Screenplay for the film "1927 – Lev Kamenev and Grigory Zinoviev . Historical Chronicles with Nikolai Svanidze" written by Marina Zhukova, translated by AI, and preceded by a summary also written by AI

Screenplay Summary:

The text offers a broad historical portrait of the late 1920s in the USSR through the intertwined lives of Lev Kamenev, Grigory Zinoviev and their circle, against the backdrop of Stalin's rise and the demise of the NEP.

It opens with composer Sergei Prokofiev's brief visit to Moscow in late 1927. He stays in the Metropol Hotel, which after 1917 had been turned into apartments for high-ranking officials. Through the Metropol, the "House on the Embankment" and several other "Houses of Soviets," the author shows the privileged lifestyle of the Bolshevik elite: fully furnished apartments, hot running water, telephones, on-site shops, clinics, laundries and kindergartens. This comfort is sharply contrasted with the reality of ordinary Muscovites, squeezed into a few square meters, often in half-basements, with no hot water or baths and forced to use public toilets.

The residential geography of the Bolshevik leadership is said to coincide with the old oprichnina lands of Ivan the Terrible – a symbolic "privileged zone" supported by the rest of the population. The House on the Embankment, built from 1927 under OGPU chief Yagoda's supervision, will later prove a "mousetrap": most of its residents will be shot or exiled during the Great Terror, even though they initially move in enthusiastically.

The narrative then focuses on Kamenev and Zinoviev. Both were Lenin's close associates and at first Stalin's allies against Trotsky, before joining Trotsky in the "Left Opposition" once Stalin was firmly entrenched. Their platform denounces the rise of a "new bourgeoisie" – kulaks, NEP entrepreneurs and bureaucrats – and the leadership's failure to maintain a consistent socialist course. The text underlines the paradox that Stalin himself, by the mid-1920s, begins to adopt "left" policies (cutting grain procurement prices, preparing an offensive against NEP), paving the way for forced collectivization, while simultaneously crushing those who advocate, on paper, a similarly radical industrialization line.

A substantial section is devoted to Zinoviev: his long years abroad with Lenin, his symbolic status as party "number two", his role in organizing an especially brutal Red Terror in Petrograd, and the patronage network ("court") he built around family members in key cultural posts. The persecution of Gorky's independent publishing house and the use of crude antisemitic slogans against the Jewish publisher Zinovy Grzhebin illustrate how power struggles, business interests and anti-Jewish rhetoric could be cynically combined. Later, a more "official" antisemitism surfaces in campaigns against Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev.

The year 1927 is depicted as a turning point: the joint plenum removes Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee; on the 10th anniversary of October, the opposition organizes alternative demonstrations in Moscow and Leningrad, violently dispersed by police and party vigilantes; antisemitic shouts are heard in the crowd. Shortly afterward, Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev are expelled from the Kremlin apartments. Kamenev is demoted to provincial exile and minor posts (concession administration, later the prestigious Academia publishing house and literary

institutes). Throughout, we follow his family's trajectory: from the "fairy tale" of Kremlin life and lavish canteen food to arrest, execution or camp for his sons, brother, nephew and grandson.

The Fifteenth Party Congress (December 1927) is presented as crucial: officially remembered as the "collectivization congress", it in fact avoids open debate on collectivization. Stalin theatrically offers to resign, is begged to stay, and shortly afterward completely reverses his earlier statement that one cannot "liquidate the kulak by administrative means," launching what will become the brutal destruction of the peasantry. After the congress, Kamenev and Zinoviev sign an "open letter" recanting their "anti-Leninist" positions and are given a probationary exile in Kaluga. We see the early, systematic use of GPU wiretapping and transcripts (the famous "conversation with Bukharin") as political weapons.

In the final part, we see Kamenev and Zinoviev after the assassination of Kirov: arrested, broken, writing desperate letters to Stalin and Gorky, then tried in staged show trials and executed in 1936. Ironically, Kamenev had once proposed Stalin for the brand-new position of General Secretary and, as head of Academia, had authorized the first Soviet edition of Dostoevsky's Demons, promptly denounced in Pravda. The catastrophic fate of their families is presented as a kind of historical boomerang – not least in light of their own earlier support for the execution of the tsar and his family.

Screenplay:

1927 – Lev Kamenev and Grigory Zinoviev

On the eve of the New Year 1927, the composer Sergei Prokofiev arrived for a short stay in Moscow from Paris. In Paris, for the previous couple of months, he had been trying to persuade the famous theatrical impresario, creator of the Russian Seasons in Paris, Sergei Diaghilev, to travel to the USSR. In August 1927 Sergei Diaghilev's brother, Valentin, would be arrested in Moscow. He taught at the Military-Political Academy and had served in the Red Army since 1918. At the last moment, his death sentence would be commuted to ten years in the camps. He would be sent to Solovki. There, he would be shot. Sergei Diaghilev did not go to the USSR.

Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev, on his arrival in Moscow, was put up in the Metropol Hotel. After 1917, its rooms had been turned into apartments for "responsible workers." In 1927 they began moving those responsible workers into new flats. Prokofiev writes in his diary: "One floor has again been returned to hotel use, leased to the Germans. In the upper floors the responsible workers still remain, and so there is the most horrible filth everywhere."

The Metropol is the so-called Second House of Soviets. There are many such Houses of Soviets in Moscow. In addition, apartments were arranged in twenty buildings inside the Kremlin.

The wife of Lenin's favorite, Bukharin, Anna Larina, before her marriage lived with her mother and father, the well-known Bolshevik Yury Larin, at the Metropol. Later, right up to Bukharin's arrest, she and he lived in the Kremlin. After his arrest she was moved out of the Kremlin to the "House on the Embankment".

That building received this name half a century later thanks to the writer Yuri Trifonov, who used it as the title of his famous novel. The decision to build the House on the Embankment was taken on January 20, 1927. After moving into this house, the wife of the arrested Bukharin immediately sent a note to the chairman of the Central Executive Committee, Kalinin: “We have no way of paying the rent.” She attached the unpaid bill for the flat to the note. Later Anna Bukharina would pass through many years of Stalin’s camps, but then, in those years of prosperous life in the Kremlin and the Metropol, she had no habit of paying rent and could not possibly have acquired one.

Unlike all other Soviet people, the party tenants in 1927 lacked nothing. The famous six Houses of Soviets were the hotels National, Metropol and Petergof, at the corner of Vozdvizhenka and Mokhovaya, where Maxim Gorky and his wife, the actress Andreyeva, had once made bombs for terrorist acts. Then there were the houses of Count Sheremetev on Granovsky Street, the house of Prince Kurakin on Lenivka, houses on Znamenka, on Neglinnaya and on Prechistensky Boulevard.

It must be said that the residential boundaries of the Bolshevik upper crust in Moscow coincide exactly with the territory of the oprichnina lands under Ivan the Terrible. The Oprichnina was a special ruling organization directly subordinate to Ivan the Terrible, with administrative and police functions, and endowed with the best lands. The rest of the population maintained this organization. In the 20th century, as in the 16th, the lands of the oprichniki – that is, the houses of Bolshevik chiefs – stretch from Prechistenka to Neglinnaya.

In these houses all conveniences are provided: furniture, table and bed linen, dishes. Central heating, bathrooms with hot water, elevators. The houses have special laundries, sometimes even separate kindergartens.

At the same time, according to official data, the average Muscovite has 5.7 square meters of living space. In reality many live in semi-basements and basements. By 1930 these figures will drop to 4.5 square meters per person. By floor area, that is one and a half graves. There is no hot water and no bathtubs. From a communal flat in Pechatnikov Lane, my wife’s grandmother went every morning to wash in the public toilets on Trubnaya Square.

In the House on the Embankment then under construction, three-, four- and five-room flats were planned. All of them were furnished. Telephones everywhere. A grocery and general store, a barber’s, a clinic, a gym, a canteen. Construction was overseen by the deputy head of the OGPU, Genrikh Yagoda.

Soon this house would turn out to be a mousetrap. Most of its tenants would be shot or exiled. But they had moved in with pleasure. Responsible workers wanted to live and eat in their own closed circle. In place of those shot, new people moved in just as eagerly.

On November 16, 1927, Lev Borisovich Kamenev moved out of his Kremlin apartment. Back at the start of the previous year, 1926, he had been removed from his positions as chairman of the Moscow Soviet, deputy chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars, and chairman of the Council of Labor and Defense, a post he had held after Lenin’s death in 1924. After that, Kamenev headed the People’s Commissariat of Trade for half a year.

He would be replaced in that post by Anastas Mikoyan. Mikoyan recalls: “I went to Varvarka Street to see Kamenev, to his office on the second floor. We were alone in the room. He began to set out his extremely pessimistic views on the state of affairs in the country; he had lost faith in the victory of socialism. It became clearer to me than ever how far he had moved away from the party line.”

Kamenev himself submitted his resignation from the post of People's Commissar of Trade, explaining that he did not enjoy the full confidence of the Politburo. Before his appointment, Mikoyan had had a conversation with Stalin. Stalin said then: "Kamenev did little practical work in the commissariat; he was more engaged in his political opposition activities. Kamenev has gone into opposition."

After talking with Kamenev, Mikoyan jotted down in blue pencil the main points of his half-hour monologue. The essence was: "Kamenev is already leaving our party and calls us bourgeois degenerates." "Us" meaning "us together with Stalin".

The extremely gifted apparatchik Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan was offended. Offended in vain: within a year and a half it would not occur to anyone to call Stalin a bourgeois degenerate. But then, in 1927, not only Mikoyan but also Western observers wondered where Russia was headed. The fact was that at that moment, in the Soviet political layout, Stalin was regarded as a rightist. Opposing him stood the "left opposition" headed by Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev. Until 1925, Kamenev and Zinoviev had played in a trio with Stalin against Trotsky. After the victory over Trotsky and the strengthening of Stalin, party life and their own ambitions led Kamenev and Zinoviev to side with Trotsky against Stalin.

It was Kamenev and Zinoviev who convinced Trotsky that the main enemy was Stalin. Before that, Trotsky had considered Zinoviev his principal rival. Moreover, Zinoviev himself saw himself as Stalin's chief rival.

Grigory Evseyevich Zinoviev possessed a priceless past. From 1908 he had been constantly with Lenin in emigration; together with Lenin he arrived in Petrograd in the sealed German railway carriage. After June 1917, when it became widely known that Lenin had returned to Russia with German money and on German money, Zinoviev left with Lenin for Razliv, where the two of them hid from arrest. At that time, under the Provisional Government, the order for Lenin's arrest in Moscow was signed by the head of the First Yakimanka District Administration, Andrey Vyshinsky. In 1936 Vyshinsky would conduct, as Stalin's procurator general of the USSR, the trial of the "united Trotskyist–Zinovievite center."

On April 6, 1917, the Bolshevik newspaper Pravda reported: "The comrades Lenin and Zinoviev, who have returned from emigration, have joined the editorial board of Pravda." The pairing "Lenin–Zinoviev" was a familiar formula in party life in the summer of 1917. The "Kamenev–Zinoviev" tandem did not yet exist.

At the April 1917 conference of the RSDLP, Zinoviev chaired the sessions and polemicized with Kamenev. During the election of the Central Committee, Zinoviev's candidacy, like Lenin's, was accepted without discussion.

Zinoviev was first brought into the Central Committee in May 1907 at the London congress of the RSDLP. He was a delegate from Petersburg. Nobody knew him, nobody listened to him. Then he stood up on a chair and drew attention to himself. The speech of the debutant standing on a chair made him a member of the Central Committee. From that chair he was everywhere number two after Lenin.

The stable, impersonal combination "Kamenev and Zinoviev" appears in 1926 together with the "left opposition". It is true that the two surnames had appeared together once before. This happened on October 10, 1917, at a meeting of the Central Committee when the decision on armed

insurrection was taken. Kamenev and Zinoviev then spoke against the insurrection and in favor of convening the Constituent Assembly. That was the first time Zinoviev spoke out against Lenin, if we ignore one more episode.

In emigration, Lenin had wanted to adopt Zinoviev's son Stepan – in other words, to take the child away from his parents while they were still alive. Zinoviev did not give his son to Lenin. The idea of adopting the younger Zinoviev was prompted by Lenin's childlessness, but also by another consideration. Lenin knew Zinoviev too well; for many years in emigration, the man had been his shadow. Lenin valued him for that, but did not want to entrust him with raising a future communist. In his own manner, Lenin valued Zinoviev, but did not respect him. Sverdlov used to say: "Zinoviev is panic incarnate."

As far as the armed uprising of October 1917 is concerned, Kamenev is consistent. In March 1917 in Pravda he wrote that the army, in time of world war, had no right to lay down its arms. He avoided attacks on the Provisional Government. Kamenev was freed from exile by Kerensky's decree at the very beginning of the February Revolution. He arrived in Petrograd from the Turukhansk region. In exile, he had been together with Stalin. They arrived together.

Lenin's "Letters from Afar", calling for the overthrow of the Provisional Government, were censored by Kamenev together with Stalin. Stalin had already moved to Lenin's position by April.

Lenin was not interested in Kamenev's stance on the armed uprising. He obtained a majority without Kamenev or Zinoviev. Trotsky writes about Kamenev simply and with respect: "On the night of October 24, Kamenev came to the Smolny. He was an opponent of the insurrection. But on that decisive night he came to spend it beside me." He adds that Kamenev gave him a cigarette. For Trotsky it matters little that Kamenev is his relative, his sister's husband.

In 1927, the essence of the left opposition's platform was as follows. The group of Stalin, which in fact determined the policy of the party's central bodies, had proved powerless to prevent "the excessive growth of those forces that want to turn the development of our country onto the capitalist path, which leads to the weakening of the working class and peasantry in the face of the growing strength of the kulak, the nepman and the bureaucrat."

The left opposition, in the person of Kamenev, Zinoviev and Trotsky, stressed that there were two mutually exclusive lines in the country. One expressed the interests of the new bourgeoisie, pinned its hopes on private initiative, and weakened the principle of planning in the economy.

The other line was based on the idea that the victory of socialism could only be ensured if the proletarian state power first rebuilt industry, then helped the backward countryside and thus raised productivity there on the basis of mechanized collective agriculture. This, the platform of the left opposition declared, was the path of socialism.

The opposition emphasized: "The Stalin line consists of short zigzags to the left and deep ones to the right." This is from the last document of the "left opposition", entitled "The Platform of the Bolshevik-Leninists".

It appeared in September 1927. Nothing in it foreshadowed the zigzag to the left that Stalin had already made in the spring.

At its April 1927 plenum, the Central Committee decided to lower the state purchasing prices for grain. For kulaks and middle peasants – that is, those who produced grain for sale and were

accustomed to sell it under the market conditions of the NEP – this decision came as a complete surprise. In 1925 and 1926, Stalin had routinely repeated the need to pacify the countryside. He said that the opposition's demagogic proposals for seizing grain by force were nonsense that only created additional difficulties. Now the peasants refused to hand over grain for next to nothing and were immediately accused of a "grain strike".

Problems with bread for the cities and the army loomed. At the same time, Stalin spoke of the imminent possibility of an attack by a bloc of capitalist states on the USSR; a trial mobilization was carried out. In the cities, people began to buy up flour, sugar and soap en masse in case of war. In some villages, they were certain that the war had already begun. A GPU information bulletin reported: "In connection with rumors of war and of a change of power, cases are noted of Pioneers quitting their organizations. In some provinces, Komsomol members leave the Komsomol in order to avoid mobilization. In a number of regions, peasants, fearing mobilization, sell their good horses or exchange them for worse ones. In Moldavia, because of this, prices for broken-down horses have risen by 100 percent."

At the beginning of 1927, the capacity of the Soviet military-industrial complex stood at 50 percent of its 1916 level. In essence, Stalin had no real disagreement with Trotsky, the leader of the left opposition. He fully agreed with him that it was necessary to build up heavy industry at breakneck speed, no matter what. Stalin's move to lower grain procurement prices was, in substance, ultra-left and worthy of Trotsky. Stalin had stepped onto Trotsky's field. Now, on that field, Stalin had to remain alone. By the logic of the game, Stalin was bound to launch an offensive against the NEP.

The attack on the NEP was predetermined by Stalin's own character. He was entirely ready for emergency measures and utterly unprepared for complex economic maneuvering, which has little in common with political score-settling. Besides, the NEP itself had exhausted its modest potential by 1927. An expansion of economic freedom, the attraction of private capital into industry, would have brought with it a change in the political regime, with an inevitable broadening of democracy in prospect. Abandoning the NEP removed not only that problem.

Ten years after the October coup, the party and soviet system had turned into a gigantic, stuck bureaucratic machine. Correspondingly, powerful anti-bureaucratic moods were rising in working-class and peasant circles. These protest moods began to form into a serious threat to power. Ten years after 1917, people expected to see the fruits of the revolution. But in the mass consciousness, the fruits of the revolution still meant only one thing: distribution to everyone and in equal shares. That is why, by 1927, for the ordinary Soviet citizen, the bureaucrat and the nepman were one and the same. Moreover, people were openly saying that the power, having allowed the NEP, had become bourgeois. Talk on the street coincided with the wording of the left opposition: "Stalin's supporters are bourgeois degenerates." The mental linkage that had arisen in people's heads—nepman-bureaucrat, or more precisely nepman-representative of power—was virtuously cut by Stalin. The "new bourgeoisie", that is, those who possessed property, was sharply opposed to those who possessed power. A massive propaganda offensive against private entrepreneurs began. They had not been much liked before, but now, openly and in full view, they were turned into class enemies responsible for the country's crises. This did not solve the economic problems. Psychologically, however, it prepared the population very well for the "great leap" policy laid down in the first Five-Year Plan. A desire for a new "expropriation of the expropriators" seized the population. The revolution had not fulfilled expectations. That meant a new revolution was needed. A worker named Temkin wrote to Stalin: "How does a worker, worn out, exhausted, sick, who has

not been able to recover in ten years of revolution, look at the capitalist-bourgeois? He is ready to rush at him, tear him to bits, destroy even the bits of him, his anger seethes, the worker is dissatisfied."

Private entrepreneurs were already being moved into the category of "non-citizens." The government, unable to cope with the economic situation, removed citizens' savings from the savings banks in the summer of 1927. A group of anonymous citizens in August 1927 wrote a petition to the Central Executive Committee of the USSR demanding the return of their deposits. At the same time the petition specified: "To the bourgeois who have more than 5,000 – don't give anything back."

The fact that in private enterprises workers' earnings were higher, that the owner gave them presents, only deepened the rage of workers in state enterprises. It was easy for Stalin to meet them halfway by whipping up the anti-NEP offensive. Faced with mass unemployment, workers in private firms sometimes turned down pay rises in order to help the owner keep the business going, and appealed to government bodies to lower taxes on the owner. In other words, those workers acted pragmatically, and this only increased the authorities' displeasure. Khrushchev writes in his memoirs: "It always hurt me to see that more people crowded around the private shops." The situation was worsened by well-off peasants producing grain for the market. They said: "Through capital and the bourgeoisie we'll build communism; there's no other way, and it's easy to use capital and the bourgeoisie if done with sense."

Seventy-five percent of retail turnover and 87 percent of industrial production fell to the private sector. The private sector was restoring economic links between regions, forcing state enterprises at least somehow to move. At the same time, it accounted for only 1 percent of national income. It was mostly small business; there were only a handful of truly large fortunes. For the most part, they were based on speculation. From the old business world nobody was left. As long as business had not entered heavy industry, it had to be crushed.

Zinoviev ought to have been happy. He had called "to break the back of all opponents of the dictatorship of the proletariat" already at the dawn of the NEP. In the mid-1920s they put it differently: "It would be a wonderful NEP if only it were without nepmen and kulaks." That was how they spoke in the new party-bureaucratic milieu.

The writer Victor Serge (real name Kibaltchich, nephew of the People's Will revolutionary Nikolai Kibaltchich) wrote: "Kamenev and Zinoviev are the builders of the bureaucratic machine, outside of which nothing can live." The third man with them in building that machine was Stalin. By 1926 everything was practically ready. Stalin's first major victory over Trotsky at that time was due not only to his successful intra-party maneuvering, but also to the fact that the ultra-left revolutionary spirit of Trotsky-Lenin had been buried under the massive bureaucratic apparatus. Lenin's closest comrades, Zinoviev and Kamenev, had strengthened that apparatus as best they could. Zinoviev did so especially successfully. In Petrograd he had created his own court.

A "court" – that is, an apparatus built on family ties and personal loyalty to the master. Zinoviev's wife, Zlata Lilina, headed the provincial education department. Her brother, Ilya Ionov, headed the publishing house of the Petrograd Soviet. Zinoviev's brother-in-law, Samuil Zaks, headed the apparatus of the State Publishing House (Gosizdat) in Moscow.

All this Zinoviev clan persecuted Gorky, who wanted to sit on two chairs at once – to stand together with the Bolsheviks and at the same time support the old intelligentsia. Gorky had been allowed to

open his own publishing house. Zinoviev's brother-in-law, Ionov, who headed the Petrograd Soviet's publishing house, saw in Gorky a direct competitor. Gorky was getting money that could have gone to him, Ionov. The State Publishing House also had its own commercial plans, far removed from ideology. Gorky's executive director was his friend, the well-known collector and caricaturist Zinovy Grzhebin. It was precisely on Grzhebin that Zinoviev, his brother-in-law Ionov and his kinsman Zaks descended. Zaks wrote personally to Lenin, saying that Lenin did not know Gorky at all, that Lenin was generally a poor judge of people. He even reminded Lenin of his friendship with Roman Malinovsky, an agent of the tsarist police planted in the party. The main slogan of the Zinoviev campaign against the publisher Grzhebin was: "The Jew Grzhebin is fleecing not only Russian writers but also the Russian proletariat. Grzhebin is squandering the money of the working people." One extraordinary feature of this situation: it is from an antisemitic position that party and Soviet officials, themselves ethnically Jewish and not hiding their origin, are speaking. At the height of Soviet power, after Stalin's campaign against "cosmopolitanism", this would be unthinkable. Jewish origin would be carefully concealed by those who managed to climb into the top party circles.

Maxim Gorky fiercely hated antisemites and politicians who played the "Jewish card." Six months after the October coup he wrote: "Antisemitism is alive and gradually raising its vile head." He wrote this to Lenin. Lenin's old comrade Zinoviev oversaw the interception of Gorky's correspondence with Lenin. Lenin did not trust Gorky. He needed him for political image purposes.

In 1921 the Politburo voted several times on whether or not to allow the gravely ill poet Blok to go abroad for treatment. Zinoviev was categorically against saving Blok. Only a month and a half later did Lenin relent and vote "for". Zinoviev remained adamant. After Blok's death, Zinoviev urged the Cheka to hasten the execution of the arrested poet Gumilyov.

Zinoviev was a fervent activist of the Red Terror. Even the head of the Petrograd Cheka, Uritsky, sometimes spoke out against the harshest measures proposed by Zinoviev. Nowhere was terror as total as in Petrograd under Zinoviev. At the same time, he was incapable of organizing the defence of Petrograd against General Yudenich's army. Trotsky had to come and "save the situation."

During the famine of 1920, Zinoviev kept on a former imperial chef for his own kitchen.

This Zinoviev tradition would not die out and would be developed during the siege of Leningrad under Stalin's viceroy Zhdanov.

Academician Dmitry Sergeyevich Likhachev recalls that during the blockade, in the spring of 1942, he and a group of authors were asked to write a book on the defence of ancient Russian towns. They were summoned to the Smolny. Half dead with hunger, they barely got there.

Likhachev writes: "The smell of the canteen was heavy in the Smolny. People looked well-fed. A woman received us. She was plump and healthy."

On October 15, 1927, in Leningrad, a jubilee session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee opened to mark the 10th anniversary of October. Zinoviev had already been removed from the city's leadership for a year and a half. He had been replaced by Kirov. Zinoviev and Trotsky arrived from Moscow. They were ordinary members of the Central Committee. During the festive parade in front of the Tauride Palace, the opposition leaders were not allowed onto the reviewing stand. They stood to one side in the bed of a truck. Some demonstrators waved their caps at them. Some stopped – out of curiosity. Trotsky took that curiosity for support.

In Moscow, on October 21, a joint plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission was convened. The leaders of the new left opposition demanded the publication of Lenin's notes written in his last days, known as the "Letter to the Congress". These notes are usually considered and called Lenin's "Testament" because they contain the line about Stalin being rude. In the period of their alliance with Stalin, Kamenev and Zinoviev had tried not to publicize Lenin's text, primarily for this reason.

In fact, there was another reason. In the "Letter to the Congress", Lenin wrote not only about Stalin but also about Trotsky. He praised Trotsky highly: "The most capable man in the present Central Committee."

In 1927 Kamenev and Zinoviev, now allied with Trotsky, insisted that the "Testament" be widely publicized.

At the plenum Stalin read Lenin's text aloud. When he had finished, he answered Lenin as it were on the question of his own rudeness: "Yes, I am rude, comrades. Rude in relation to those who rudely split the party. Perhaps a certain mildness is needed towards splitters. But I do not possess such mildness."

The plenum removed Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee.

On November 7, the 10th anniversary of the October coup, Zinoviev in Leningrad and Trotsky in Moscow staged demonstrative actions.

In the morning, the balconies of oppositionists' apartments – these were the already mentioned Houses of Soviets – displayed portraits of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Lenin. There were banners reading "Back to Lenin!"

Several thousand workers, students and cadets from military schools took part in the alternative Trotskyist parades. The demonstrators were set upon by volunteer squads, police, and GPU agents in civilian clothes. Clearly audible antisemitic shouts were heard. Antisemitism as a method of struggle against the opposition was already in use. This problem had been discussed in June 1927 at a meeting of the Central Control Commission with Trotsky present. Afterwards, a statement by the Politburo – in effect by Stalin – appeared in the central press: "We are fighting Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev not because they are Jews, but because they are oppositionists." The reading public took in the message that the opposition leaders were Jews.

On November 7, Trotsky and Kamenev drove around central Moscow by car. Stones were thrown at them; GPU agents fired several shots into the air. Raids were carried out in the homes of a number of oppositionists. In the flat of the poet Mikhail Svetlov, at 2, Art Theatre Passage, an underground printshop had produced a Trotskyist newspaper, Kommunist, with his verses for November 7. Later the Soviet poet Mikhail Svetlov, author of the famous poem "Grenada", would evade arrest by plunging into long heavy drinking bouts.

Academician Boris Chertok, rocket engineer and right-hand man of Sergei Korolev, recalls: "On the VTsIK House, at the corner of Vozdvizhenka and Mokhovaya, where Kalinin's office was, a huge portrait of Trotsky was hung. Soldiers on the balcony began tearing down this portrait with long poles. The crowd below went wild. It was impossible to tell whether there were more Trotsky supporters or opponents. Suddenly a column of Trotskyist students emerged from the university gates. A brawl broke out in the street, and you could not tell who was on whose side."

In 1927 Boris Chertok was a seventh-grade pupil. In his memoirs he writes: “The next day, during the long break, yelling ‘Beat the Trotskyists!’, we burst into the neighboring class 7B. They were ready to defend themselves. On the blackboard was written the slogan: ‘Fire on the kulak, the nepman and the bureaucrat!’”

On November 14, Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the party. Kamenev was removed from the Central Committee.

On the evening of November 16, 1927, Zinoviev moved out of his Kremlin apartment at the same time as Kamenev. Victor Serge recalls: “In his Kremlin flat, Zinoviev sat beside Lenin’s death mask. More precisely, it was Lenin’s head on a pillow under glass. Zinoviev said to me: ‘Only members of the Central Committee have the right to live in the Kremlin. They’re throwing me out, and I’ll go away together with the death mask of old Ilyich.’”

Trotsky had left the Kremlin as early as November 14. He recalls: “I lived in the apartment of my friend Beloborodov, who still officially held the post of People’s Commissar for Internal Affairs of the RSFSR.” Let us recall that on Lenin’s and Sverdlov’s orders, Beloborodov had signed the order for the execution of the royal family in July 1918. The GPU did not immediately determine exactly where Trotsky had settled after leaving the Kremlin.

Karl Radek, known as the “golden pen of the party”, was also packing his things in the Kremlin. Victor Serge found him destroying papers amid a litter of old books on the carpet:
“ ‘I’m going to strip all this and make off. We must be idiots: we haven’t a penny, and we could have grabbed marvelous trophies.’

Suddenly Kamenev and Sokolnikov came in to see Radek. Kamenev’s beard had turned completely gray. Such a respectable old man.”

Kamenev was forty-four. At that time Kamenev had in fact separated from his wife, Olga Davydovna, Trotsky’s sister. Unofficially, but openly, he now considered as his wife Tatyana Ivanovna Glebova. She was an instructor in the women’s department of the Moscow party committee.

The father of the Soviet gold chervonets, Sokolnikov, who came with Kamenev to see Radek, would soon marry the ex-wife of Central Committee member Serebryakov, Galina.

Galina Serebryakova recalls: “I met Kamenev’s wife, Tatyana Ivanovna, a typical Russian beauty. The kind of woman you want to put a kokoshnik on, and cover her white, full shoulders with a loose velvet gown trimmed with sable. It was for such women that fistfights happened in old Russia.”

Tatyana Glebova and members of her family were to be shot. Their son survived. Tatyana Ivanovna’s mother died after Kamenev’s first trial in 1935. From the window of her flat in Karmanitksy Lane off the Arbat, Galina Serebryakova watched the yardman nailing together a wooden cross for the grave of Kamenev’s mother-in-law. The Kamenevs and the Serebryakovs were neighbors.

In 1927, Kamenev was briefly ambassador to Italy. Together with Glebova, he visited Gorky on Capri. Later, during a short exile from Moscow, Tatyana Ivanovna lived with Kamenev in Kaluga. In 1932–1933 they were in exile in Minusinsk. In 1929 their son Vladimir was born. He took his

mother’s surname. In all he spent eighteen years in the camps. His last arrest came in 1950, in his fifth year at Leningrad University.

Before the revolution, in Paris, Kamenev and his wife Olga Davydovna lived near the family of the SR leader Viktor Chernov. They socialized. The legendary Yevno Azef, police informer and chief SR terrorist, killer of high tsarist officials, used to call on Chernov. Kamenev’s first son Alexander had just been born, known in the family as Lyutik (“little flower”). In 1918 Chernov would be elected chairman of the famous Constituent Assembly, which the Bolsheviks would disperse. In 1920 Chernov was wanted by the authorities. His wife and three daughters were arrested. Chernov’s friends, remembering their common Paris exile, appealed to Kamenev for help.

Kamenev replied that the family members had been detained as hostages. And that his wife, Olga Davydovna, was ready to take Chernov’s ten-year-old youngest daughter, Ariadna, into their home.

Chernov was given Kamenev’s reply. He reacted as follows: “After you explained with enviable composure that my wife and three children had been taken as hostages by Soviet power, there can no longer be talk of any personal relations based on the past. Besides, I do not want my daughter to enjoy the privileges of the Kremlin, which are a mockery of the hunger of children in Moscow and beyond.” The Chernov family managed to emigrate in 1921.

During the Second World War, Ariadna and her husband took part in the French Resistance. In 1960 they returned to the Soviet Union.

At the end of the 1920s, Kamenev’s first family – Olga Davydovna and the sons Alexander and Yuri – lived in a house on Manezh Square, beneath the flat of Lenin’s sister, Anna Ilinichna Ulyanova-Elizarova. Kamenev’s daughter-in-law, the actress Galina Kravchenko, recalls: “At first life was like a fairy tale. A six-room apartment. For lunch I went to the ‘Kremlin cafeteria’ (that is, the Kremlin canteen-distribution center) in Lev Borisovich’s car. The lunches were for two, but nine people were full to the brim on them.”

Galina Kravchenko married Kamenev’s son, the Moscow playboy Lyutik, in 1929. By this time the whole country was already living on ration cards. And Galina remembers the Kremlin lunches: “For lunch there was always half a kilo of black caviar, grain caviar. Together with lunch, or instead of it, you could take a dry ration: cold meats, groceries, sweets, liquor, wonderful cutlets, anything you wanted. If you needed more, you could order it. For Maslenitsa we were given hot blini. They were brought in containers, and the blini barely had time to cool.”

Clothes were harder to come by. Kamenev’s daughter-in-law had her clothes made at the Foreign Affairs Commissariat’s dressmaking shop on Kuznetsky Most. There she would meet Stalin’s wife, Alliluyeva.

Once Kamenev asked his daughter-in-law to buy him some socks. Galina Kravchenko writes: “I went out and came back with nothing.
‘There are no socks, Lev Borisovich,’ I said.
‘How can that be?’
‘That’s how: there are no socks anywhere in Moscow.’
Kamenev was astonished.”

That was already in 1932.

Kamenev's daughter-in-law acted in NEP-era films: The Cigarette Girl from Mosselprom, The NEP's Bacchanalia, The Doll with Millions. In 1967 she appeared in Sergei Bondarchuk's War and Peace as Julie Karagina. She came from a good family, had finished a gymnasium and the Bolshoi Theatre's ballet school.

At the Kamenevs' flat on Manezh Square, the artistic crowd would gather. Lenin's sister, Anna Ilinichna, would send the maid to ask them not to make so much noise. Eisenstein came often. Kamenev adored him.

On November 7, 1927, the Bolshoi Theatre hosted the premiere of Sergei Eisenstein and Grigori Alexandrov's film October. Stalin personally edited the film. He cut out Trotsky.

When, in the spring of 1935, they came to arrest Kamenev's son, the search seized a strip of film on which Kamenev appeared together with Lenin. During a visit in Butyrka prison, Alexander Kamenev told his wife to leave immediately and go as far away as possible with their son, to arrange her life and give the child her own surname.

Kamenev's grandson, Vitaly Kravchenko, was arrested in 1951. He was studying law and was secretary of the Komsomol committee. His fellow students informed on him: the grandson of an enemy of the people, Kamenev – and in such a post! He was jailed.

Kamenev's brother, Nikolai, an artist, his wife and their son, an engineer, were shot. Kamenev's younger son, Yuri, a ninth-grade schoolboy, was shot.

At the end of her life, Kamenev's daughter-in-law said: "Now that I've learned so much about the execution of the tsar's family, I don't know why, but I think life punished them all, with their children and wives – the guilty and the innocent."

Kamenev's father, a successful railway engineer, studied at the St Petersburg Technological Institute in the same year as Grinevitsky. Ignaty Grinevitsky was a Russian terrorist, a bomber, the assassin of Emperor Alexander II, the man who abolished serfdom in Russia.

The Fifteenth Party Congress has been known in Soviet historiography as "the congress of collectivization." In fact, collectivization was not discussed at that congress. In his report, Stalin said: "Those comrades are wrong who think that we can and must do away with the kulak as a class by administrative means, through the GPU."

A week and a half later, Stalin would change his position to one directly opposite. The total destruction of the peasantry would begin. The congress's moderate decisions did not interest Stalin. Nevertheless, the Fifteenth Congress in December 1927 deserves attention for two reasons. For the last time – though not for the first – Stalin declared at this congress that he was ready to resign. He said: "I ask to be relieved of my duties as General Secretary. I assure you, comrades, that the party will only gain from this." Naturally, his request was turned down.

Stalin explained his request to resign. He said: "Until very recently, the party needed me as a man who was more or less tough, as an antidote to the opposition. Now the opposition has been defeated." Stalin was telling the plain truth.

Immediately after the congress, Zinoviev and Kamenev wrote a declaration in which they condemned their own views as anti-Leninist. They wrote that they submitted to the will of the party, "for it is the only supreme judge." Zinoviev and Kamenev's "Open Letter" was printed in Pravda.

Trotsky wrote no letter of repentance. Zinoviev and Kamenev declared that they had broken with Trotsky's group.

They were given a six-month probation. They were sent to Kaluga. In July 1928, in Kaluga, Kamenev received a letter in exile from Grigori Sokolnikov. Sokolnikov, who had repented first at the Fifteenth Congress, remained on the Central Committee. He was also Bukharin's old schoolmate from the gymnasium. In this letter, written in plain language, he told Kamenev: "Battles are brewing in the Central Committee. Come. We must consult." Kamenev came. The three of them – Sokolnikov, Kamenev and Bukharin – met. In essence, the conversation was Bukharin's highly emotional monologue. He said that Stalin was an unprincipled intriguer, deliberately stoking disagreements and leading the country to civil war. Soon the "record of the conversation between Bukharin and Kamenev" appeared on Stalin's desk. Stalin deliberately told the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Rykov, about it. Rykov ran to Bukharin. Bukharin exclaimed: "Then Kamenev informed on me – the scoundrel, the traitor!" Later, the GPU arranged for this "record" to be published abroad, in the Socialist Herald. After its publication abroad, the text was reproduced in Moscow and distributed to Central Committee members. It would be used both against Bukharin and against Kamenev. After camp and exile, Bukharin's wife read this text. She does not believe it was written by Kamenev himself. That is, she does not consider it Kamenev's denunciation of Stalin. She can be trusted in this matter. She believes the "record" was the result of GPU wiretapping. Even then, this was standard, well-established practice. Stalin himself showed Bukharin transcripts of Zinoviev's conversations with his wife. Political topics alternated with intimate matters. Stalin savored the intimate details.

In that conversation, Bukharin told Kamenev that Stalin would want to use him, Kamenev, in his struggle against him, Bukharin. Kamenev wrote to Zinoviev: "Any day now, there should be signals from the other camp." By this he meant a signal from Stalin. In his letter to Zinoviev he adds: "It will come. We'll see what they say."

Signals from Stalin did not follow. Zinoviev was appointed rector of the university in Kazan. Kamenev went to Glavkontsesskom, the Central Concessions Committee. Then both were exiled again. Zinoviev's last post was as a member of the board of the Central Union of Consumer Societies. After his exile, Kamenev headed the excellent publishing house Academia. He oversaw the preparation of a new academic edition of Pushkin's works. He worked with the Pushkin Museum at Mikhaylovskoye. In effect, Kamenev was preparing the centennial commemoration of Pushkin's death.

When Bukharin offered him the post of head of the literary section of Izvestia, Kamenev refused: "I want to be forgotten. I want Stalin not even to remember my name."

Korney Chukovsky recalls: "On December 5, 1934, I was invited to dinner at Kamenev's. Zinoviev was also there; he said he was writing an article 'Pushkin and the Decembrists'." After dinner, Chukovsky and Kamenev went to the Hall of Columns to stand by the coffin of the murdered Kirov.

The subsequent charge that Kamenev and Zinoviev had organized the assassination of the first secretary of the Leningrad regional committee of the VKP(b), Kirov, was fabricated. They were shot in August 1936. It was Kamenev who, while Lenin was still alive, had proposed Stalin's candidacy for General Secretary.

Right up to his arrest on December 16, 1934, Kamenev headed the Institute of Russian Literature in Leningrad and, in Moscow, the Maxim Gorky Institute of World Literature. Gorky was still alive. Bukharin said: “Gorky wants to see Kamenev as the leader of Soviet literature.”

Zinoviev was arrested the same day as Kamenev. He lived on the Arbat, in the famous “House with the Knights”. At the moment of his arrest, he wrote to Stalin: “I thought only of one thing: how to deserve the trust of the Central Committee and your personal trust. In nothing, in nothing, in nothing am I guilty.”

From prison, Zinoviev wrote again to Stalin: “I get to the point where I stare for long spells at your portraits and those of the other Politburo members in the newspapers, thinking: my dear ones, I belong to you in soul and body. I have understood that I am ready to do anything to earn forgiveness, mercy.”

Finally, on January 28, 1935, Zinoviev wrote to Gorky: “You are a great artist, a connoisseur of the human soul, a teacher of life; think, I beg you, for a moment, what it means for me to be sitting now in a Soviet prison. Try to picture it concretely.”

Gorky never received the letter. Once upon a time, Zinoviev had held back Gorky’s letters to Lenin. Now Gorky’s correspondence was sifted on Stalin’s orders.

In one of the bookcases in Gorky’s mansion there stood a very rare book. Publishing house Academia, 1935. Virtually the entire remaining print-run had been pulped. It was Fyodor Dostoevsky’s novel The Devils (The Possessed). It was being published in the USSR for the first time. The bold decision to publish The Devils had been taken by Kamenev. In Pravda the novel was immediately denounced as a “dirty little libel against the revolution” and “old rubbish.” Before Stalin, this novel of Dostoevsky had been banned by Lenin’s wife, Krupskaya.