them as the advanced people."[11] Thus the expectations that arise from this story are what prompt Zinoviev's concern with the wall; they also form the basis of most of his solutions.

Based on work he had done before the war, Zinoviev had a ready-made and detailed model of the dangers of the wall in the German SDP.[12] He interpreted the SPD as an originally revolutionary party that unbeknownst to itself had allowed the leadership stratum to become a closed caste. The result was degeneration (*pererozhdenie*) of the party organism. This was a warning to the Communist party, which should not simply feel superior to other parties and ignore "the beam in its own eye." There was a definite possibility that it too would end up dominated by a "stratum of state-employed intellectuals, soviet *chinovniki*, soviet and party bureaucrats."[13]

Of course, Zinoviev denied that the wall was inherent in the soviet system as such (witness his speech at the 8th Congress of Soviets in 1920), but he did analyze some of the deeper causes of the phenomenon. (In reading over Zinoviev's analysis of the situation in 1919 and 1920, keep in mind the standard stereotype according to which the Bolsheviks were then in the grip of an

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9. Mary McAuley, *Bread and Justice: State and Society in Petrograd, 1917-1922* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991), p. 402. The last two chapters of the book and McAuley's conclusion contain an insightful analysis of the phenomenon of the wall. For a discussion of differing Bolshevik responses to the wall in 1920, see Lars T. Lih, "Vlast from the Past," *Left History*, 6, no. 2 (1999): 29-52.

10. *Vos'moi s"ezd RKP(b): Protokoly* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1959), p. 294.

11. *Ibid.*

12. See Zinoviev, "The Social Roots of Opportunism," in John Riddell, ed., *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International* (New York: Monad Press, 1984), pp. 476-95.

13. *Vos'moi s"ezd RKP(b)*, pp. 279-80.

euphoric ideology of "war communism" that led them to believe that socialism was just around the corner.)

One set of reasons arose from the fundamental fact that the party was now in power and had the responsibility of administering a vast state. If you were in your office administering a department, or off on a *komandirovka* in the provinces, you were physically unable to maintain a living link with the workers in the factory.

Another set of reasons was the sacrifices caused by the war and the *razrukha*. What kind of communist paradise could there be if Russia had to be looted in order to serve the front?[14] No wonder that political life in the soviets died away. Poverty led to strict prioritizing and this is turn was the underlying reason for *glavkokratiia* (rule by *glavki*, the boards that ran the highly centralized industrial sector). The party also had to be on a war footing, with strict centralization, which meant that practices such as *naznachenstvo* (appointment from above) and *perebroska sil* (centralized distribution of scarce party forces) had to be tolerated.

Another war-related factor was the need to deny political freedoms. Zinoviev affirmed the necessity for this denial, but he leaves the impression that it was anomalous and he looked forward to its gradual disappearance.[15] At the 8th party congress in 1919, he noted that in practice a much wider group had been deprived of electoral rights than the Soviet Constitution itself had mandated. The Bolsheviks should strive to extend electoral rights (when circumstances permitted) instead of waiting for the Mensheviks and the SRs to get the credit.[16]

Another fundamental reason for the appearance of the wall was the cultural gap between the leadership of the party and the mass membership. This led to reliance on *spetsy*, the so-called "bourgeois specialists" – a reliance that was not only bad in itself, but threatened an infectious degeneration on the part of the communists who worked with them. Attempts by the workers simply to replace the *spetsy* created chaos in government, as the workers "get tangled up in the state *apparat* in the same way that a child will sometimes get tangled up in the coat of his father."[17]

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14. G. Zinoviev, *Na poroge novoi epokhi: kommunisty i bespartiinye* (Petrograd: Gosizdat, 1921) (speech given to non-party conference in April 1921).

15. It should be recalled that Zinoviev's dispute with Lenin in October 1917 was fundamentally over the issue of a coalition government, as shown by Myron Redlin, "Zinoviev's Revolutionary Tactics in 1917."

16. *Vos'moi s"ezd RKP(b)*, pp. 290-91.

17. "Pometki V. I. Lenina v tezisakh G. E. Zinov'eva," *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, no. 6 (1990), pp. 30-36. This image is taken from a draft Zinoviev wrote for presentation to the 8th Congress of Soviets in late 1920. Lenin was somewhat taken aback by it, writing "??" in the margin.

All of these factors together – the need to administer the state, the permanent emergency of war and *razrukha*, the monopoly of political power, the cultural gulf between leaders and followers – meant that too great a burden was placed on the thin layer of the party leadership. These leaders were spread too thin, bone-tired, and loaded down with an "accumulation of power" and offices that boded no good.[18]

The wall was like a dam that interrupted the otherwise natural flow of hearts and minds into the Bolshevik camp. There were bad consequences on both sides of the wall. On the leadership side, there were flagrant abuses of power and privilege. Among those mentioned by Zinoviev were cases of privileged distribution of expropriated goods such as apartments and an alarming case of incipient anti-Semitism in his home town of Elizavetgrad.[19] On the side of the workers, there was natural and justified anger at these abuses. One of the key promises of the revolution had been equality, and nothing did the party more harm than indifference and greed on the part of the party's leadership. "People do not realize that they deal a blow to our party with this sort of thing that no single whiteguard would be able to do."[20]

Even if there were no abuses, the wall led to resentment on the part of those left behind:

> The worker is jealous, he envies his fellow worker who is a member of a soviet, who dresses a little better, who eats a little better, and therefore he hates him worse than he earlier hated a *burzhui*. Yes, the worker has this trait. . . . If the worker doesn't see the one he elected for three months, he starts to regard him as part of 'them' [*chuzhoi*] and no longer as his representative."[21]

All of this led to a situation where alternative leaderships – the Bolsheviks' rivals for hegemony – had a greater chance. Zinoviev gave the example of one Federov at the Putilov factory: a "petty crook" that the workers trusted more than their own elected representatives, simply because he was always there in the factory.[22]

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18. *Vos'moi s"ezd RKP(b)*, pp. 279-80.

19. Zinoviev, "Ob itogakh," pp. 190, 197.

20. *Ibid*., p. 197.

21. *Ibid*., p. 195. This statement may give the impression that Zinoviev was justifying this inequality, but at the 9th party conference in September 1920 he discussed these same problems (position of a worker elite) at length and made clear that equality was a key value of the revolution (*Deviataia konferentsiia RKP(b): Protokoly* [Moscow: Gosizdat, 1972], pp. 145-52). In 1925, the party majority gave Zinoviev a very hard time when he insisted that equality was a key revolutionary value.

22. Zinoviev, "Ob itogakh," pp. 194-95.

If the main reason for the wall was objective conditions such as the war and material poverty, then ultimately the only way to break down the wall was to remove those underlying causes: end the war and improve productivity. At the beginning of 1920, Zinoviev looked forward to steady improvement in the standard of living, but this proved premature, since 1920 turned out to be another year of war and sacrifice. In the meantime, the party leaders had to be frank about the sacrifices they demanded and show that they realized the cost of victory.

Objective difficulties should not excuse inaction. The party's own incompetence – its "lack of skill, sloppiness, lack of culture and carelessness" – had greatly contributed to the problem.[23] The most important thing was to improve the workers' lot in some minimal way:

> Up here in Petrograd, in connection with the recent disturbances, it was established that at the Nevsky gate cloth supplies were rotting away, while at the same time women workers who needed clothes were driven to thievery, for which we persecuted them and created conflict after conflict. There's no greater shame for us than that these supposedly small – but in reality not small at all – "defects of the mechanism" are still around, that we still can't clothe a worker family or the mother of a worker, who would appreciate even the smallest improvement of their lot or some genuine love and concern for them.[24]

Another basic antidote for degeneration was workerization (*orabochenie*), or bringing the workers (and after them, the toilers in general) into the party and the soviets. The accent here is more on the workers' role in curing the party than spreading the party's influence. Workerization includes bringing workers into the party, nonparty toilers into the soviets, and turning Rabkrin into a tool for improving the state apparatus. It also meant bringing party members closer to the workers: Zinoviev persistently pushed measures to ensure that officials be regularly sent back to the floor.[25]

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23. See Zinoviev's speech at *Vos'moi s"ezd Sovetov rabochikh, krest'ianskikh, krasnoarmeiskikh i kazachnykh deputatov* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1921).

24. *Ibid*., pp. 283-84.

25. McAuley comments: "When faced with unrest, one response was to try to bring the government itself, physically, closer to the people; to create an immediate, personal link between leaders and led. . . . They repeatedly resorted to this strategy, described as one of restoring 'links with the non-party masses,' one which had its roots in old party practice (meetings were the place for gaining party support) and which fitted with notions of direct democracy, but one which was woefully inadequate as a means of connecting government and people" (*Bread and Justice,* p. 426).

In particular, effort should be made to revitalize the soviets and extend party influence within them.[26] The net of enlistment should be thrown wide: in Petrograd a somewhat successful effort had been made to enlist "craftsmen, laundresses, cabbies and lower-level civil servants" in order to free them "from the influence and hegemony of the petty and large-scale bourgeoisie."[27]

The converse of workerization was "re-registrations" or *chistki* (purges) to remove non-proletarian elements – or at least to impose a special check-up (*proverka*) on them. Finally, Zinoviev proposed some specific measures of abuse prevention: legal accountability of party members, a crackdown on favoritism and "protectionism," and wide preliminary discussion of state decrees.

NEP (1922-1925)

We now turn to the early NEP period when Zinoviev was the principal spokesman for Bolshevism. The basic story and the analysis of the wall remain more or less the same, but updated to take into account the new circumstances of peacetime.

Zinoviev now adds some elaborations to his basic story of expanding influence. In 1922, he provided more detail to the story prior to the revolution. He claimed that in the pre-revolutionary years the party had been able to create a "reservoir" of sympathizers who provided the basic core of new members after 1917.[28] In early 1921, the difficulties of the civil war reached their height and the party's relations with the workers reached their low point. In a speech given at the time, Zinoviev apologized for the guards at the facto~ gates, but asserted that it was the role of the purposive (*soznatel'nye*) leaders to make sure that waverings at a moment of intense strain not lead to disaster.[29]

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26. Zinoviev recalled the hopes that had been placed on the soviets in 1917: "the soviets as organs in which the creativity of the masses finds for itself the most free and most organized path, the soviets as organs that guaranteed a constant stream of fresh forces from below, the soviets as organs where the masses learned at one and the same time to legislate and to carry out their own laws" ("Pometki V. I. Lenina," p. 33). "Revitalization of the soviets" became central to Zinoviev's rhetoric in the mid-twenties.

27. *Vosmoi s"ezd*, pp. 290-91.

28. *XI s"ezd RKP(b): Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1961), pp. 380-85.

29. Zinoviev, *Na poroge novoi epokhi*. Zinoviev was evidently deeply shaken by this episode; I have found two other references to it, both emphasizing the depth of the alienation between party and class at this point in time, but also praising the Bolsheviks for remaining true to their "historical mission." See Zinoviev, "Zadachi nashei partii posle konchiny V. I. Lenina: Dva doklada," *Krasnaia Nov'*, 1924, p. 24 and Zinoviev, *Istoriia RKP(b)*, 4th ed. (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1924), p. 200.

After this low point (Zinoviev continues) things gradually became better. Although 1921-1923 were difficult years that allowed a growth in Social Democratic influence abroad, they also saw the beginning of economic revival and the end of the "declassing" of the scattered and demoralized working class. The "Lenin enrollment" of 1924 marked the completion of the years of recovery and the beginning of a new chapter in the story, one that would end with all members of the working class inside the party.

The role of Cassandra is no longer played by the warning example of the SPD's degeneration, but rather by what Zinoviev calls the "clever foe" (*umnyi vrag*): Russian émigrés who were looking forward to the party's degeneration. The clever foe was a basic rhetorical device for Zinoviev: he does not just refer to such writers in passing, but gives very extensive citations from their articles and indeed often frames his presentation around them. Among the émigrés used in this way were Pavel Miliukov, David Dalin, Fëdor Dan, Vladimir Nabokov (the father of the novelist), and Nikolai Ustrialov. It almost seems as if Zinoviev is engaged in an inner polemic with these intelligentsia critics.

The wall that had grown up between party and class still existed, and the basic reason was still the clash between the responsibilities of power and the party's self-image as leader of the oppressed. On the one hand, the party member was told to "learn to trade," to work closely with specialists, and to accept the need for inequality; on the other hand, he was told to be to a representative of the class that was "recently oppressed and which still today is economically the most downtrodden."[30] This dilemma was not unique to NEP: "The danger of degeneration of the social nucleus is real, we talked about this danger in 1919 and in 1921. We are obliged to repeat it, especially under NEP, with an even heavier accent."[31]

The economic collapse was thankfully a problem that was gradually receding into the past: problems such as unemployment remained, but nothing like the crises of the recent past.[32] The revival of the economy presented a new challenge: handling the demands for political activity that were sure to come both from nonparty elements (to be encouraged) and the new bourgeoisie (to be discouraged).[33]

Zinoviev was adamant that there would be no "political NEP," that is, no legalization of independent political activity. It is still possible to see hints

30. *XI s"ezd*, pp. 394-95.
31. *Ibid*., pp. 407-10.
32. *Trinadtsatyi s"ezd RKP(b): Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1963), pp. 85-87.
33. Zinoviev, *Zadachi nashei partii*, pp. 20-24.

that Zinoviev thought of this situation as an anomaly.[34] When he was accused in 1925 of advocacy of independent peasant councils, his fellow leaders seem to find the charge plausible.

In any event, Zinoviev went into detail about the dangers that resulted from the party's "legal monopoly." It was not so much open careerism that was the problem, since careerists could be removed with the relatively blunt instrument of the *chistka*. It was rather the mass, elemental phenomenon of the influence of unprepared party members, especially those from the Red Army. Zinoviev's discussion of this problem shows the tension in his outlook. He continues to praise the new recruits, point to their services, and emphasize their sincerity; it is not their fault that they do not know themselves and that they bring petty-bourgeois prejudices into the party.[35]

The party is therefore still faced with a cultural gap between leaders and rank-and-file. The low cultural level leads to endless squabbles (*skloki*), especially on the local level.[36] It is also undoubtedly true that decisions are often handed down ready-made from on high and that there is insufficient "free discussion" in the party. Besides objective reasons for this situation, Zinoviev granted that inertia from the days of the civil war was a factor.

Finally, the party's responsibility to give political direction to the state put a tremendous strain on its internal unity. In a speech of January 1924, Zinoviev listed ten different categories of party membership: factory workers, peasants, Red Army officers, students, civil servants, administrators of the local soviets, economic officials, trade union officials, "our merchants" and officials in the cooperatives.[37]

Some recently published archival material indicates that Zinoviev was genuinely worried about the possibility of the party turning into a "mandarin sect." On August 6, 1923, while vacationing in Kislovodsk, he wrote the following note to Stalin:

> In one of the protocols of the Politburo I saw a decision . . . to ease the enrollment of the children of high officials into secondary education.
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> In my opinion, this decision is a big mistake. It will only make the position of the children of high officials more difficult. And, most important, this kind of privilege closes the road to more gifted [applicants] and introduces an element of caste. This won't do.[38]

34. *XI s"ezd*, pp. 391-94.
35. *Ibid*., p. 390.
36. For a civil-war discussion of *skloki*, see *Vos'moi s"ezd RKP(b)*, p. 292.
37. Zinoviev, *Zadachi nashei partii*, p. 12.
38. *Izvestiia TsK*, no. 4 (1991), p. 202.

In relation to the other side of the wall, Zinoviev revealed in his speeches what appears to be genuine empathy with the difficulties of ordinary individuals and the reasons why they would not always be completely thrilled with the party. For example:

> I mentioned the Putilov factory [in Petrograd] because not so long ago I went through an unpleasant experience there: after the end of one rally a young lad about 17 years old with a gloomy expression said to his neighbor but obviously so that I would hear it: "Ekh, there's not one intelligent person in Soviet Russia" – clearly trying to say "and you aren't so smart yourself." When I started asking why he had such a gloomy, Schopenhauerian outlook on life already at age 17, it turned out that it wasn't from Schopenhauer at all, but because "I have three unemployed at home, I'm the only worker and I can't provide for them. And what I'm usually receiving in the way of culture is next to nothing." The figure of this young lad at the Putilov factory is not something exceptional and we have to pay attention to it. If we really have seventeen-year-olds in the factories that are subjected to such thoughts, then this is a serious danger.[39]

As we might expect, Zinoviev's basic wall-prevention measure was to end any "massophobia" (*massoboiazn'*) in the party and to accelerate workerization. An article dated February 15 192 – the beginning of the campaign for the Lenin enrollment – provides the fullest account of his hopes, and I will summarize it here.[40]

In the Comintern resolution from 1920 that I cited earlier, Zinoviev had looked forward to the time when the party would embrace almost the entire working class. After citing this resolution, Zinoviev exultantly claimed "We are now, in the USSR, in the most completely evident way, *beginning* to approach precisely this final phase. . . . The fragmentation, the de-classing of the proletariat is coming to an end."

The foundation of the party had always been its "stratum of old, longtime [*korennye*] worker-Bolsheviks." The new worker members were also hereditary workers, so that the present enrollment was a case of "potential energy turning into kinetic." Everybody in the party should be taught to take for granted that they should take their cues (*ravniat'sia*) from the basic core of workers from the factory floor.

Now that these new members have been enlisted, the party had to aggressively assimilate them (*perevarit'*). The basic method should be to give them

39. *XI s"ezd*, pp. 405-06.

40. This article can be found in Zinoviev, *Istoriia RKP(b)*, pp. 5-21.

state responsibilities: to help production through production conferences and the like, to assist the local Rabkrin in improving the state apparatus, and to strive for influence among the nonparty elements. The new members must remember that the standards of the nonparty people have risen, so that the basic party mission of acting as leaders has become even more challenging. Zinoviev seems confident that the new workers will genuinely improve matters; he cites the testimony of "our best red directors" that industrial production was now finally reviving.

Zinoviev then went into some other ways to get the most out of workerization. There should be a party reorganization to get cells closer to the factory floor. Party democracy – especially in the sense of free discussion – should be intensified as the basic means of party education. The new workers with links to the village should be used to strengthen the *smychka*. The everyday living standard (*byt)* of the workers should be improved. Finally, massophobia should not be allowed to stand in the way getting even more workers into the party: "We must plow the virgin soil ever deeper."[41]

In presenting Zinoviev's outlook from this period, I have abstracted from some dissonant notes that emerged in the struggle against Trotsky. There was, for example, more and more of a stress on party unity and the impermissibility of any attack on it. Lenin's death also made Zinoviev even more afraid of splits within the party leadership. The audience response to this theme was always foot-stomping approval – far more than to anything else Zinoviev says. Zinoviev also takes up the defense of the party *apparat* as a necessary tool in disciplining the state *apparat*.

Despite these dissonant notes, I think we can conclude the following: from at least 1919 to 1924, despite the end of the civil war and the introduction of NEP, Zinoviev presented a consistent picture of the danger of the wall as well as some possible antidotes. His main response is to urge the overcoming of "massophobia" (his own, perhaps, as well as that of others). Despite the many objective reasons for the existence of the wall, the party should strive to overcome it for the sake of its own health as well as its need for social support. Zinoviev was able to give a relatively lucid analysis of the wall and its consequences because of his underlying optimism that the party and the class (and beyond it, the mass) share an underlying unity of outlook which time will only make more clear.

The peasantry: Hegemony and "who-whom"

In the 1920s, Zinoviev often made a claim that stands in stark contrast to conventional wisdom about NEP: he presented it as just another manifestation of the essence of Bolshevism, namely, the insistence on the mission of

41. Ibid.; see also Zinoviev, *Zadachi nashei partii*.

the working class to act as hegemonic leader of the peasantry. According to Zinoviev, the insistence on this mission was Lenin's central contribution to Marxism and had always separated Bolshevism from its socialist rivals. In 1924, he cited the newly discovered manuscript of Lenin's *Who are the friends of the people* from the early 1890s: "The person of the future in Russia is the worker – this is the thought of the Social Democrats." He then paraphrased Lenin's formula in order to bring out the fundamental idea of hegemony: "The person of the future in Russia is the worker, *leading the peasant*."[42] Thus the *smychka* of the 1920s is shown to have deep roots in Lenin's earliest writings.

In this way, Zinoviev fits the peasantry into his own larger story of hegemony: just as the party will eventually win over the working class as a whole, so will the working class win over the peasantry. The drama of the story is heightened, both because the peasants are more backward than the workers and because the kulak is a more formidable hegemonic rival than the urban bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, Zinoviev's drama of hegemony in the 1920s is basically optimistic, since it is structured by an assumption of a *natural* hostility between the kulak and the majority of the peasantry: "We have united with the working peasant against the kulak bloodsucker!"[43] When Zinoviev, Kamenev and Krupskaya protested against what they viewed as a whitewash of the kulak in 1925, they did so because they thought it would offend peasants, not party ideologues or urban workers. The *smychka* thus *required* hostility toward the kulak.

Civil war

By 1920, the revolution had given the peasants land and a countryside free from *pomeshchiki*, but very little else except heavy burdens and a deteriorating economy. The minimum (and perhaps the maximum) we can expect from the Bolsheviks is an honest avowal of these facts. Zinoviev (along with many other Bolshevik spokesmen) passes this particular test.[44]

In early 1920, Zinoviev admitted that although Russia had been in bad shape when the Bolsheviks took it over, it was in worse shape now. Yes, the peasants had received land. "But you know, the peasant can't scrape the earth with his teeth. The peasant can't work the land because he has no horses. We declared mobilization after mobilization. The village is short of everything

42. Zinoviev, *Istoriia RKP(b)*, p. 208.

43. G. Zinoviev, *Krest'iane i sovetskaia vlast'* (Petrograd: Gosizdat, 1920) (speech given April 21, 1920 to a non-party conference in Petrograd *guberniia*).

44. In reading the following, keep in mind the entrenched stereotype reflected, for example, in Robert Conquest's assertion that "grain procurement by force" was "regarded by the Party, from Lenin down, as not merely socialism, but even communism" (*Harvest of Sorrow* [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986], p. 48).

necessary."[45] Taking peasants away from the field for two weeks at harvest time was "appalling and a real torture. But still – it was unavoidable. . . . With a weary heart, we were forced literally to loot half of Russia, but achieve victory over the generals."[46]

Added to the material burdens was arbitrary government by representatives of Soviet power. "When I hear specific complaints – here they took your horse away, there they made an illegitimate arrest, the special tax was improperly levied – then I am amazed, not that such examples [of peasant protest] occur, but that they are becoming ever fewer." Given illiteracy, general backwardness, years of being divided from the workers, and the shortage of "decent people and officials," such abuses could not be avoided.[47]

These are not isolated statements, or ones made only to peasant audiences. In Germany in late 1920, critics cited statements like these by Zinoviev as well as Lenin and Preobrazhensky to show how badly the peasants were faring in Russia. Zinoviev responded that yes indeed, he and the others had been quoted correctly, but they were doing their best to make things better. Besides, these statements showed that the Bolsheviks weren't afraid to talk about their problems.[48]

We next inquire whether we can find any doctrinal reflection about the importance of maintaining peasant support. We should remember that the Bolsheviks were criticized by orthodox socialists such as Karl Kautsky because they gave *too much* to the peasants: the break-up of the estates hurt large-scale agriculture and helped to entrench a village bourgeoisie. The Bolshevik response was to write the necessity of attracting peasant support into the "twenty-one conditions" for membership in the Communist International – a document drafted by Zinoviev.[49]

In his speech in Germany in September 1920, Zinoviev maintained that neglect of the peasants was a cardinal reason for Béla Kun's failure in Hungary, and forecast the necessity for the German revolution to gain the support of the *seredniak* in order to ward off counter revolution. In response to critics who said that the break-up of the estates signified a return to the middle ages,

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45. *Novye zadachi nashei partii (ot voiny k khoziaistvu)* (Petersburg: Gosizdat: 1920), p. 11 (speech given Jan. 28, 1920).

46. Zinoviev, *Krest'iane i sovetskaia vlast'*.

47. *Ibid*., pp. 45-56

48. Zinoviev, *Dvenadtsat' dnei v Germanii* (Peterburg: Gosizdat, 1920), pp. 66 ff.

49. Hedlin shows that Zinoviev was the main author of the 21 conditions, despite their attribution to Lenin in the fifth edition of his works ("Grigorii Zinoviev: Myths of the Defeated"). I can add a stylistic observation to Hedlin's discussion: the presence of the rare word *razzhizheniia* (rarefaction), one that I have run across only in Zinoviev's writings.

Zinoviev retorted that Russia could live five or ten years without socialism in the villages, but at least it would never go back to capitalism.[50]

These statements by Zinoviev support his claim that, even during the period of so-called war communism, Bolshevism distinguished itself from Menshevism and other varieties of socialism by its willingness to attract peasant support even at the cost of slowing down the purely economic evolution of socialism in the countryside.

We now turn to Zinoviev's view of what was going on inside the peasantry. Here "the kulak" can best be understood as a role in the drama of hegemony: the alternative leadership that struggles with the proletariat for influence over the swing vote, that is, the wavering mass of the peasantry. There is a certain inner contradiction contained within this role in all versions of the hegemony story, since the alternative leadership is seen as both the oppressor loathed by the masses and the seductive rival with an enormous capacity to deceive the same masses.

This is certainly the case for Zinoviev's view of the kulak. One the one hand, the kulaks are a small handful who "hold the whole village in their tenacious clutches."[51] The peasants know who these people are, and ultimately it is up to the peasants to deal with them. The kulak is somebody who lives "at the expense of others" and thrives on usury, speculation and exploitation of labor. Zinoviev is frankly puzzled why the village does not declare open season on them and attributes this to village shyness or lack of organization.[52]

This leads us to the other side of the coin: the threat posed by the kulaks as the most entrenched and rooted bourgeois class in Russia. Unlike the urban bourgeoisie, they're not leaving for Constantinople. On the contrary, they show great survival power: throw them out of a fifth story window, and they land on their feet. Some of them may see the need for a new life, but for the most part they remain dangerous enemies even if they don't take up arms (they spread rumors, wriggle into soviets and so forth). This is a long-term problem: kulakdom (*kulach'e*) isn't going to be extinct for a long time.[53]

Zinoviev's fierce rhetoric about kulaks must be put alongside the evidence that he took the worker-peasant union seriously. Perhaps this can best be seen by the very fact of the speech I have been citing extensively (*Krest'iane i so-*

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50. He quickly added that it would be at least a century before the "full practical realization of communism." Later, during NEP, Zinoviev often admitted that the Bolsheviks had underestimated the time factor.

51. Zinoviev, *Pis'mo k krest'ianam: Zachem rabochie posylaiut prodovol'stvennye otriady v derevniu?* (Petrotrad, np, 1918).

52. Zinoviev, *Krest'iane i sovetskaia vlast'.*

53. Ibid. (Zinoviev's rhetoric about kulaks in 1920 is actually more moderate than it was in 1918; for examples, see Lars T. Lih, *Bread and Authority in Russia, 1914-1921* [Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990]).

vetskaia vlast', given on April 21, 1920) which was given at a "nonparty conference" in Petrograd province. Here Zinoviev went before a peasant audience, admitted that the revolution had given little but imposed much, pleaded that the mutual victory not be spoiled by distrust, and tried to respond to the many vocal complaints. He couldn't understand why people in the audience were offended by his attacks on the kulak: "There's no reason to be offended by what I said! . . . If the kulak is offended, that makes sense. His turn has come. But there are no kulaks among you."[54]

Zinoviev's confidence that deep down the peasants were on the side of the Bolsheviks is an extension of the same confidence he expressed in the case of the workers. The point of the soviets for both workers and peasants was to provide a means of "bringing understanding to our backward brethren."[55] Conversely the soviet mechanism would only benefit from enlisting peasants as well as workers. In 1919 he proposed that VTsIK bring in more peasants: "We should see more leaders of the peasant poor there, who have not yet enrolled in the party, but who will do so in a month or maybe two."[56]

As this last comment indicates, Zinoviev entered into the world of the peasantry from the proletarian door, that is, the *bednota*. These were the "best people" in the village. Zinoviev was inclined not to be harsh about their mistakes: wasn't it time for them to triumph for once? He regarded the *seredniak* somewhat condescendingly and put him in the same category as the "lower middle-class intelligentsia" and the urban man-in-the-street (*obyvatel'*): all these groups could and should be won over, but only with time. The task of the party was thus to extend its influence in the villages so that it is possible to "maintain the *vlast* [without military force]. To accomplish this will require a huge amount of work that will occupy a series of years."[57]

NEP

We now turn to Zinoviev's presentation of the logic of NEP in the years before he went into opposition in 1925. His understanding of it was summed up in the repeated phrase *kto-kogo*. Like most people, I had always thought that this phrase was an expression of the hard-line Lenin: "who (oppresses, beats, takes advantage of) whom." It was something of a shock when some time ago I tried to track down its actual use by Lenin and found that (as far as I can tell) it was entirely confined to the NEP years and only employed to express the logic of NEP. He used it no more than a couple of times, and I

54. *Krest'iane i sovetskaia vlast'*, pp. 38-39.
55. Zinoviev, *Dvenadtsat' dnei v Germanii*.
56. *Vos'moi s"ezd RKP(b)*, p. 288 See also the citation given earlier claiming that the peasant does not need a sophisticated grasp of the party program in order to join VTsIK.
57. Zinoviev, "Ob itogakh VIII s''ezda."

would hazard the guess that Zinoviev's frequent use of it in 1923-1925 that put the phrase into wider circulation.

As understood by Zinoviev, the phrase means something like this: who will gain the loyalty of the peasants: the proletarian state or the new bourgeoisie? Who will best take advantage of the opportunities presented by economic revival? Who will best represent the political interests of the peasant and best provide the peasant with goods and credit? Which *smychka* will prevail: the proletarian or the bourgeois? The answer to these questions will decide the fate of the revolution.

Thus, *kto-kogo* turns NEP into an on-going drama. We can best understand the further details of the NEP drama as understood by Zinoviev if we take seriously a terminological innovation he proposed in 1923 and 1924: to distinguish between "NEP" and the New Economic Policy. "NEP" had been turned into a term referring to the nepmen, the new bourgeoisie and the kulaks. Its negative connotations should not be transferred to the New Economic Policy, which was the only sensible policy for constructing socialism in a peasant country surrounded by capitalism. (The following discussion uses this distinction somewhat more systematically than Zinoviev did, but I am sticking closely to Zinoviev's own presentation of the logic of the New Economic Policy.)

According to Zinoviev, the New Economic Policy did involve a retreat, namely, the tolerance of NEP elements (*not* the concessions to the peasants). This retreat was necessary in order to revive the economy under conditions of the capitalist encirclement. The retreat was not all the way back to capitalism, but only to "state capitalism," which included such uncapitalist things as a state monopoly on foreign trade. Once the economy had revived sufficiently, an advance was again possible. This advance would also be conducted under the terms of the New Economic Policy: its aim would be to replace the economic services provided by the Nepmen with the state's own superior economic structures. Until the advance was successfully completed, the question of *kto-kogo* would still be open. "NEP" could therefore at first be read as the Necessary Economic Policy; later, when state economic structures were in place, as the Needless Economic Policy.[58]

In the case of the party's relation to the workers, degeneration manifested itself by an acceptance of the wall. An equivalent degeneration in the case of the New Economic Policy would be forgetting about *kto-kogo*, that is, welcoming economic revival in and of itself, no matter where it was leading, and in this way refusing the challenge of directing economic development down the proper socialist channels. This is the outcome predicted by the clever foe.

58. Zinoviev, *Russia's Path to Communism* (London: CPGB, 1925) (speech given May 20, 1925).

In his 1924 political report to the 13th party congress, Zinoviev asked two questions. The first was "did the state's economic performance mean that it was moving out of the elementary class of economic competence?" The second was *kto-kogo*. A generally positive answer was given to the first question, but Zinoviev emphasized that an unambiguously positive answer could not be given to the second question. His speech is sprinkled with warnings about the dangers of forgetting about *kto-kogo*:

> We shouldn't delude ourselves: there is a real danger of degeneration, and the danger of a more then proportional growth of the bourgeoisie is also real – and of course this bourgeoisie is starting to emerge out of the village. This is the reason that we are much less confident and final in our response [to questions about the success of *kto-kogo*]. Here much depends precisely on the subjective efforts of our party, and what we need to do is not so much to underline the positive aspects but rather to show where we need to apply all our strength. The struggle between us and "them" (the new bourgeoisie) is just starting.[59]

Zinoviev did not talk much about the kulaks until 1924; before then, "NEP" meant primarily the urban nepmen. Even in 1924, he maintained that there was more danger from a revived menshevism (interpreted as the political expression of the urban NEP) rather than from the SRs (the political expression of the village NEP, that is, the kulaks). But we find a familiar theme in his insistence that in the long run it would be the SRs who would prove most dangerous.[60] Zinoviev's views rest on an assumption that he shared with others in the party opposition: the new bourgeoisie would eventually find political representation and expand their influence if the state was unable to render it economically superfluous. One might say that Zinoviev and the rest were stuck in prewar conceptions, of civil society and underestimated the power of their own repression. In contrast, Bukharin was supremely confident that the kulaks presented no threat, because his model was the wartime "state capitalism" that (it seemed to him) was able to co-opt all opposition.

In his 1924 congress report, Zinoviev also put forth the idea of two possible deviations on the kulak question: trying to eliminate them by repressive means alone vs. denying their existence. He cited reports from the country-

59. *Trinadtsatyi s"ezd RKP(b)*, p. 88 (similar passages on pp. 99, 105).

60. Zinoviev's worries about the kulak did not include the danger that he would refuse to hand over enough grain for industrialization. Kamenev was more aware of this economic danger, which lay outside Zinoviev's focus on political and social questions (see Alexis Pogorelskin, "Kamenev and the Peasant Question: The Turn to Opposition, 1924-1925," *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 27, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 381-96.

side that indicated the danger that the kulak would end up supporting the Bolsheviks more than the *bedniak* did. Out of concern for the *smychka*, the party should be aware of peasant criticism on this issue.

It is hardly surprising that Zinoviev put heavy emphasis on the worker-peasant union during 1922-25, and I will not discuss this theme at length. I will cite here a few characteristic touches. In 1923, he rebuked the party by saying that even Mussolini was doing a better job of linking up with the peasants.[61] In his 1923 correspondence with Stalin, Zinoviev expressed his delight in the founding of a peasant international [1923, B, 200].

In a speech of early 1925, we find some of Zinoviev's populism.[62] In explaining the new policies of the neo-NEP, he reviewed some statistics on peasant poverty and concluded: "We are a government based upon the poor, but it is not our desire to perpetuate the poor; we want to improve their lot." Later in the same speech he admitted that "we know that often the nonparty peasant knows our decrees, is almost invariably a better husbandman, better understands agriculture and sometimes is better educated than our village Communists." Zinoviev is still upset by abuses of power: "The peasant will be sure that the bad 'Communist' is not all powerful when he feels free to lift his voice against him and see justice meted out to him. . . . How, I ask . . . are we to get the peasant to feel he has a right to speak up against bad Communists?"

If he had an answer to his own question, he didn't give it in this speech.

Opposition in 1925: Flip-flop or continuity?

My original aim was to carry my analysis forward to the disputes of late 1925 when Zinoviev and Kamenev went into opposition, but this has proved to be quite impossible, since I would have to go into the policies of 1925's neonep, Bukharin's position, and the various doctrinal disputes that became intertwined with the main debate. I will only give the briefest outline of what I think was at issue.

At present, the only full discussion of the debates of 1925 is by E. H. Carr. According to him, Zinoviev did a flip-flop on the question of NEP, moving from a strong defense of the neonep to a strong critique of NEP in a matter of months. With the background provided by this article, the essential consistency of Zinoviev's position becomes apparent.

In my view, the essence of the debate was over defeatism vs. complacency. Bukharin's main polemical enemy had always been socialists such as Kautsky who argued that the Bolshevik revolution was doomed to failure because conditions in Russia were not ripe for socialism (I call this the maturity

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61. *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd RKP(b)*, p. 6.
62. Zinoviev, *Russia's Path to Communism*.

(*zrelost'*) debate). If any Bolshevik talked too much about the difficulties facing socialist construction in Russia, Bukharin tended to conclude that he or she was a defeatist who secretly accepted Kautsky's argument and had lost faith in the possibility of socialism in Russia. In response, Bukharin himself tended to glide over the difficulties, and this pushed Zinoviev's buttons: behind Bukharin he heard the voice of Ustrialov and other clever foes who were predicting that the Bolsheviks would come to terms with capitalism, become complacent, and gradually forget their revolutionary aspirations.

Thus it was not the actual policy of neonep that led to Zinoviev's worries, but its interpretation by Bukharin and others. For Zinoviev, it was very important to see the legalization of various kulak practices as a retreat and to keep one's revolutionary perspective: the *kto-kogo* question was still an open one. Zinoviev had always said it would be a disaster if the *bedniak* came to see the New Economic Policy as a wager on the kulak, and now Bukharin with his "get rich" slogan (April 1925) seemed to be going out of his way to give exactly that impression.

A related debate was over the status of state industry: was it "state capitalism" or already socialist? Behind the mind-numbing citation-mongering on this issue we can perceive Zinoviev's concern that the party should take seriously the workers' dissatisfaction with low pay, bad working conditions, and abuses by the bosses.

Conclusion

The most important conclusion to emerge from this material is that Zinoviev did in fact express a consistent outlook with some degree of intellectual and political integrity (given standards appropriate for political leaders). This outlook was based on his understanding of Leninism as a drama of hegemony: a battle with the class enemy for the souls of the masses. Zinoviev was especially concerned with the danger of degeneration: would the vanguard forget its mission? Would it accept with complacency the wall that inevitably sprang up between vanguard and masses? Would it forget about the drama of *kto-kovo* made necessary by concessions to the new bourgeoisie? Indeed, degeneration itself could even be defined as forgetting that hegemony *was* a drama, that is, a struggle with no sure outcome. I can see no reason to dismiss this outlook as mere rhetoric or as motivated by passing factional concerns. Zinoviev stuck to it over a number of years, during both the civil war and NEP; he consistently put forth policy suggestions based on it; he used it as the basis of his platform when he moved into opposition.

The particular features of Zinoviev's outlook seem to have been recognized by his comrades in the Bolshevik leadership. For example, in spring 1919 Zinoviev was the speaker for the Central Committee at the 8th party congress on issues of party organization and bureaucratism. He was also the

main spokesman on this question at the 9th party conference in September 1920, when the issue of bureaucratism was at the center of a violent controversy within the party. Zinoviev was also given the job of reporting on this issue at the 8th congress of Soviets at the end of 1920.

Zinoviev's emphasis on the concept of hegemony makes one think of Antonio Gramsci. As a foreign communist, Gramsci would have dealt more with Zinoviev than with any other Bolshevik leader and must have been influenced by his particular understanding of Leninism. Certainly it would be satisfyingly ironic if the despised Zinoviev turned out ultimately to have more enduring intellectual influence (via his talented pupil Gramsci) than any other top Bolshevik.[63]

I have been stressing some of the relatively attractive features of Zinoviev's outlook, since it seems to me that this is the more surprising result of my investigation. Lest I seem unbalanced, I should add at least the following. Zinoviev had very little concrete to say about the policy dilemmas faced by the Bolsheviks except what was revealed by his hegemony scenario. Furthermore, when he went into opposition, all his weaknesses came into play and he was never able to make a coherent presentation of his case. His book *Leninism* and his speeches at the 14th party congress and the 15th party conference show him drowning in defensive logic-chopping and citation-mongering. It is mainly (but not entirely!) his own fault that his message had to be excavated by obscure academics many decades later.

There is nevertheless something refreshing about Zinoviev's outlook, symbolized by the occasional presence in his speeches of the hungry mother and the Schopenhaurian teenager. To some extent, perhaps, this is just a rhetorical device – but if so, it is a refreshing one after the faceless abstractions that dominate the writings and speeches of other top Bolshevik leaders. My impression is that Zinoviev was genuinely concerned about the problems faced by ordinary people.

One reason that I undertook this research was skepticism about received understandings of "War Communism" and NEP. I have not stressed this aspect in the present essay, but I will make a couple of observations. Some of the things Zinoviev said during 1920 – especially about the problems of bureaucratism and the burdens placed on the peasantry – are simply not compatible with the standard stereotype of "war communism" as the sanctification of wartime expedients into a permanent system. In a less direct way, my Zinoviev material presents problems for typical interpretations of NEP. There is first simply the consistency I have shown in Zinoviev's outlook: he was able to defend NEP by making the same kind of arguments that he made during

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63. For the deep roots of the hegemony scenario in Lenin's outlook, see Lars T. Lih, *Lenin Rediscovered* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

the civil war.[64] Zinoviev's own understanding of NEP as typically Bolshevik also stands as a challenge to conventional views. Finally, his understanding of the retreat/advance metaphor shows that the "advance" was not meant as a return to "war communism" or a Stalin-style assault on the peasantry. (In none of this is Zinoviev unique – he is simply another anomaly confronting the standard stereotypes.)

The main purpose of this essay has been to complicate our understanding of the early years of Soviet power by presenting one authoritative and relatively populist rendering of the "essence of Bolshevism."

64. I make the same case *vis-à-vis* Bukharin in Lars T. Lih, "Bukharin's 'Illusion': War Communism and the Meaning of NEP," *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 27, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 417-59.