

Stalin, J.W.

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Preface

The ninth volume of the Works of J. V. Stalin contains writings and speeches of the period from December 1926 to July 1927.

This was a time when the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R., under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party and on the basis of the decisions of the Fourteenth Congress and Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.), were continuing their efforts for the socialist industrialisation of the country.

The strengthening of the socialist economy of the U.S.S.R. gave rise to a sharp intensification of the struggle of the imperialist states against the Soviet Union, and of the struggle of the capitalist elements against the socialist elements within the country.

“Something like a united front from Chamberlain to Trotsky was being formed” against the Soviet government.

In his report “Once More on the Social-Democratic Deviation in Our Party,” delivered at the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I., and his reply to the discussion on the report, his speeches at the Fifteenth Moscow Gubernia Party Conference and at the meeting of workers of the Stalin Railway Workshops, the article “Notes on Contemporary Themes” and in other works, J. V. Stalin upholds and develops the Marxist-Leninist teaching on the Party as the principal directing and guiding force of the Soviet state, exposes the “theories” of the leaders of the Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc as inimical to the cause of the working class and the Bolshevik Party, and denounces the subversive activities of these leaders within the C.P.S.U.(B.) and the Comintern.

In these works, J. V. Stalin deals with questions of the theory and practice of socialist industrialisation, the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R.; he stresses the unity and indivisibility of the national and international tasks of the socialist revolution; he defines the Party’s line in the sphere of foreign policy at a time when the threat of a now armed attack on the U.S.S.R. had grown, and indicates the requirements for strengthening the defensive capacity of the Soviet Union.

In “The Party’s Three Fundamental Slogans on the Peasant Question,” “Concerning the Question of a Workers’ and Peasants’ Government,” and “The Slogan of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Poor Peasantry in the Period of Preparation for October,” J. V. Stalin develops Lenin’s teaching on the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, and on the leading role of the proletariat in this alliance, and explains the class essence of the Soviet state and Soviet Government.

A considerable part of the ninth volume is taken up by works devoted to an analysis of the motive forces and prospects of development of the revolutionary-democratic and anti-imperialist movement of the Chinese people in 1925-27. They include: “Questions of the Chinese Revolution,” “Talk With Students of the Sun Yat-sen University,” “The Revolution in China and the Tasks of the Comintern,” and others.

Published for the first time in this volume are J. V. Stalin’s letters to Ksenofontov, Zaitsev, Shinkevich, Chugunov, Tsvetkov and Alypov, and Pokrovsky.

Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute
of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.)

Preface

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I

Preliminary Remarks

Comrades, permit me to make a few preliminary remarks before passing to the substance of the question.

1. Contradictions of Inner-Party Development

The first question is that of the struggle within our Party, a struggle which did not begin yesterday and which has not ceased.

If we take the history of our Party from the moment of its inception in 1903 in the form of the Bolshevik group, and follow its successive stages down to our day, we can say without exaggeration that the history of our Party has been the history of a struggle of contradictions within the Party, the history of the overcoming of these contradictions and of the gradual strengthening of our Party on the basis of overcoming them. Some might think that the Russians are excessively pugnacious, that they love debating and multiply differences, and that it is because of this that the development of their Party proceeds through the overcoming of inner Party contradictions. That is not true, comrades. It is not a matter of pugnacity, but of the existence of disagreements based on principle, which arise in the course of the Party's development, in the course of the class struggle of the proletariat. The fact of the matter is that contradictions can be overcome only by means of a struggle for definite principles, for definite aims of the struggle, for definite methods of waging the struggle leading to the desired aim. One can, and should, agree to any compromise with dissenters in the Party on questions of current policy, on questions of a purely practical nature. But if these questions are connected with disagreements based on principle, no compromise, no "middle" line can save the situation. There can be no "middle" line in questions of principle. Either one set of principles or another must be made the basis of the Party's work. A "middle" line in matters of principle is the "line" of stuffing people's heads with rubbish, of glossing over disagreements, a "line" leading to the ideological degeneration of the Party, to the ideological death of the Party.

How do the Social-Democratic parties of the West exist and develop nowadays? Have they inner-party contradictions, disagreements based on principle? Of course, they have. Do they disclose these contradictions and try to overcome them honestly and openly in sight of the mass of the party membership? No, of course not. It is the practice of the Social-Democrats to cover up and conceal these contradictions and disagreements. It is the practice of the Social-Democrats to turn their conferences and congresses into an empty parade of ostensible well-being, assiduously covering up and slurring over internal disagreements. But nothing can come of this except stuffing people's heads with rubbish and the ideological impoverishment of the party. This is one of the reasons for the decline of West-European Social-Democracy, which was once revolutionary, and is now reformist.

We, however, cannot live and develop in that way, comrades. The policy of a "middle" line in matters of principle is not our policy. The policy of a "middle" line in matters of principle is

the policy of decaying and degenerating parties. Such a policy cannot but lead to the conversion of the party into an empty bureaucratic apparatus, running idle and divorced from the masses of the workers. That path is not our path.

Our Party's whole past confirms the thesis that the history of our Party is the history of the overcoming of inner-Party contradictions and of the constant strengthening of the ranks of our Party on the basis of overcoming them.

Let us take the first period, the Iskra period, or the period of the Second Congress of our Party, when the disagreements between the Bolsheviks and the Men-sheviks first appeared within our Party and when the top leadership of our Party in the end split into two sections: the Bolshevik section (Lenin), and the Men-shevik section (Plekhanov, Axelrod, Martov, Zasluch, Potresov). Lenin then stood alone. If you only knew how much howling and shouting there was then about the "irreplaceables" who had left Lenin! But experience of the struggle and the history of the Party showed that this divergence was based on principle, that it was an essential phase for the birth and development of a really revolutionary and really Marxist party. The experience of the struggle at that time showed, firstly, that the important thing was not quantity, but quality, and, secondly, that the important thing was not formal unity, but that unity should be based on principle. History showed that Lenin was right and the "irreplaceables" were wrong. History showed that if these contradictions between Lenin and the "irreplaceables" had not been overcome, we should not today have a genuine revolutionary party.

Let us take the next period, the period of the eve of the 1905 Revolution, when the Bolsheviks and Men-sheviks confronted each other still within one party as two camps with two absolutely different platforms, when the Bolsheviks stood on the verge of a formal splitting of the Party, and when, in order to uphold the line of our revolution, they were compelled to convene a special congress of their own (the Third Congress). To what did the Bolshevik section of the Party owe the fact that it then gained the upper hand, that it won the sympathy of the majority of the Party? To the fact that it did not slur over disagreements based on principle and fought to overcome them by isolating the Men-sheviks.

I might refer, further, to the third stage in the development of our Party, the period following the defeat of the 1905 Revolution, the 1907 period, when a section of the Bolsheviks, the so-called "Otzovists," headed by Bogdanov, forsook Bolshevism. This was a critical period in the life of our Party. It was the period when a number of Bolsheviks of the old guard deserted Lenin and his party. The Mensheviks loudly asserted that the Bolsheviks were done for. But Bolshevism was not done for, and in the course of about a year and a half experience of the struggle showed that Lenin and his party were right in fighting to overcome the contradictions within the Bolshevik ranks. These contradictions were overcome not by slurring over them, but by bringing them into the open and by a struggle, to the benefit and advantage of our Party.

I might refer, further, to the fourth period in the history of our Party, the 1911-12 period, when the Bolsheviks rebuilt the Party, which had almost been shattered by tsarist reaction, and expelled the Liquidators. Here, too, as in the previous periods, the Bolsheviks proceeded to rebuild and strengthen the Party, not by slurring over the disagreements with the Liquidators on matters of principle, but by bringing them into the open and overcoming them.

I might point, next, to the fifth stage in the development of our Party, the period preceding the October Revolution of 1917, when a section of the Bolsheviks, headed by well-known leaders of the Bolshevik Party, wavered and were against undertaking the October uprising, considering it an adventure. We know that this contradiction, too, the Bolsheviks overcame not by slurring over the disagreements, but by an open struggle for the October Revolution. Experience of the struggle showed that if we had not overcome those disagreements we might have placed the October Revolution in a critical position.

I might point, lastly, to subsequent periods in the development of our inner-Party struggle—the period of the Brest Peace, the 1921 period (the trade-union discussion), and the other periods, with which you are familiar and on which I shall not dilate here. It is well known that in all these, as in earlier periods, our Party grew and became strong by overcoming internal contradictions. What follows from this?

It follows that the C.P.S.U.(B.) grew and became strong by overcoming inner-Party contradictions.

It follows that the overcoming of inner-Party disagreements by means of struggle is a law of development of our Party.

Some may say that this may be a law for the C.P.S.U.(B.), but not for other proletarian parties. That is not true. This law is a law of development for all parties of some size, whether the proletarian Party of the U.S.S.R. or the proletarian parties of the West. Whereas in a small party in a small country it is possible in one way or another to slur over disagreements, covering them up by the prestige of one or several persons, in the case of a big party in a big country development through the overcoming of contradictions is an inevitable element of party growth and consolidation. So it was in the past. So it is today.

I should like here to refer to the authority of Engels, who, together with Marx, directed the proletarian parties of the West for several decades. The matter concerns the eighties of the last century, when the Anti-Socialist Law 2 was in force in Germany, when Marx and Engels were in exile in London, and when the Sozialdemokrat, 3 the illegal German Social-Democratic organ published abroad, in fact guided the work of German Social-Democracy. Bernstein was then a revolutionary Marxist (he had not yet managed to go over to the reformists), and Engels maintained a lively correspondence with him on the most burning problems of German Social-Democratic policy. Here is what he wrote to Bernstein at that time (1882):

"It seems that every workers' party in a big country can develop only by inner struggle, in full conformity with the laws of dialectical development in general. The German Party has become what it is in a struggle between the Eisenachers and the Lassalleans, in which the fight itself played a major role. Unity became possible only when the gang of rascals deliberately reared by Lassalle to serve him as a tool had played itself out, and even so our side showed much too much haste in agreeing to unity. In France, the people who, although they have sacrificed the Bakunin-ist theory, continue to employ Bakuninist methods of struggle and at the same time want to sacrifice the class character of the movement to their own special ends, must also first play themselves out before unity can again become possible. To preach unity under such circumstances would be sheer folly. Moral preaching is of no avail against infantile diseases, which under present circumstances have to be gone through" (see Marx-Engels Archives, Book I, pp. 324-25 4).

For, Engels says in another place (1885):

"In the long run the contradictions are never slurred over, but always fought out" (ibid., p. 371).

It is to this, above all, that we must attribute the existence of contradictions within our Party and the development of our Party by overcoming these contradictions through struggle.

2. Sources of Contradictions Within the Party

Where do these contradictions and disagreements stem from, what is their source?

I think that the source of the contradictions within the proletarian parties lies in two circumstances.

What are these circumstances?

They are, firstly, the pressure exerted by the bourgeoisie and bourgeois ideology on the proletariat and its party in the conditions of the class struggle—a pressure to which the least stable strata of the proletariat, and, hence, the least stable strata of the proletarian party, not infrequently succumb. It must not be thought that the proletariat is completely isolated from society, that it stands outside society. The proletariat is a part of society, connected with its diverse strata by numerous threads. But the party is a part of the proletariat. Hence the Party cannot be exempt from connections with, and from the influence of, the diverse sections of bourgeois society. The pressure of the bourgeoisie and its ideology on the proletariat and its party finds expression in the fact that bourgeois ideas, manners, customs and sentiments not infrequently penetrate the proletariat and its party through definite strata of the proletariat that are in one way or another connected with bourgeois society.

They are, secondly, the heterogeneity of the working class, the existence of different strata within the working class. I think that the proletariat, as a class, can be divided into three strata.

One stratum is the main mass of the proletariat, its core, its permanent part, the mass of "pure-blooded" proletarians, who have long broken off connection with the capitalist class. This stratum of the proletariat is the most reliable bulwark of Marxism.

The second stratum consists of newcomers from non-proletarian classes—from the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie or the intelligentsia. These are former members of other classes who have only recently merged with the proletariat and have brought with them into the working class their customs, their habits, their waverings and their vacillations. This stratum constitutes the most favourable soil for all sorts of anarchist, semi-anarchist and "ultra-Left" groups.

The third stratum, lastly, consists of the labour aristocracy, the upper stratum of the working class, the most well-to-do portion of the proletariat, with its propensity for compromise with the bourgeoisie, its predominant inclination to adapt itself to the powers that be, and its anxiety to "get on in life." This stratum constitutes the most favourable soil for outright reformists and opportunists.

Notwithstanding their superficial difference, these last two strata of the working class constitute a more or less common nutritive medium for opportunism in general—open

opportunism, when the sentiments of the labour aristocracy gain the upper hand, and opportunism camouflaged with "Left" phrases, when the sentiments of the semi-middle-class strata of the working class which have not yet completely broken with the petty-bourgeois environment gain the upper hand. The fact that "ultra-Left" sentiments very often coincide with the sentiments of open opportunism is not at all surprising. Lenin said time and again that the "ultra-Left" opposition is the reverse side of the Right-wing, Menshevik, openly opportunist opposition. And that is quite true. If the "ultra-Lefts" stand for revolution only because they expect the victory of the revolution the very next day, then obviously they must fall into despair and be disillusioned in the revolution if the revolution is delayed, if the revolution is not victorious the very next day.

Naturally, with every turn in the development of the class struggle, with every sharpening of the struggle and intensification of difficulties, the differences in the views, customs and sentiments of the various strata of the proletariat must inevitably make themselves felt in the shape of definite disagreements within the party, and the pressure of the bourgeoisie and its ideology must inevitably accentuate these disagreements by providing them with an outlet in the form of a struggle within the proletarian party.

Such are the sources of inner-Party contradictions and disagreements.

Can these contradictions and disagreements be avoided? No, they cannot. To think that these contradictions can be avoided is self-deception. Engels was right when he said that in the long run it is impossible to slur over contradictions within the party, that they must be fought out.

This does not mean that the party must be turned into a debating society. On the contrary, the proletarian party is, and must remain, a militant organisation of the proletariat. All I want to say is that one cannot brush aside and shut one's eyes to disagreements within the party if they are disagreements over matters of principle. All I want to say is that only by fighting for the Marxist line based on principle can a proletarian party be protected from the pressure and influence of the bourgeoisie. All I want to say is that only by overcoming inner-Party contradictions can we succeed in making the Party sound and strong.

II

Specific Features of the Opposition in the C.P.S.U.(B.)

Permit me now to pass from the preliminary remarks to the question of the opposition in the C.P.S.U.(B.).

First of all, I should like to mention certain specific features of our inner-Party opposition. I am referring to its external features, those which strike the eye, and shall leave aside for the present the substance of the disagreements. I think these specific features may be reduced to three principal ones. There is, firstly, the fact that the opposition in the C.P.S.U.(B.) is a combined opposition and not "simply" some kind of opposition. There is, secondly, the fact that the opposition tries to camouflage its opportunism with "Left" phrases, making a parade of "revolutionary" slogans. There is, thirdly, the fact that the opposition, because of its amorphousness as regards principles, every now and again complains that it has been misunderstood—that in point of fact the opposition leaders constitute a faction of "the misunderstood." (Laughter.)

Let us begin with the first specific feature. How are we to explain the fact that our opposition comes forward as a combined opposition, as a bloc of all the various trends previously

condemned by the Party, and, moreover, that it comes forward not "simply," but with Trotskyism at its head?

It is to be explained by the following circumstances:

Firstly, by the fact that all the trends united in the bloc—the Trotskyists, the "New Opposition," the remnants of "Democratic Centralism,"⁵ the remnants of the "Workers' Opposition"⁶ — are all more or less opportunist trends, which have either been fighting Leninism since their inception or have begun to fight it latterly. It stands to reason that this common feature could not but facilitate their uniting into a bloc for the purpose of fighting the Party.

Secondly, by the fact that the present period is a crucial one, and that this crucial period has again faced us point blank with the basic questions of our revolution; and since all these trends differed, and continue to differ, with our Party over various questions of the revolution, it is natural that the character of the present period, which sums up and strikes the balance of all our disagreements, should impel all these trends into one bloc, a bloc opposed to the basic line of our Party. It stands to reason that this circumstance could not but facilitate the uniting of the diverse opposition trends into one common camp.

Thirdly, by the fact that the mighty strength and solidarity of our Party, on the one hand, and the weakness of all the opposition trends without exception and their divorce from the masses, on the other hand, could not but render the disunited struggle of these trends against the Party manifestly hopeless, in view of which the opposition trends inevitably had to take the course of uniting their forces, so as to compensate for the weakness of the individual groups by combining them, and thus increase the opposition's chances, if only in appearance.

Well, and how are we to explain the fact that the opposition bloc is headed precisely by Trotskyism?

Firstly, by the fact that Trotskyism represents the most consummate opportunist trend of all the existing opposition trends in our Party (the Fifth Congress of the Comintern was right in characterising Trotskyism as a petty-bourgeois deviation⁷).

Secondly, by the fact that not a single other opposition trend in our Party is able to camouflage its opportunism with "Left" and r-r-r-revolutionary phrases so cunningly and skilfully as Trotskyism. (Laughter.)

This is not the first occasion in the history of our Party that Trotskyism has come forward at the head of the opposition trends against our Party. I should like to refer to the well known precedent in the history of our Party dating back to 1910-14, when a bloc of anti-Party opposition trends, headed by Trotsky, was formed in the shape of the so-called August Bloc. I should like to refer to this precedent, because that bloc represents as it were the prototype of the present opposition bloc. At that time Trotsky united against the Party the Liquidators (Potresov, Martov and others), the Otzovists ("Vperyodists") and his own group. Now he has attempted to unite in an opposition bloc the "Workers' Opposition," the "New Opposition" and his own group.

We know that Lenin fought the August Bloc for three years. Here is what Lenin wrote of the August Bloc on the eve of its formation:

"We therefore declare in the name of the Party as a whole that Trotsky is conducting an anti-Party policy—that he is breaking Party law and embarking on the path of adventurism and a split. . . . Trotsky keeps silent about this undeniable truth, because the real aims of his policy cannot stand the truth. But the real aims are becoming ever clearer and more obvious even to the least far-sighted Party members. These real aims are an anti-Party bloc of the Potresovs and Vperyodists, which bloc Trotsky is supporting and organising. . . . This bloc, of course, will support Trotsky's 'fund,' and the anti-Party conference he is convening, because both the Potresovs and the Vperyodists are getting here what they want: freedom for their factions and their consecration, a cover for their activity, and lawyer-like advocacy of it in the eyes of the workers.

"Well then, precisely from the standpoint of 'fundamental principles,' we cannot but regard this bloc as adventurism in the most precise meaning of the term. To say that he sees in Potresov and the Otzovists genuine Marxists, real champions of the principles of Social-Democracy, Trotsky does not dare. The essence of the position of an adventurer is that he has permanently to be evasive. . . . Trotsky's bloc with Potresov and the Vperyod-ists is adventurism precisely from the standpoint of 'fundamental principles.' That is no less true from the standpoint of the Party's political tasks. . . . The experience of the year since the plenum has shown in practice that it is precisely the Potresov groups and the Vperyod faction that embody this bourgeois influence on the proletariat. . . . Thirdly and lastly, Trotsky's policy is adventurism in the organisational sense, for, as we have already pointed out, it tears down Party legality and, by organising a conference in the name of one group abroad (or in the name of a bloc of two anti-Party factions—the Golosists and Vperyodists), it is directly making for a split" (see Vol. XV, pp. 65, 67-70).

That is what Lenin said about the first bloc of anti-Party trends headed by Trotsky. The same must be said in substance, but still more emphatically, of the present bloc of anti-Party trends, also headed by Trotsky.

These are the reasons why our opposition now comes forward in the shape of a united opposition, and not "simply," but with Trotskyism at its head.

That is how matters stand as regards the first specific feature of the opposition.

Let us pass to the second specific feature. I have already said that the second specific feature of the opposition is its strenuous effort to camouflage its opportunist deeds with "Left," "revolutionary" phrases. I do not consider it possible to dwell here on the facts that show the constant divergence between "revolutionary" words and opportunist deeds in the practice of our opposition. It is sufficient to examine, for example, the theses on the opposition adopted by the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) 8 to understand how this camouflage works. I should like merely to quote a few instances from the history of our Party which indicate that all the opposition trends in our Party in the period since the seizure of power have endeavoured to camouflage their non-revolutionary deeds with "revolutionary" phrases, invariably criticising the Party and its policy from the "Left."

Let us take, for example, the "Left" Communists who came out against the Party in the period of the Brest Peace (1918). We know that they criticised the Party from the "Left," attacking the Brest Peace and characterising the Party's policy as opportunist, unpro-letarian and one of compromise with the imperialists. But it proved in practice that, in attacking the Brest Peace, the "Left" Communists were preventing the Party from securing a "respite" in which to

organise and consolidate Soviet power, that they were helping the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who were then opposed to the Brest Peace, and were facilitating the efforts of imperialism, which was endeavouring to crush the Soviet power at its very inception.

Let us take the "Workers' Opposition" (1921). We know that it also criticised the Party from the "Left," "fulminating" against the policy of NEP and "pulverising" to "dust and ashes" Lenin's thesis that the restoration of industry must begin with the development of agriculture, which provides the raw materials and food that are prerequisites for industry, "pulverising" this thesis of Lenin's on the grounds that it ignored the interests of the proletariat and was a peasant deviation. But it proved in practice that, had it not been for the NEP policy, had it not been for the development of agriculture, which provides the raw materials and food that are prerequisites for industry, we should have had no industry at all, and the proletariat would have remained declassed. Moreover, we know in which direction the "Workers' Opposition" began to develop after this—to the Right or to the Left.

Let us, lastly, take Trotskyism, which for several years now has been criticising our Party from the "Left" and which at the same time, as the Fifth Congress of the Comintern correctly put it, is a petty-bourgeois deviation. What can there be in common between a petty-bourgeois deviation and real revolutionary spirit? Is it not obvious that "revolutionary" phrases are here merely a camouflage for a petty-bourgeois deviation?

There is no need to mention the "New Opposition," whose "Left" cries are designed to conceal the fact that it is a captive of Trotskyism.

What do all these facts show?

That "Left" camouflage of opportunist actions has been one of the most characteristic features of all the various opposition trends in our Party during the period since the seizure of power.

What is the explanation of this phenomenon?

The explanation lies in the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R., the profound revolutionary traditions that are deep-seated in our proletariat. The explanation lies in the downright hatred in which anti-revolutionary and opportunist elements are held by the workers of the U.S.S.R. The explanation lies in the fact that our workers will simply not listen to an open opportunist, and that therefore the "revolutionary" camouflage is a bait designed to attract, if only by its outward appearance, the attention of the workers and to inspire them with confidence in the opposition. Our workers, for instance, cannot understand why the British workers to this day have not thought of drowning such traitors as Thomas, of throwing them down a well. (Laughter.) Anyone who knows our workers will easily realise that individuals and opportunists like Thomas would simply not be tolerated by the Soviet workers. Yet we know that not only are the British workers not preparing to drown Messieurs the Thomases, but they even re-elect them to the General Council and re-elect them not just simply, but with acclamation. Obviously, such workers do not need a revolutionary camouflage for opportunism, since they are not averse to accepting opportunists into their midst as it is.

And what is the explanation of this? The explanation lies in the fact that the British workers have no revolutionary traditions. These revolutionary traditions are now coming into being. They are coming into being and developing, and there is no reason to doubt that the British

workers are being tempered in revolutionary battle. But as long as these are lacking, the difference between the British and the Soviet workers remains. This, in fact, explains why it is risky for the opportunists in our Party to approach the workers of the U.S.S.R. without some "revolutionary" camouflage.

There you have the reasons for the "revolutionary" camouflage of the opposition bloc.

Finally, as regards the third specific feature of the opposition. I have already said that it consists in the amorphousness as regards principle of the opposition bloc, in its unprincipledness, in its amoebic character, and in the consequent continual complaints of the opposition leaders that they have been "misunderstood," "misrepresented," fathered with what they "did not say" and so on. They are truly a faction of "the misunderstood." The history of proletarian parties tells us that this feature ("they have misunderstood us!") is the most common and wide-spread feature of opportunism in general. You must know, comrades, that exactly the same thing "happened" with the well-known opportunists Bernstein, Vollmar, Auer and others in the ranks of German Social-Democracy at the end of the 1890's and the beginning of the 1900's, when German Social-Democracy was revolutionary, and when these arrant opportunists complained for many years that they were "misunderstood" and "misrepresented." We know that the German revolutionary Social-Democrats at that time called the Bernstein faction the faction of "the misunderstood." Thus it cannot be regarded as an accident that the opposition bloc has to be assigned to the category of "misunderstood" factions.

Such are the chief specific features of the opposition bloc.

III

The Disagreements in the C.P.S.U.(B.)

Let us pass to the substance of the disagreements.

I think that our disagreements could be reduced to a few basic questions. I shall not deal with these questions in detail, because time is short and my report is long enough as it is. There is all the more reason for not doing so, because you have material on the questions of the C.P.S.U.(B.), material which suffers, it is true, from certain errors of translation, but which on the whole gives a correct idea of the disagreements in our Party.

1. Questions of Socialist Construction

First question. The first question is that of the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country, the possibility of victoriously building socialism. It is not a matter, of course, of Montenegro or even Bulgaria, but of our country, the U.S.S.R. It is a matter of a country where imperialism existed and was developing, where there is a certain minimum of large-scale industry and a certain minimum of proletariat, and where there is a party which leads the proletariat. And so, is the victory of socialism possible in the U.S.S.R., can socialism be built in the U.S.S.R. on the basis of the internal forces of our country and on the basis of the potentialities at the disposal of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R.?

But what does building socialism mean, if this formula is translated into concrete class language? Building socialism in the U.S.S.R. means overcoming our, Soviet, bourgeoisie by our own efforts in the course of a struggle. Hence the question amounts to this: is the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. capable of overcoming its own, Soviet bourgeoisie? Consequently, when it is asked whether socialism can be built in the U.S.S.R., what is meant is this: is the

proletariat of the U.S.S.R. by its own efforts capable of overcoming the bourgeoisie of the U.S.S.R.? That, and that alone, is how the question stands as regards solving the problem of building socialism in our country.

The Party answers this question in the affirmative, because it holds that the proletariat of the U.S.S.R., the proletarian dictatorship in the U.S.S.R., by its own efforts is capable of overcoming the bourgeoisie of the U.S.S.R.

If this were incorrect, if the Party had no justification for asserting that the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. is capable of building a socialist society, despite the relative technical backwardness of our country, then the Party would have no justification for remaining in power any longer, it would have to surrender power in one way or another and to pass to the position of an opposition party.

For, one thing or the other:

either we can engage in building socialism and, in the final analysis, build it completely, overcoming our "national" bourgeoisie—in which case it is the duty of the Party to remain in power and direct the building of socialism in our country for the sake of the victory of socialism throughout the world;

or we are not in a position to overcome our bourgeoisie by our own efforts—in which case, in view of the absence of immediate support from abroad, from a victorious revolution in other countries, we must honestly and frankly retire from power and steer a course for organising another revolution in the U.S.S.R. in the future.

Has a party the right to deceive its class, in this case the working class? No, it has not. Such a party would deserve to be hanged, drawn and quartered. But just because our Party has no right to deceive the working class, it would have to say frankly that lack of confidence in the possibility of completely building socialism in our country would lead to our Party retiring from power and passing from the position of a ruling party to that of an opposition party.

We have won the dictatorship of the proletariat and have thereby created the political basis for the advance to socialism. Can we by our own efforts create the economic basis of socialism, the new economic foundation necessary for the building of socialism? What is the economic essence and economic basis of socialism? Is it the establishment of a "paradise" on earth and universal abundance? No, that is the philistine, petty-bourgeois idea of the economic essence of socialism. To create the economic basis of socialism means welding agriculture and socialist industry into one integral economy, subordinating agriculture to the leadership of socialist industry, regulating relations between town and country on the basis of an exchange of the products of agriculture and industry, closing and eliminating all the channels which facilitate the birth of classes and, above all, of capital, and, in the long run, establishing such conditions of production and distribution as will lead directly and immediately to the abolition of classes.

Here is what Comrade Lenin said on this score in the period when we introduced NEP, and when the question of laying a socialist foundation for the national economy confronted the Party in all its magnitude:

"Replacement of the surplus-appropriation system by a tax, its significance in principle: transition from 'War' Communism to a correct socialist foundation. Neither the surplus-appropriation system, nor a tax, but the exchange of the products of large-scale ('socialised') industry for peasant products-such is the economic essence of socialism, its basis" (see Vol. XXVI, pp. 311-12).

That is how Lenin understood the question of creating the economic basis of socialism.

But in order to weld agriculture with socialised industry, it is necessary, in the first place, to have an extensive network of bodies for the distribution of products, an extensive network of co-operative bodies, both of consumer co-operatives and of agricultural, producer co-operatives. That was precisely what Lenin had in mind when he said in his pamphlet On Co-operation:

"Co-operation, under our conditions, very often entirely coincides with socialism" (see Vol. XXVII, p. 396).

And so, can the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. by its own efforts build the economic basis of socialism, in the conditions of the capitalist encirclement of our country?

The Party replies to this question in the affirmative (see resolution of the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) 9). Lenin replies to this question in the affirmative (see, for instance, his pamphlet On Co-operation). All the experience of our constructive work furnishes an affirmative answer to this question, because the share of the socialist sector in our economy is growing from year to year at the expense of that of private capital, both in the sphere of production and in the sphere of distribution, while the role of private capital as compared with that of the socialist elements in our economy is declining from year to year.

Well, and how does the opposition reply to this question?

It replies to this question in the negative.

It follows that the victory of socialism in our country is possible, that the possibility of building the economic basis of socialism may be regarded as assured.

Does this mean that such a victory can be termed a full victory, a final victory of socialism, one that would guarantee the country that is building socialism against all danger from abroad, against the danger of imperialist intervention and the consequent danger of restoration? No, it does not. While the question of completely building socialism in the U.S.S.R. is one of overcoming our own, "national," bourgeoisie, the question of the final victory of socialism is one of overcoming the world bourgeoisie. The Party says that the proletariat of one country is not in a position to overpower the world bourgeoisie by its own efforts. The Party says that for the final victory of socialism in one country it is necessary to overcome, or at least to neutralise, the world bourgeoisie. The Party says that such a task is within the power only of the proletariat of several countries. Consequently, the final victory of socialism in a particular country signifies the victory of the proletarian revolution in, at least, several countries.

This question does not give rise to any special disagreement in our Party, and therefore I shall not dwell on it, but would refer those who are interested to the materials of the Central

Committee of our Party which were distributed the other day to the members of the Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

2. Factors of the "Respite"

Second question. The second question concerns problems of the conditions of the present international position of the U.S.S.R., the conditions of that period of "respite" during which the work of building socialism in our country began and developed. We can and must build socialism in the U.S.S.R. But in order to build socialism, we must first exist. There must be a "respite" from war, there must be no attempts at intervention, there must have been won a certain minimum of international conditions which are necessary in order that we may exist and build socialism.

On what, it may be asked, does the present international position of the Republic of Soviets rest, what determines the present "peaceful" period of development of our country in its relation to the capitalist countries, what is the basis of that "respite," or of that period of "respite," which has been won, which renders immediate attempts at serious intervention on the part of the capitalist world impossible, and which creates the necessary external conditions for the building of socialism in our country, seeing that it has been proved that the danger of intervention exists and will continue to exist, and that this danger can be eliminated only as a result of the victory of the proletarian revolution in a number of countries?

The present period of "respite" is based on at least four fundamental facts.

Firstly, on the contradictions within the imperialist camp, which are not becoming weaker and which render a plot against the Republic of Soviets difficult.

Secondly, on the contradictions between imperialism and the colonial countries, on the growth of the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries.

Thirdly, on the growth of the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries and the growing sympathy of the proletarians of all countries for the Republic of Soviets. The proletarians of the capitalist countries are not yet able to support the proletarians of the U.S.S.R. with an outright revolution against their own capitalists. But the capitalists of the imperialist states are already unable to march "their" workers against the proletariat of the U.S.S.R., because the sympathy of the proletarians of all countries for the Republic of Soviets is growing, and is bound to grow from day to day. And to go to war nowadays without the workers is impossible.

Fourthly, on the strength and might of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R., on its achievements in socialist construction, and on the strength of organisation of its Red Army.

The combination of these and similar conditions gives rise to that period of "respite" which is the characteristic feature of the present international position in the Republic of Soviets.

3. The Unity and Inseparability of the "National" and International Tasks of the Revolution

Third question. The third question concerns problems of the "national" and international tasks of the proletarian revolution in a particular country. The Party holds that the "national" and international tasks of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. merge into the one general task of emancipating the proletarians of all countries from capitalism, that the interests of the building of socialism in our country wholly and completely merge with the interests of the

revolutionary movement of all countries into the one general interest of the victory of the socialist revolution in all countries.

What would happen if the proletarians of all countries did not sympathise with and support the Republic of Soviets? There would be intervention and the Republic of Soviets would be smashed.

What would happen if capital succeeded in smashing the Republic of Soviets? There would set in an era of the blackest reaction in all the capitalist and colonial countries, the working class and the oppressed peoples would be seized by the throat, the positions of international communism would be lost.

What will happen if the sympathy and support that the Republic of Soviets enjoys among the proletarians of all countries grows and intensifies? It will radically facilitate the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R.

What will happen if the achievements of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. continue to grow? It will radically improve the revolutionary position of the proletarians of all countries in their struggle against capital, will undermine the position of international capital in its struggle against the proletariat, and will greatly heighten the chances of the world proletariat.

But it follows from this that the interests and tasks of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. are interwoven and inseparably connected with the interests and tasks of the revolutionary movement in all countries, and, conversely, that the tasks of the revolutionary proletarians of all countries are inseparably connected with the tasks and achievements of the proletarians of the U.S.S.R. in the field of socialist construction.

Hence to counterpose the "national" tasks of the proletarians of a particular country to the international tasks is to commit a profound political error.

Hence anyone who depicts the zeal and fervour displayed by the proletarians of the U.S.S.R. in the struggle on the front of socialist construction as a sign of "national isolation" or "national narrow-mindedness," as our oppositionists sometimes do, has gone out of his mind or fallen into second childhood.

Hence affirmation of the unity and inseparability of the interests and tasks of the proletarians of one country and the interests and tasks of the proletarians of all countries is the surest way to the victory of the revolutionary movement of the proletarians of all countries.

Precisely for this reason, the victory of the proletarian revolution in one country is not an end in itself, but a means and an aid for the development and victory of the revolution in all countries.

Hence building socialism in the U.S.S.R. means furthering the common cause of the proletarians of all countries, it means forging the victory over capital not only in the U.S.S.R., but in all the capitalist countries, for the revolution in the U.S.S.R. is part of the world revolution—its beginning and the base for its development.

4. Concerning the History of the Question of Building Socialism

Fourth question. The fourth question concerns the history of the question under discussion. The opposition asserts that the question of the building of socialism in one country was first raised in our Party in 1925. At all events, Trotsky bluntly declared at the Fifteenth Conference: "Why is theoretical recognition of the building of socialism in one country demanded? Where does this perspective come from? How is it that nobody raised this question before 1925?"

It follows, then, that before 1925 this question was not raised in our Party. It follows that this question was raised in the Party only by Stalin and Bukharin, and that it was in 1925 that they raised it. Is that true? No, it is not.

I affirm that the question of the building of a socialist economy in one country was first raised in the Party by Lenin as early as 1915. I affirm that Lenin was opposed at that time by none other than Trotsky. I affirm that since then, that is, since 1915, the question of the building of a socialist economy in one country was repeatedly discussed in our press and in our Party.

Let us turn to the facts.

a) 1915. Lenin's article on "The United States of Europe Slogan" in the Central Organ of the Bolsheviks (*Sotsial-Demokrat* 10). Here is what Lenin says in that article:

"As a separate slogan, however, the slogan of a United States of the World would hardly be a correct one, firstly, because it merges with socialism; secondly, because it may give rise to a wrong interpretation in the sense of the impossibility of the victory of socialism in a single country and about the relation of such a country to the rest.

"Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country taken separately. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and having organised its own socialist production,* would stand up against the rest of the world, the capitalist world, attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, raising revolts in those countries against the capitalists, and in the event of necessity coming out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their states." . . . For "the free union of nations in socialism is impossible without a more or less prolonged and stubborn struggle of the socialist republics against the backward states" (see Vol. XVIII, pp. 232-33).

And here is Trotsky's rejoinder, made in the same year, 1915, in *Nashe Slovo*, 11 which Trotsky directed:

"'Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism.' From this the *Sotsial-Demokrat* (the central organ of the Bolsheviks in 1915, where Lenin's article in question was published.—J. St.) draws the conclusion that the victory of socialism is possible in one country, and that therefore there is no reason to make the dictatorship of the proletariat in each separate country contingent upon the establishment of a United States of Europe. . . . That no country in its struggle must 'wait' for others, is an elementary thought which it is useful and necessary to reiterate in order that the idea of concurrent international action may not be replaced by the idea of temporising international inaction. Without waiting for the others, we begin and continue the struggle nationally, in the full confidence that our initiative will give an impetus to the struggle other countries; but if this should not occur, it would be hopeless to think — as historical experience and theoretical considerations testify—that, for

example, a revolutionary Russia could hold out in the face of a conservative Europe, or that a socialist Germany could exist in isolation in a capitalist world. To accept the perspective of a social revolution within national bounds is to fall a prey to that very national/narrow-mindedness which constitutes the essence of social-patriotism"* (Trotsky, The Year 1917, Vol. III, Part I, pp. 89-90).

You see that the question of "organising socialist production" was raised by Lenin as far back as 1915, on the eve of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, at the time of the imperialist war, when the question of the growing over of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution was on the order of the day.

You see that at that time Comrade Lenin was controverted by none other than Trotsky, who obviously knew that Lenin in his article was speaking of the "victory of socialism" and of the possibility of "organising socialist production in one country."

You see that the charge of "national narrow-mindedness" was raised for the first time by Trotsky already in 1915, and that this charge was levelled not against Stalin or Bukharin, but against Lenin.

Now it is Zinoviev who every now and again puts forward the ludicrous charge of "national narrow-mindedness." But he apparently does not realise that in so doing he is repeating and reviving Trotsky's thesis, directed against Lenin and his Party.

b) 1919. Lenin's article "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." Here is what Lenin says in that article:

"In spite of the lies and slanders of the bourgeoisie of all countries and of their open or masked henchmen the 'Socialists' of the Second International), one thing remains beyond dispute, viz., that from the point of view of the basic economic problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the victory of communism over capitalism in our country is assured. Throughout the world the bourgeoisie is raging and fuming against Bolshevism and is organising military expeditions, plots, etc., against the Bolsheviks, just because it fully realises that our success in reconstructing the social economy is inevitable, provided we are not crushed by military force. And its attempts to crush us in this way are not succeeding"* (see Vol. XXIV, p. 510)

You see that in this article Lenin speaks of the "economic problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat," of "reconstructing the social economy" with a view to the "victory of communism." And what does the "economic problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat" and "reconstructing the social economy" mean under the dictatorship of the proletariat? It means nothing else than the building of socialism in one country, our country.

c) 1921. Lenin's pamphlet, The Tax in Kind. 12 The well known proposition that we can and must lay "a socialist foundation for our economy" (see The Tax in Kind).

d) 1922. Lenin's speech in the Moscow Soviet, where he says that "we have dragged socialism into everyday life," and that "NEP Russia will become socialist Russia" (see Vol. XXVII, p. 366). Trotsky's rejoinder to this in his "Postscript" to the Peace Programme in 1922, without any direct indication that he is polemising against Lenin. Here is what Trotsky says in the "Post-script":

"The assertion reiterated several times in the Peace Programme that a proletarian revolution cannot culminate victoriously within national bounds may perhaps seem to some readers to have been refuted by the nearly five years' experience of our Soviet Republic. But such a conclusion would be unwarranted. The fact that the workers' state has held out against the whole world in one country, and a backward country at that, testifies to the colossal might of the proletariat, which in other, more advanced, more civilised countries will be truly capable of performing miracles. But while we have held our ground as a state politically and militarily, we have not arrived, or even begun to arrive, at the creation of a socialist society. The struggle for survival as a revolutionary state has resulted in this period in an extreme decline of productive forces; yet socialism is conceivable only on the basis of their growth and development. The trade negotiations with bourgeois countries, the concessions the Genoa Conference and the like constitute all too graphic evidence of the impossibility of isolated building of socialism within the framework of national states. . . . Real progress of a socialist economy in Russia will become possible only after the victory of the proletariat in the major European countries"* (Trotsky, *The Year 1917*, Vol. III, Part I, pp. 92-93).

Who is Trotsky controverting when he speaks here of "the impossibility of isolated building of socialism within the framework of national states"? Not, of course, Stalin or Bukharin. Trotsky is here controverting Comrade Lenin, and controverting him on the basic question and no other—the possibility of "socialist construction within the framework of national states."

e) 1923. Lenin's pamphlet *On Co-operation*, which was his political testament. Here is what Lenin wrote in this pamphlet:

"As a matter of fact, state power over all large-scale means of production, state power in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat, etc.—is not this all that is necessary for building a complete socialist society from the co-operatives, from the co-operatives alone, which we formerly looked down upon as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to look down upon as such now, under NEP? Is this not all that is necessary for building a complete socialist society? This is not yet the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for this building"* (see Vol. XXVII, p. 392).

It could hardly be put more clearly, one would think.

From what Trotsky says it follows that "socialist construction within the framework of national states" is impossib/e. Lenin, however, affirms that we, that is, the proletariat of the U.S.S.R., have now, in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, "all that is necessary and sufficient" "for building a complete socialist society." The antithesis of views is absolute.

Such are the facts.

You thus see that the question of the building of socialism in one country was raised in our Party as early as 1915, that it was raised by Lenin himself, and that he was controverted on this issue by none other than Trotsky, who accused Lenin of "national narrow-mindedness."

You see that since then and down to Comrade Lenin's death this question was not removed from the order of the day of our Party's work.

You see that in one form or another this question was several times raised by Trotsky in the shape of a veiled but quite definite controversy with Comrade Lenin, and that every time Trotsky handled the question not in the spirit of Lenin and Leninism, but in opposition to Lenin and Leninism.

You see that Trotsky is telling a downright untruth when he asserts that the question of the building of socialism in one country was not raised by anybody prior to 1925.

5. The Special Importance of the Question of Building Socialism in the U.S.S.R. at the Present Moment

Fifth question. The fifth question concerns the problem of the urgency of the task of building socialism at the present moment. Why has the question of building socialism assumed a specially urgent character just now, just in this recent period? Why is it that, whereas in 1915, 1918, 1919, 1921, 1922, 1923, for instance, the question of building socialism in the U.S.S.R. was discussed only occasionally, in individual articles, in 1924, 1925, 1926 it has assumed a very prominent place in our Party activity? What is the explanation of that?

In my opinion, the explanation lies in three chief causes.

Firstly, in the fact that in the last few years the tempo of the revolution in other countries has slowed down, and what is called a "partial stabilisation of capitalism" has set in. Hence the question: is not the partial stabilisation of capitalism tending to diminish or even to nullify the possibility of building socialism in our country? Hence the enhanced interest in the fate of socialism and socialist construction in our country.

Secondly, in the fact that we have introduced NEP, have permitted private capital, and have to some extent retreated in order to regroup our forces and later on pass to the offensive. Hence the question: may not the introduction of NEP tend to diminish the possibility of socialist construction in our country? This is another source of the growing interest in the possibility of socialist construction in our country.

Thirdly, in the circumstance that we have won the Civil War, driven out the interventionists and won a "respite" from war, that we have assured ourselves peace and a peaceful period, offering favourable conditions for putting an end to economic disruption, restoring the country's productive forces, and setting about building a new economy in our country. Hence the question: in what direction must we conduct the building of our economy—towards socialism, or in some other direction? Hence the question: if we are to conduct our building towards socialism, are there grounds for counting on being able to build socialism under the conditions of NEP and the partial stabilisation of capitalism? Hence the tremendous interest displayed by the entire Party and the entire working class in the fate of socialist construction in our country. Hence the annual computations of all sorts of factors made by the organs of the Party and the Soviet government with a view to enhancing the relative importance of the socialist forms of economy in the spheres of industry, trade and agriculture.

There you have the three chief causes which indicate that the question of building socialism has become a most urgent one for our Party and our proletariat, as well as for the Comintern.

The opposition considers that the question of building socialism in the U.S.S.R. is only of theoretical interest. That is not true. It is a profound error. Such an attitude to the question can only be attributed to the fact that the opposition is completely divorced from our practical

Party work, our work of economic construction and our co-operative affairs. Now that we have put an end to economic disruption, have restored industry, and have entered a period of the reconstruction of our entire national economy on a new technical basis, the question of building socialism has assumed immense practical importance. What should we aim at in our work of economic construction, in what direction should we build, what should we build, what should be the perspective of our constructive work?—these are all questions, without the settlement of which honest and thoughtful business executives cannot take a step forward if they want to adopt a really enlightened and considered attitude to the work of construction. Are we building in order to manure the soil for a bourgeois democracy, or in order to build a socialist society?—this is now the root question of our constructive work. Are we in a position to build a socialist economy now, under the conditions of NEP and the partial stabilisation of capitalism?— this has now become one of the cardinal questions for our Party and Soviet work.

Lenin answered this question in the affirmative (see, for example, his pamphlet *On Co-operation*). The Party has answered this question in the affirmative (see the resolution of the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.)). And what about the opposition? I have already said that the opposition answers this question in the negative. I have already said in my report at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.), and I am obliged to repeat it here, that only quite recently, in September 1926, Trotsky, the leader of the opposition bloc, declared in his message to the oppositionists that he considers the "theory of socialism in one country" a "theoretical justification of national narrow-mindedness" (see Stalin's report at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) 13).

Compare this quotation from Trotsky (1926) with his article of 1915 where, polemising with Lenin on the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country, he for the first time raised the question of the "national narrow-mindedness" of Comrade Lenin and the Leninists— and you will realise that Trotsky still adheres to his old position of Social-Democratic negation as regards the building of socialism in one country.

That is precisely why the Party affirms that Trotskyism is a Social-Democratic deviation in our Party.

6. The Perspectives of the Revolution

Sixth question. The sixth question concerns the problem of the perspectives of the proletarian revolution. In his speech at the Fifteenth Party Conference, Trotsky said: "Lenin considered that we cannot possibly build socialism in 20 years, that in view of the backwardness of our peasant country we shall not build it even in 30 years. Let us take 30-50 years as a minimum."

I must say here, comrades, that this perspective, invented by Trotsky, has nothing in common with Comrade Lenin's perspective of the revolution in the U.S.S.R. A few minutes later, Trotsky himself in his speech began to challenge this perspective. But that is his affair. I, however, must declare that neither Lenin nor the Party can be held responsible for this perspective invented by Trotsky or for the conclusions that follow from it. The fact that Trotsky, having fabricated this perspective, later on in his speech began to challenge his own fabrication, only goes to show that Trotsky has got himself completely muddled and has put himself in a ridiculous position.

Lenin did not say that "we cannot possibly build socialism" in 30 or 50 years. In point of fact, what Lenin said was this:

"Ten or 20 years of correct relations with the peasantry, and victory on a world scale is assured (even if the proletarian revolutions, which are growing, are delayed); otherwise, 20-40 years of the torments of white guard terrorism" (see Vol. XXVI, p. 313).

From this proposition of Lenin's can the conclusion be drawn that we "cannot possibly build socialism in 20-30 or even 50 years"? No. From this proposition only the following conclusions can be drawn:

a) given correct relations with the peasantry, we are assured of victory (i.e., the victory of socialism) in 10-20 years;

b) this victory will not only be a victory for the U.S.S.R.; it will be a victory "on a world scale";

c) if we do not secure victory in this period, it will mean that we have been smashed, and that the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat has been replaced by a regime of whiteguard terrorism, which may last 20-40 years.

Of course, one may agree or not agree with this proposition of Lenin's and the conclusions that follow from it. But to distort it, as Trotsky does, is impermissible.

And what does victory "on a world scale" mean? Does it mean that such a victory is equivalent to the victory of socialism in one country? No, it does not. In his writings, Lenin strictly distinguishes between the victory of socialism in one country and victory "on a world scale." When Lenin speaks of victory "on a world scale," he means to say that the success of socialism in our country, the victory of socialist construction in our country, will have such tremendous international significance that that victory cannot be confined to our country, but is bound to call forth a powerful movement towards socialism in all capitalist countries, and that, moreover, if it does not coincide in time with the victory of the proletarian revolution in other countries, it must at any rate usher in a powerful movement of the proletarians of other countries towards the victory of the world revolution.

Such is the perspective of the revolution as Lenin saw it, if we mean by this the perspective of the victory of the revolution, which, of course, is what we in our Party have in mind.

To confuse this perspective with Trotsky's perspective of 30-50 years is to slander Lenin.

7. How the Question Really Stands

Seventh question. Suppose we grant this, the opposition says to us, but with whom, in the final analysis, is it better to maintain an alliance—with the world proletariat, or with the peasantry of our country; to whom should we give preference—to the world proletariat or the peasantry of the U.S.S.R.? In so doing, matters are depicted as if the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. stands confronted by two allies—the world proletariat, which is prepared to overthrow its bourgeoisie at once, but is awaiting our preferential consent; and our peasantry, which is prepared to assist the proletariat of the U.S.S.R., but is not quite certain that the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. will accept its assistance. That, comrades, is a childish way of presenting the question. It is one that bears no relation either to the course of the revolution in our country or to the correlation of forces on the front of the struggle between world capitalism and socialism. Excuse me for saying so, but only schoolgirls can present the question in that way. Unfortunately, matters are not as some oppositionists depict them.

Furthermore, there is no reason to doubt that we would gladly accept assistance from both parties, if it depended only on us. No, that is not the way the question stands in reality.

The way the question stands is this: since the tempo of the world revolutionary movement has slowed down and socialism is not yet victorious in the West, but the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. is in power, is strengthening its power year by year, is rallying the main mass of the peasantry around it, is already registering substantial achievements on the front of socialist construction, and is successfully strengthening ties of friendship with the proletarians and oppressed peoples of all countries— are there any grounds for denying that the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. can overcome its bourgeoisie and continue the victorious building of socialism in our country, notwithstanding the capitalist encirclement?

That is how the question stands now, provided, of course, we proceed not from fancy, as the opposition bloc does, but from the actual correlation of forces on the front of the struggle between socialism and capitalism.

The reply of the Party to this question is that the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. is, in these circumstances, capable of overcoming its own, "national," bourgeoisie and of successfully building a socialist economy.

The opposition, however, says:

"Without direct state* support from the European proletariat, the working class of Russia will not be able to maintain itself in power and to transform its temporary rule into a lasting socialist dictatorship" (see Trotsky, *Our Revolution*, p. 278).

What is the significance of this quotation from Trotsky, and what does "state support from the European proletariat" mean? It means that, without the preliminary victory of the proletariat in the West, without the preliminary seizure of power by the proletariat in the West, the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. will not only be incapable of overcoming its bourgeoisie and of building socialism, but will even be incapable of maintaining itself in power.

That is how the question stands, and that is where the root of our disagreements lies.

How does Trotsky's position differ from that of Otto Bauer, the Menshevik?

Unfortunately, not at all.

8. The Chances of Victory

Eighth question. Suppose we grant this, the opposition says, but which has the greater chance of victory— the proletariat of the U.S.S.R., or the world proletariat?

"Is it conceivable," Trotsky said in his speech at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.), "that in the next 30-50 years European capitalism will continue to decay, but the proletariat will prove incapable of making a revolution? I ask: why should I accept this assumption, which can only be said to be an assumption of unjustified and gloomy pessimism regarding the European proletariat? . . . I affirm that I see no theoretical or political justification for believing that it will be easier for us to build socialism together with the peasantry, than for the European proletariat to take power" (see Trotsky's speech at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.)).

Firstly, the perspective of stagnation in Europe "in the next 30-50 years" must be rejected unreservedly. No one compelled Trotsky to proceed from this perspective of the proletarian revolution in the capitalist countries of the West, which has nothing in common with the perspective our Party envisages. Trotsky has fettered himself with this fictitious perspective, and he must himself answer for the consequences of such an operation. I think that this period must be reduced by at least half, if the actual perspective of the proletarian revolution in the West is borne in mind.

Secondly, Trotsky decides without reservation that the proletarians of the West have a much greater chance of overcoming the world bourgeoisie, which is now in power, than the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. has of overcoming its own, "national," bourgeoisie, which has already been smashed politically, has been cast out of the key positions in the national economy, and, economically, is compelled to retreat under the pressure of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist forms of our economy.

I consider that such a way of presenting the question is incorrect. I consider that, in putting the question in that way, Trotsky completely betrays himself. Did not the Mensheviks tell us the same thing in October 1917, when they cried from the house-tops that the proletarians of the West had a far greater chance of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and seizing power than the proletarians of Russia, where technical development was weak and the proletariat numerically small? And is it not a fact that, in spite of the lamentations of the Mensheviks, the proletarians of Russia in October 1917 proved to have had a greater chance of seizing power and overthrowing the bourgeoisie than the proletarians of Britain, France or Germany? Has not the experience of the revolutionary struggle throughout the world demonstrated and proved that the question cannot be put in the way that Trotsky puts it?

Who has the greater chance of a speedy victory is a question that is not decided by contrasting the proletariat of one country with the proletariat of other countries, or the peasantry of our country with the proletariat of other countries. Such contrasting is mere childishness. Who has the greater chance of a speedy victory is a question that is decided by the real international situation, by the real correlation of forces on the front of the struggle between capitalism and socialism. It may happen that the proletarians of the West will defeat their bourgeoisie and seize power before we succeed in laying a socialist foundation for our economy. That is by no means excluded. But it may happen that the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. will succeed in laying a socialist foundation for our economy before the proletarians of the West overthrow their bourgeoisie. That is not excluded either.

The question of the chances of a speedy victory is one the decision of which depends upon the real situation on the front of the struggle between capitalism and socialism, and upon it alone.

9. Disagreements over Political Practice
Such are the bases of our disagreements.

From these bases spring disagreements over political practice, both in the fields of foreign and home policy, and in the purely Party field. These disagreements form the subject of the ninth question.

a) The Party, proceeding from the fact of the partial stabilisation of capitalism, considers that we are in a period between revolutions, that in the capitalist countries we are moving towards revolution and the principal task of the Communist Parties is to establish a path to the masses,

to strengthen connections with the masses, to win the mass organisations of the proletariat and prepare the broad mass of the workers for the coming revolutionary clashes.

The opposition, however, having no faith in the internal forces of our revolution, and fearing the fact of the partial stabilisation of capitalism as capable of destroying our revolution, considers (or considered) it possible to deny the fact of the partial stabilisation of capitalism, considers (or considered) the British strike 14 a sign that the stabilisation of capitalism has ended; and when it turns out that stabilisation is a fact nevertheless—so much the worse for the facts, the opposition-declares, and that it is possible, therefore, to skip over-the facts, and in this connection it demonstratively comes out with noisy slogans for a revision of the united front tactics, for a rupture with the trade-union movement in the West, and so on.

But what does disregarding the facts, disregarding the objective course of things, mean? It means abandoning science for quackery.

Hence the adventurist character of the policy of the opposition bloc.

b) The Party, proceeding from the fact that industrialisation is the principal means of socialist construction, and that the principal market for socialist industry is the home market of our country, considers that the development of industrialisation must be based upon a steady improvement of the material conditions of the main mass of the peasantry (to say nothing of the workers), that a bond between industry and peasant economy, between the proletariat and the peasantry, with the leadership of the proletariat in the bond, is, as Lenin expressed it, the "alpha and omega of Soviet power" 15 and of the success of our constructive work, and that therefore our policy in general, and our taxation policy and price policy in particular, must be so constructed as to answer to the interests of this bond.

The opposition, however, having no faith in the possibility of drawing the peasantry into the work of building socialism and obviously believing that it is permissible to carry out industrialisation to the detriment of the main mass of the peasantry, is inclined towards capitalist methods of industrialisation, is inclined to regard the peasantry as a "colony," as an object of "exploitation" by the proletarian state, and proposes such methods of industrialisation (increased taxation of the peasantry, higher wholesale prices for manufactured goods, etc.) as are calculated only to disrupt the bond between industry and peasant economy, undermine the economic position of the poor and middle peasantry, and shatter the very foundations of industrialisation.

Hence the opposition's attitude of disapproval towards the idea of a bloc between the proletariat and the peasantry, and the hegemony of the proletariat in this bloc—an attitude characteristic of Social-Democracy.

c) We proceed from the fact that the Party, the Communist Party, is the principal instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that the leadership of one party, which does not and cannot share this leadership with other parties, constitutes that fundamental condition without which no firm and developed dictatorship of the proletariat is conceivable. In view of this, we regard the existence of factions within our Party as impermissible, for it is self-evident that the existence of organised factions within the Party must lead to the splitting of the united Party into parallel organisations, to the formation of embryos and nuclei of a new party or parties in the country, and, hence, to the disintegration of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The opposition, however, while not contesting these propositions openly, nevertheless in its practical work proceeds from the necessity of weakening the unity of the Party, the necessity of freedom of factions within the Party, and therefore—the necessity of creating the elements of a new party.

Hence the splitting policy in the practical work of the opposition bloc.

Hence the outcry of the opposition against the "regime" in the Party, an outcry which, in point of fact, is a reflection of the protests of the non-proletarian elements in the country against the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Hence the question of two parties.

Such, comrades, is the sum and substance of our disagreements with the opposition.

IV

The Opposition at Work

Let us pass now to the question how these disagreements have manifested themselves in practical work.

Well then, what did our opposition look like in actual fact in its practical work, in its struggle against the Party?

We know that the opposition was operating not only in our Party, but in other sections of the Comintern as well, for instance in Germany, France, etc. Therefore, the question must be put in this way: what in actual fact did the practical work of the opposition and its followers look like both in the C.P.S.U.(B.) and in other sections of the Comintern?

a) The practical work of the opposition and its followers in the C.P.S.U.(B.). The opposition began its "work" by levelling very grave charges against the Party. It declared that the Party "is sliding into opportunism." The opposition asserted that the Party's policy "runs counter to the class line of the revolution." The opposition asserted that the Party is degenerating and moving towards a Thermidor. The opposition declared that our state is "far from being a proletarian state." All this was affirmed either in open declarations and speeches of representatives of the opposition (at the July Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission in 1926), or in secret documents of the opposition disseminated by its supporters.

But, in levelling these grave charges against the Party, the opposition created the basis for the organisation of new, parallel units within the Party, for the organisation of a new, parallel Party centre, for the formation of a new party. One of the supporters of the opposition, Mr. Ossovsky, bluntly declared in his articles that the existing party, our Party, defends the interests of the capitalists, and that in view of this a new party, a "purely proletarian party," must be formed, existing and functioning side by side with the present party.

The opposition may say that it is not answerable for Ossovsky's attitude. But that is not true. It is fully and entirely answerable for the "doings" of Mr. Ossovsky. We know that Ossovsky openly declared himself a supporter of the opposition, and the opposition never once attempted to contest this. We know, further, that at the July Plenum of the Central Committee Trotsky defended Ossovsky against Comrade Molotov. We know, lastly, that despite the

unanimous opinion of the Party against Ossovsky, the opposition voted in the Central Committee against Ossovsky's expulsion from the Party. All this indicates that the opposition assumed moral responsibility for Ossovsky's "doings."

Conclusion: the practical work of the opposition in the C.P.S.U.(B.) manifested itself in the attitude of Ossovsky, in his view that a new party must be formed in our country, parallel with and opposed to the C.P.S.U.(B.).

Indeed, it could not be otherwise. For either one thing or the other:

either the opposition, when levelling these grave charges against the Party, did not itself mean them seriously and levelled them only as a demonstration—in which case it was misleading the working class, which is a crime;

or the opposition meant, and still means, its charges seriously—in which case it should have steered a course, as indeed it did, towards the rout of the leading cadres of the Party and the formation of a new party.

Such was the complexion of our opposition as displayed in its practical work against the C.P.S.U.(B.) by October 1926.

b) The practical work of the opposition's followers in the German Communist Party. Proceeding from the charges levelled against the Party by our opposition, the "ultra-Lefts" in Germany, headed by Herr Korsch, drew "further" conclusions and dotted the i's and crossed the t's. We know that Korsch, that ideologist of the German "ultra-Lefts," asserts that our socialist industry is a "purely capitalist industry." We know that Korsch dubs our Party a "kulakised" party, and the Comintern an "opportunist" organisation. We know, further, that, in view of this, Korsch preaches the necessity for a "new revolution," directed against the existing regime in the U.S.S.R.

The opposition may say that it is not answerable for Korsch's attitude. But that is not true. The opposition is fully and entirely answerable for the "doings" of Herr Korsch. What Korsch says is a natural conclusion from the premises preached by the leaders of our opposition to their supporters in the shape of the charges against the Party. Because, if the Party is sliding into opportunism, if its policy diverges from the class line of the revolution, if it is degenerating and moving towards a Thermidor, and our state is "far from being a proletarian state," only one inference can be drawn from this, namely, the necessity for a new revolution, a revolution against the "kulakised" regime. Apart from this, we know that the German "ultra-Lefts," including the Wed-dingites, 16 voted against the expulsion of Korsch from the party, thereby assuming moral responsibility for Korsch's counter-revolutionary propaganda. Well, and who does not know that the "ultra-Lefts" support the opposition in the C.P.S.U.(B.)?

c) The practical work of the opposition's followers in France. The same must be said of the opposition's followers in France. I am referring to Souvarine and his group, who run a notorious magazine in France. Proceeding from the premises provided by our opposition in its charges against the Party, Souvarine draws the conclusion that the chief enemy of the revolution is the Party bureaucracy, the top leadership of our Party. Souvarine asserts that there is only one "salvation"—a new revolution, a revolution against the top leadership in the Party and the government, a revolution, primarily, against the Secretariat of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.). There, in Germany, a "new revolution" against the existing regime in the

U.S.S.R. Here, in France, a "new revolution" against the Secretariat of the C.C. Well, and how is this new revolution to be organised? Can it be organised without a separate party adapted to the aims of the new revolution? Of course not. Hence the question of creating a new party.

The opposition may say that it is not answerable for Souvarine's writings. But that is not true. We know, firstly, that Souvarine and his group are supporters of the opposition, especially its Trotskyist section. We know, secondly, that only quite recently the opposition was planning to instal M. Souvarine on the editorial board of the central organ of the French Communist Party. True, that plan failed. That, however, was not the fault but the misfortune of our opposition.

Thus it follows that the opposition in its practical work, taking the opposition not in the form in which it depicts itself, but in the form in which it manifests itself in the course of work both in our country, the U.S.S.R., and in France and Germany—it follows, I say, that the opposition in its practical work is directly facing the question of routing the existing cadres of our Party and forming a new party.

V

Why the Enemies of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat Praise the Opposition
Why do the Social-Democrats and the Cadets praise the opposition?

Or, in other words, whose sentiments does the opposition reflect?

You have probably observed that the so-called "Russian question" has of late become a burning question of the Social-Democratic and bourgeois press in the West. Is this accidental? Of course not. The progress of socialism in the U.S.S.R. and the development of the communist movement in the West cannot but inspire profound alarm in the ranks of the bourgeoisie and its agents in the working class—the Social-Democratic leaders. The dividing line between revolution and counter-revolution nowadays lies between the bitter hatred of some and the comradely friendship of others for the proletarian Party of the U.S.S.R. The cardinal international significance of the "Russian question" is now a fact with which the enemies of communism cannot but reckon.

Around the "Russian question" two fronts have formed: the front of the enemies of the Republic of Soviets, and the front of its devoted friends. What do the enemies of the Republic of Soviets want? They are out to create among the broad masses of the population the ideological and moral prerequisites for a fight against the proletarian dictatorship. What do the friends of the Republic of Soviets want? They are out to create among the broad strata of the proletariat the ideological and moral prerequisites for supporting and defending the Republic of Soviets.

Let us now examine why the Social-Democrats and Cadets among the Russian bourgeois emigres praise our opposition.

Here, for instance, is what Paul Levi, a well-known Social-Democratic leader in Germany, says:

"We were of the opinion that the special interests of the workers—in the final analysis, the interests of socialism—run counter to the existence of peasant ownership, that the identity of

interests of workers and peasants is only an illusion, and that as the Russian revolution developed this contradiction would become acute and more apparent. We considered the idea of community of interests another form of the idea of coalition. If Marxism has any shadow of justification at all, if history develops dialectically, then this contradiction was bound to shatter the coalition idea, just as it has already been shattered in Germany. . . . To us who observe developments in the U.S.S.R. from farther away, from Western Europe, it is clear that our views coincide with the views of the opposition. . . . The fact is there: an independent, anti-capitalist movement under the banner of the class struggle is again beginning-in Russia" (Leipziger Volkszeitung, July 30, 1926).

That there is confusion in this quotation regarding the "identity" of the interests of the workers and peasants is obvious. But that Paul Levi is praising our opposition for its struggle against the idea of a bloc of the workers and peasants, the idea of an alliance of the workers and peasants, is likewise indubitable.

Here is what the not unnotorious Dan, leader of the "Russian" Social-Democrats, leader of the "Russian" Mensheviks who advocate the restoration of capitalism in the U.S.S.R., has to say about our opposition:

"By their criticism of the existing system, which repeats the Social-Democratic criticism almost word for word, the Bolshevik opposition is preparing minds . . . for the acceptance of the positive platform of Social-Democracy."

And further:

"Not only among the mass of the workers, but among communist workers as well, the opposition is rearing the shoots of ideas and sentiments which, if skilfully tended, may easily bear Social-Democratic fruit" (Sotsialistichesky Vestnik, No. 17-18).

Clear, I think.

And here is what Posledniye Novosti, 17 central organ of Milyukov's counter-revolutionary bourgeois party, says of our opposition:

"Today, the opposition is undermining the dictatorship, every new publication of the opposition utters more and more 'terrible' words, the opposition itself is evolving in the direction of increasingly violent assaults on the prevailing system; and this for the time being is enough for us to accept it with gratitude as a mouthpiece for wide sections of the politically dissatisfied population" (Posledniye Novosti, No. 1990).

And further:

"The most formidable enemy of the Soviet power today is the one that creeps upon it unawares, grips it in its tentacles on all sides, and destroys it before it realises that it has been destroyed. It is precisely this role—inevitable and necessary in the preparatory period from which we have not yet emerged—that the Soviet opposition is performing" (Posledniye Novosti, No. 1983, August 27 of this year).

Comment, I think, is superfluous.

I confine myself to these quotations owing to shortness of time, although scores and hundreds like them might be cited.

That is why the Social-Democrats and the Cadets praise our opposition.

Is this accidental? No, it is not.

It will be seen from this that the opposition reflects not the sentiments of the proletariat of our country, but the sentiments of the non-proletarian elements who are dissatisfied with the dictatorship of the proletariat, incensed against the dictatorship of the proletariat, and are waiting with impatience for it to disintegrate and collapse.

Thus the logic of the factional struggle of our opposition has led in practice to the front of our opposition objectively merging with the front of the opponents and enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Did the opposition want this? It is to be presumed it did not. But the point here is not what the opposition wants, but where its factional struggle objectively leads. The logic of the factional struggle is stronger than the wishes of particular individuals. And precisely because of this it has come to pass that the opposition front has in practice merged with the front of the opponents and enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin taught us that the basic duty of Communists is to defend and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. But what has happened is that the opposition, because of its factional policy, has landed in the camp of the opponents of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

That is why we say that the opposition has broken with Leninism not only in theory, but also in practice.

Indeed, it could not be otherwise. The correlation of forces on the front of the struggle between capitalism and socialism is such that only one of two policies is now possible within the ranks of the working class: either the policy of communism, or the policy of Social-Democracy. The attempt of the opposition to occupy a third position, while spearheading the struggle against the C.P.S.U.(B.), was inevitably bound to result in its being thrown by the very course of the factional struggle into the camp of the enemies of Leninism.

And that is exactly what has happened, as the facts quoted show.

That is why the Social-Democrats and Cadets praise the opposition.

VI

Defeat of the Opposition Bloc

I have already said that in their struggle against the Party the opposition operated by means of very grave charges against the Party. I have said that, in their practical work, the opposition came to the very verge of the idea of a split and the formation of a new party. The question therefore arises: how long did the opposition succeed in maintaining this splitting attitude? The facts show that it succeeded in maintaining this attitude for only a few months. The facts show that by the beginning of October of this year the opposition was compelled to acknowledge its defeat and to retreat.

What brought about the retreat of the opposition?

In my opinion, the retreat of the opposition was brought about by the following causes.

Firstly, by the fact that in the U.S.S.R. the opposition found itself without a political army. It may very well be that the building of a new party is an entertaining occupation. But if, after a discussion, it turns out that there is nobody to build a new party from, then obviously retreat is the only way out.

Secondly, by the fact that in the course of the factional struggle all sorts of sordid elements, both in our country, the U.S.S.R., and abroad, attached themselves to the opposition, and that the Social-Democrats and Cadets began to praise it for all they were worth, shaming and disgracing it in the eyes of the workers with their kisses. The opposition was left with the choice: either to accept these praises and kisses of the enemy as their due, or to make an abrupt turn and retreat, so that the sordid appendages that had attached themselves to the opposition should mechanically fall away. By retreating, and acknowledging its retreat, the opposition confessed that the latter way out was for it the only acceptable one.

Thirdly, by the fact that the situation in the U.S.S.R. proved to be better than the opposition had assumed, and the mass of the Party membership proved to be more politically conscious and united than it might have seemed to the opposition at the beginning of the struggle. Of course, if there had been a crisis in the country, if discontent had been mounting among the workers, and if the Party had displayed less solidarity, the opposition would have taken a different course and not have decided to retreat. But the facts have shown that the calculations of the opposition came to naught in this field also.

Hence the defeat of the opposition.

Hence its retreat.

The opposition's defeat passed through three stages.

The first stage was the opposition's "statement" of October 6, 1926. In this document the opposition renounced the theory and practice of freedom of factions and factional methods of struggle, and publicly and unequivocally admitted its errors in this sphere. But that was not all that the opposition renounced. By dissociating itself in its "statement" from the "Workers' Opposition" and the Korschés and Souvarines of every brand, the opposition thereby renounced those ideological positions it had held which had recently brought it close to those trends.

The second stage was the opposition's virtual renunciation of the charges it had recently been levelling against the Party. It must be admitted and, having admitted it, it must be stressed that the opposition did not venture to repeat its charges against the Party at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.). If one compares the minutes of the July Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission with the minutes of the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.), one cannot help noting that at the Fifteenth Conference not a trace remained of the old charges of opportunism, Thermidorism, sliding away from the class line of the revolution, etc. Furthermore, bearing in mind the circumstance that a number of delegates questioned the opposition about its former charges, and that the opposition

maintained a stubborn silence on this point, it must be admitted that the opposition has in fact renounced its former charges against the Party.

Can this circumstance be qualified as a virtual renunciation by the opposition of a number of its ideological positions? It can, and should be. It means that the opposition has deliberately furled its battle-standard in face of its defeat. It could not, indeed, be otherwise. The charges were levelled in the expectation of building a new party. But since these expectations fell to the ground, the charges had to fall to the ground too, at least for the time being.

The third stage was the complete isolation of the opposition at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.). It should be remarked that at the Fifteenth Conference not a single vote was given to the opposition, and thus it found itself in complete isolation. Recall the hullabaloo raised by the Opposition towards the end of September of this year, when it launched the attack, the open attack on the Party, and compare this clamour with the fact that at the Fifteenth Conference the opposition found itself, so to speak, in the singular number—and you will realise that the opposition could not be wished a "better" defeat.

Can the fact be denied that the opposition has indeed renounced its charges against the Party, not having dared to repeat them at the Fifteenth Conference in spite of the demands of the delegates?

No, it cannot, because it is a fact.

Why did the opposition take this course; why did it furl its banner?

Because the unfurling of the ideological banner of the opposition necessarily and inevitably signifies the theory of two parties, the reanimation of all the various brands of Katzes, Korschés, Maslows, Souvarines and other sordid elements, the unleashing of the anti-proletarian forces in our country, the praises and kisses of the Social-Democrats and the bourgeois-liberal Russian emigres.

The ideological banner of the opposition is fatal to the opposition — that is the point, comrades.

Therefore, in order not to perish altogether, the opposition was forced to retreat and to cast away its banner.

That is the basic reason for the defeat of the opposition bloc.

VII

The Practical Meaning and Importance of the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) I am concluding, comrades. It only remains for me to say a few words on the conclusions as regards the meaning and importance of the decisions of the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.).

The first conclusion is that the conference summed up the inner-Party struggle since the Fourteenth Congress, gave definite shape to the victory scored by the Party over the opposition and, by isolating the opposition, put an end to that factional orgy which the opposition had forced upon our Party in the previous period.

The second conclusion is that the conference cemented our Party more solidly than ever before, on the basis of the socialist perspective of our constructive work, on the basis of the idea of the struggle for the victory of socialist construction against all opposition trends and all deviations in our Party.

The most urgent question in our Party today is that of the building of socialism in our country. Lenin was right when he said that the eyes of the whole world are upon us, upon our economic construction, upon our achievements on the front of constructive work. But in order to achieve successes on this front, the principal instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat, our Party, must be ready for this work, must realise the importance of this task, and must be able to serve as the lever of the victory of socialist construction in our country. The meaning and importance of the Fifteenth Conference is that it gave definite shape to and crowned the arming of our Party with the idea of the victory of socialist construction in our country.

The third conclusion is that the conference administered a decisive rebuff to all ideological vacillations in our Party and thereby facilitated the full triumph of Leninism in the C.P.S.U.(B.).

If the Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern approves the decisions of the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) and recognises the correctness of our Party's policy towards the opposition—as I have no reason to doubt it will—this will lead to a fourth conclusion, namely, that the Fifteenth Conference has created certain by no means unimportant conditions essential for the triumph of Leninism throughout the Comintern, in the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat of all countries and nations. (Stormy applause. An ovation from the entire plenum.)

Reply to the Discussion

December 13

I

Miscellaneous Remarks

1. We Need Facts, Not Inventions and Tittle-Tattle

Comrades, before passing to the substance of the question, permit me to make a few factual corrections to statements of the opposition, statements which either distort the facts or are inventions or tittle-tattle.

1) The first question is that of the speeches of the opposition at the Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. The opposition declared that it had decided to take the floor because the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) had not directly intimated that by doing so it might be violating the opposition's "statement" of October 16, 1926, and that if the C.C. had forbidden it to speak, the opposition leaders would not have ventured to do so.

The opposition further declared that in speaking here at the Enlarged Plenum it would take every precaution not to aggravate the struggle; that it would confine itself to mere "explanations", that it had no thought of attacking the Party, God forbid; that it was not its intention, God forbid, to level any charges against the Party or to appeal against its decisions.

That is all untrue, comrades. It is totally at variance with the facts. It is hypocrisy on the part of the opposition. The facts have shown, and particularly the statement of Kamenev has shown, that the speeches of the opposition leaders at the Enlarged Plenum were not "explanations," but an attack, an assault, on the Party.

What does publicly accusing the Party of a Right deviation mean? It is an attack on the Party, a sortie against the Party.

Did not the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) indicate in its resolution that if the opposition were to take the floor it would aggravate the struggle, give an impetus to the factional conflict? Yes, it did. That was a warning to the opposition on the part of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.). Could the C.C. go farther than that? No, it could not. Why? Because the C.C. could not forbid the opposition to speak. Every member of the Party has the right to appeal against a Party decision to a higher body. The C.C. could not ignore this right of Party members. Hence, the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) did all that lay in its power to prevent a new aggravation of the struggle, a new intensification of the factional conflict.

The opposition leaders, who are members of the C.C., must have known that their speeches were bound to take the form of an appeal against the decisions of their Party, the form of a sortie against the Party, an attack on the Party.

Consequently, the speeches of the opposition, especially Kamenev's—which was not his own personal statement but that of the whole opposition bloc, because this speech, which he read from a manuscript, was signed by Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev—this speech of Kamenev's represents a turning point in the development of the opposition bloc, away from the "statement" of October 16, 1926, in which the opposition renounced factional methods of struggle, and towards a new phase in the opposition's existence, one in which they are reverting to factional methods of struggle against the Party.

Hence the conclusion: the opposition has violated its own "statement" of October 16, 1926, by reverting to factional methods of struggle.

Well then, let us say so frankly, comrades. There is no point in dissembling. Kamenev was right when he said that a cat should be called a cat. (Voices: "Quite right!" "And a swine, a swine.")

2) Trotsky said in his speech that "after the February Revolution Stalin preached erroneous tactics, which Lenin characterised as a Kautskyan deviation."

That is not true, comrades. It is tittle-tattle. Stalin did not "preach" any Kautskyan deviation. That I had certain waverings after my return from exile, I have not concealed, and I wrote about them myself in my pamphlet *On the Road to October*. But who of us has not been subject to transitory waverings? As to Lenin's position and his April Theses 18 of 1917—which is what is meant here—the Party knows very well that at that time I stood in the same ranks as Comrade Lenin, against Kamenev and his group, who were at that time putting up a fight against Lenin's theses. Those who are familiar with the minutes of the April Conference of our Party in 1917 cannot but know that I stood in the same ranks as Lenin and together with him fought the opposition of Kamenev.

The trick here is that Trotsky has confused me with Kamenev. (Laughter. Applause.)

It is true that at that time Kamenev was in opposition to Lenin, to his theses, to the majority of the Party, and expounded views which bordered on defencism. It is true that at that time, in March, for instance, Kamenev was writing articles of a semi-defencist character in *Pravda*, for which articles, of course, I cannot in any degree be held responsible.

Trotsky's trouble is that he has confused Stalin with Kamenev.

Where Trotsky was then, at the time of the April Conference in 1917, when the Party was waging a fight against Kamenev's group; which party he belonged to then—the Left-Menshevik or the Right-Menshevik—and why he was not in the ranks of the Zimmerwald Left, 19 let Trotsky tell us himself, in the press if he likes. But that he was not at that time in our Party is a fact which Trotsky would do well to remember.

3) Trotsky said in his speech that "Stalin committed rather grave mistake on the national question." What mistake, and under what circumstances, Trotsky did not say.

That is not true, comrades. It is tittle-tattle. I never have been in disagreement with the Party or with Lenin on the national question. What Trotsky is presumably referring to is an insignificant incident which happened before the Twelfth Congress of our Party, when Comrade Lenin rebuked me for conducting too severe an organisational policy towards the Georgian semi-nationalists, semi-Communists of the type of Mdivani—who was recently our trade representative in France—that I was "persecuting" them. Subsequent facts, however, showed that the so-called "deviationists," people of the Mdivani type, actually deserved to be treated more severely than I, as one of the secretaries of the C.C. of our Party, treated them. Subsequent events showed that the "deviationists" were a degenerating faction of the most arrant opportunism. Let Trotsky prove that this is not so. Lenin was not aware of these facts, and could not be aware of them, because he was ill in bed and had no opportunity to follow events. But what bearing can this insignificant incident have on Stalin's position based on

principle? Trotsky is here obviously hinting in tittle-tattle fashion at certain "disagreements" between the Party and myself. But is it not a fact that the C.C. as a whole, including Trotsky, unanimously voted for Stalin's theses on the national question? Is it not a fact that this vote took place after the Mdivani incident, and before the Twelfth Congress of our Party? Is it not a fact that the reporter on the national question at the Twelfth Congress was none other than Stalin? Where, then, are the "disagreements" on the national question, and why indeed did Trotsky desire to recall this insignificant incident?

4) Kamenev declared in his speech that the Fourteenth Congress of our Party committed an error in "opening fire against the Left"—that is, against the opposition. It appears that the Party fought, and continues to fight, the revolutionary core of the Party. It appears that our opposition is a Left, not a Right, opposition.

That is all nonsense, comrades. It is tittle-tattle spread by our oppositionists. The Fourteenth Congress did not think of opening, and could not have opened, fire on the revolutionary majority. In point of fact, it opened fire on the Rights, on our oppositionists, who constitute a Right opposition, although draped in a "Left" toga. Naturally, the opposition is inclined to regard itself as a "revolutionary Left." But the Fourteenth Congress of our Party found, on the contrary, that the opposition was only masking itself with "Left" phrases, but in point of fact was an opportunist opposition. We know that a Right opposition often masquerades in a "Left" toga in order to mislead the working class. The "Workers' Opposition" likewise considered itself to be more to the Left than anyone else, but proved in reality to be more to the Right than anyone else. The present opposition also believes itself to be more to the Left than anyone else; but the practical activities and the whole work of the present opposition prove that it is a centre of attraction and a rallying point for all Right opportunist trends, from the "Workers' Opposition" and Trotskyism to the "New Opposition" and the Souvarines of every brand.

Kamenev performed a "slight" piece of juggling with "Lefts" and "Rights."

5) Kamenev quoted a passage from Lenin's works to the effect that we had not yet completely laid a socialist foundation for our economy, and declared that the Party was committing an error in asserting that we had already completely laid a socialist foundation for our economy.

That is nonsense, comrades. It is petty tittle-tattle on Kamenev's part. Never yet has the Party declared that it has already completely laid a socialist foundation for our economy. Whether we have or have not completely laid a socialist foundation for our economy is not the point at issue at all just now. That is not the point at issue just now. The only point at issue is, can we or can we not completely lay a socialist foundation for our economy by our own efforts? The Party affirms that we are in a position to completely lay a socialist foundation for our economy. The opposition denies this, and thereby slides into defeatism and capitulationism. That is the point at issue just now. Kamenev feels how untenable his position is and is trying to evade this issue. But he will not succeed.

Kamenev performed another "slight" piece of juggling.

6) Trotsky declared in his speech that he "anticipated Lenin's policy in March-April 1917." It thus follows that Trotsky "anticipated" Comrade Lenin's April Theses. It follows that Trotsky had already in February-March 1917 independently arrived at the policy which Comrade Lenin advocated in his April Theses in April-May 1917.

Permit me to say, comrades, that this is stupid and unseemly boastfulness. Trotsky "anticipating" Lenin is a spectacle that can only evoke laughter. The peasants are quite right when they say in such cases: "This is comparing a fly to a watch tower." (Laughter.) Trotsky "anticipating" Lenin. . . . Let Trotsky venture to come out and prove this in print. Why has he never tried to do so even once? Trotsky "anticipated" Lenin. . . . But, in that case, how is the fact to be explained that Comrade Lenin, from the first moment of his appearance in the Russian arena in April 1917, deemed it necessary to dissociate himself from Trotsky's position? How is the fact to be explained that the "anticipated" found it necessary to disavow the "anticipator"? Is it not a fact that Lenin declared on several occasions in April 1917 that he was totally at variance with Trotsky's basic formula: "No tsar, but a workers' government"? Is it not a fact that Lenin at that time repeatedly declared that he was totally at variance with Trotsky, who was trying to skip over the peasant movement, the agrarian revolution?

Where, then, is the "anticipation" here?

The conclusion is: we need facts, not inventions and tittle tattle, whereas the opposition prefers to operate with inventions and tittle-tattle.

2. Why the Enemies of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat Praise the Opposition

I said in my report that the enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Menshevik and Cadet Russian emigres, praise the opposition. I said that they praise the opposition for activity which tends to undermine the unity of the Party, and, hence, to undermine the dictatorship of the proletariat. I quoted a number of passages showing that it is precisely on this account that the enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat praise the opposition, on account of the fact that the opposition by its activity unleashes the anti-proletarian forces in the country, is trying to discredit our Party and the proletarian dictatorship, and is thereby facilitating the work of the enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In reply to this, Kamenev (and Zinoviev too) referred at first to the Western capitalist press, which, it appears, praises our Party, and Stalin too, and later referred to the Smena-Vekhist 20 Ustryalov, a representative of the bourgeois experts in our country, who expresses solidarity with the position of our Party.

As regards the capitalists, there is a great difference of opinion among them about our Party. For instance, in the American press a little while ago they were praising Stalin because, they said, he would give them the opportunity of securing big concessions. But now, it turns out, they are scolding and abusing Stalin in every way, asserting that he has "deceived" them. A cartoon once appeared in the bourgeois press showing Stalin with a bucket of water, putting out the fire of revolution. But later another cartoon appeared in refutation of the first: it showed Stalin this time not with a bucket of water, but with a bucket of oil; and it turns out that Stalin is not putting out, but adding fuel to the fire of revolution. (Applause, laughter.)

As you see, over there, among the capitalists, there is considerable disagreement about the position of our Party, as well as about the position of Stalin.

Let us pass to Ustryalov. Who is Ustryalov? Ustryalov is a representative of the bourgeois experts and of the new bourgeoisie generally. He is a class enemy of the proletariat. That is undeniable. But there are various kinds of enemies. There are class enemies who refuse to reconcile themselves to the Soviet regime and are out to overthrow it at any cost. But there are also class enemies who in one way or another have reconciled themselves to the Soviet

regime. There are enemies who are trying to pave the way for the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat. These are the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, Cadets and the like. But there are also enemies who co-operate with the Soviet regime and oppose those who stand for its overthrow, hoping that the dictatorship will gradually weaken and degenerate, and will then meet the interests of the new bourgeoisie. Ustryalov belongs to this latter category of enemies.

Why did Kamenev refer to Ustryalov? Maybe in order to show that our Party has degenerated, and that it is because of this that Ustryalov praises Stalin or our Party in general? It was not for that reason, apparently, because Kamenev did not venture to say so frankly. Why, then, did Kamenev refer to Ustryalov? Evidently, in order to hint at "degeneration."

But Kamenev forgot to mention that this same Ustryalov praised Lenin even more. Everybody in our Party is familiar with Ustryalov's articles in praise of Lenin. What is the explanation? Can it be that Comrade Lenin had "degenerated" or had begun to "degenerate," when he introduced NEP? One has only to put this question to realise how utterly absurd the assumption of "degeneration" is.

Well, then, why does Ustryalov praise Lenin and our Party, and why do the Mensheviks and Cadets praise the opposition? That is the question which has to be answered first of all, and which Kamenev does his best to evade.

The Mensheviks and Cadets praise the opposition because it undermines the unity of our Party, weakens the dictatorship of the proletariat, and thus facilitates the efforts of the Mensheviks and Cadets to overthrow the Soviet regime. The quotations prove that. Ustryalov, however, praises our Party because the Soviet government has permitted NEP, has permitted private capital, and has permitted bourgeois experts, whose assistance and experience the proletariat needs.

The Mensheviks and Cadets praise the opposition because its factional activity is helping them in the work of paving the way for the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the Ustryalovs, knowing that the dictatorship cannot be overthrown, reject the idea of overthrowing the Soviet regime, try to secure a snug corner under the dictatorship of the proletariat and to ingratiate themselves with it—and they praise the Party because it has introduced NEP and, on certain conditions, has permitted the existence of the new bourgeoisie, which wants to utilise the Soviet regime for the furtherance of its own class aims, but which the Soviet regime is utilising for the furtherance of the aims of the proletarian dictatorship.

Therein lies the difference between the various class enemies of the proletariat of our country.

Therein lies the root cause why the Mensheviks and Cadets praise the opposition, while Messieurs the Ustryalovs praise our Party.

I should like to draw your attention to Lenin's view on this subject.

"In our Soviet Republic," Lenin says, "the social order is based on the collaboration of two classes: the workers and peasants, in which the 'Nepmen,' i.e., the bourgeoisie, are now permitted to participate on certain conditions" (Lenin, Vol. XXVII p. 405)

Well, it is because the new bourgeoisie is permitted a certain qualified collaboration—on certain conditions, of course, and under the control of the Soviet government—it is precisely because of this that Ustryalov praises our Party, hoping to make a foothold out of this permission and to utilise the Soviet regime to further the aims of the bourgeoisie. But we, the Party, calculate differently: we calculate to utilise the members of the new bourgeoisie, their experience and their knowledge, with a view to Sovietising, to assimilating, part of them, and to casting aside the other part who prove incapable of being Sovietised.

Is it not a fact that Lenin drew a distinction between the new bourgeoisie and the Mensheviks and Cadets, permitting and utilising the former, and proposing that the latter be arrested.

Here is what Comrade Lenin wrote on this score in his work *The Tax in Kind*:

"We should not be afraid of Communists 'learning' from bourgeois experts, including merchants, small capitalist co-operators, and capitalists. We should learn from them in the same way as we learnt from the military experts, though in a different form. The results of what is 'learnt' must be tested only by practical experience: do things better than the bourgeois experts at your side; try this way and that to secure an improvement in agriculture and industry, and to develop exchange between them. Do not grudge the price for 'tuition': no price for tuition will be too high if only we learn something" (Lenin, Vol. XXVI, p. 352).

That is what Lenin said of the new bourgeoisie and the bourgeois experts, of whom Ustryalov is a representative.

And here is what Lenin said about the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries:

"But those 'non-party' people who are in fact nothing more or less than Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries disguised in fashionable, non-party attire, à la Kronstadt, should be carefully kept in prison, or packed off to Berlin, to Martov, so that they may freely enjoy all the charms of pure democracy and freely exchange ideas with Chernov, Milyukov and the Georgian Mensheviks" (ibid., p. 352).

That is what Lenin said.

Maybe the opposition does not agree with Lenin? Then let it say so frankly.

This explains why we arrest Mensheviks and Cadets but permit the new bourgeoisie on certain conditions and with certain limitations, in order, while combating them with measures of an economic nature and overcoming them step by step, to utilise their experience and knowledge for our work of economic construction.

It therefore follows that our Party is praised by certain class enemies, like Ustryalov, because we have introduced NEP and permitted the bourgeoisie a certain qualified and limited collaboration with the existing Soviet system, our aim being to utilise the knowledge and experience of this bourgeoisie for our constructive work, which aim, as you know, we are not unsuccessfully achieving. The opposition, on the other hand, is praised by other class enemies, like the Mensheviks and Cadets, because its activity tends to undermine the unity of our Party, to undermine the dictatorship of the proletariat, and to facilitate the efforts of the Mensheviks and Cadets to overthrow the dictatorship.

I hope the opposition will at last understand the profound difference between praise of the former kind and praise of the latter kind.

3. There Are Errors and Errors

The opposition spoke here of certain errors committed by individual members of the Central Committee. Certain errors, of course, have been committed. Nobody in our Party is absolutely "infallible." Such people do not exist. But there are different kinds of errors. There are errors in which their authors do not persist, and which do not develop into platforms, trends or factions. Such errors are quickly forgotten. But there are errors of a different kind, errors in which their authors persist and from which develop factions, platforms and struggle within the Party. Such errors cannot be quickly forgotten.

Between these two categories of errors a strict distinction must be made.

Trotsky, for instance, says that at one time I committed an error in regard to the foreign trade monopoly. That is true. I did indeed propose, at a time when our procurement agencies were in a state of chaos, that one of our ports should be temporarily opened for the export of grain. But I did not persist in my error and, after discussing it with Lenin, at once corrected it. I could enumerate scores and hundreds of similar errors committed by Trotsky, which were later corrected by the Central Committee, and which he did not persist in. If I were to enumerate all the errors—very serious ones, less serious ones, and not very serious ones—which Trotsky has committed in the course of his work in the Central Committee, but which he did not persist in and which have been forgotten, I should have to deliver several lectures on the subject. But I think that in a political struggle, in a political controversy, it is not such errors that should be spoken about, but those which later developed into platforms and gave rise to a struggle within the Party.

But Trotsky and Kamenev touched upon precisely the kind of errors which did not develop into opposition trends and which were quickly forgotten. And since the opposition touched upon precisely such questions, permit me, in my turn, to recall certain errors of this kind which the opposition leaders committed. Perhaps this will serve as a lesson to them and they will not try to fasten upon already forgotten errors another time.

There was a time when Trotsky asserted in the Central Committee of our Party that the Soviet regime hung by a thread, that it had "sung its swan song," and that it had only a few months, if not weeks, to live. That was in 1921. It was a most dangerous error, testifying to Trotsky's dangerous attitude of mind. But the Central Committee ridiculed him on account of it, and Trotsky did not persist in his error, it was forgotten.

There was a time—it was in 1922—when Trotsky proposed that our industrial plants and trusts should be allowed to pledge state property, including fixed capital, as security for obtaining credits from private capitalists. (Comrade Yaroslavsky: "That is the road to capitulation.") It probably is. At any rate, it would have been the pre-condition for the denationalisation of our industrial plants. But the Central Committee rejected the plan. Trotsky put up a fight, but later ceased to persist in his error, and it is now forgotten.

There was a time—it was in 1922—when Trotsky proposed rigorous concentration of our industry, such a crazy concentration that it would infallibly have put about a third of our working class outside the gates of the mills and factories. The Central Committee rejected this proposal of Trotsky's as something scholastic, crazy and politically dangerous. Trotsky

several times intimated to the Central Committee that all the same this course would sooner or later have to be adopted. However, we did not adopt this course. (A voice from the audience: "It would have meant closing down the Putilov Works.") Yes, that is what it would have come to. But subsequently Trotsky ceased to persist in his error, and it was forgotten.

And so on and so forth.

Or take Trotsky's friends, Zinoviev and Kamenev, who are so fond of recalling that there was a time when Bukharin said "enrich yourselves" and who keep dancing around this phrase "enrich yourselves."

It was in 1922, when we were discussing the question of the Urquhart concession and the enslaving terms of this concession. Well then, is it not a fact that Kamenev and Zinoviev proposed that we should accept the enslaving terms of the Urquhart concession, and persisted in their proposal? However, the Central Committee turned down the Urquhart concession, Zinoviev and Kamenev ceased to persist in their error, and the error was forgotten.

Or take, for example, yet another of Kamenev's errors, one which I am reluctant to mention, but which he compels me to recall because he bores us with his continual reminders of Bukharin's error, an error which Bukharin long ago corrected and finished with. I am referring to an incident that happened after the February Revolution, when Kamenev was in exile in Siberia, when Kamenev joined with well-known Siberian merchants (in Achinsk) in sending a telegram of greetings to the constitutionalist Mikhail Romanov (Shouts: "Shame!"), that same Romanov in whose favour the tsar abdicated and to whom he transferred the "right to the throne." That, of course, was a most stupid error, for which Kamenev received a severe drubbing from our Party at the time of the April Conference in 1917. But Kamenev acknowledged his error, and it was forgotten.

Is there any need to recall errors of this kind? Of course not, because they were forgotten and finished with long ago. Why then do Trotsky and Kamenev keep shoving errors of this kind under the noses of their Party opponents? Is it not obvious that by doing so they only compel us to recall the numerous errors committed by the leaders of the opposition? And we are compelled to do so, if only to teach the opposition not to indulge in pin-pricks and tittle-tattle.

But there are errors of a different kind, errors in which their authors persist and from which later factional platforms develop. These are errors of an entirely different order. It is the task of the Party to disclose such errors and overcome them. For overcoming such errors is the sole means by which to assert the principles of Marxism in the Party, to preserve the unity of the Party, to eliminate factionalism, and to create a guarantee against the repetition of such errors.

Take, for example, Trotsky's error at the time of the Brest Peace, an error which developed into a regular platform directed against the Party. Is it necessary to combat such errors openly and determinedly? Yes, it is.

Or take that other error of Trotsky's, during the trade union discussion, an error which provoked an all-Russian discussion in our Party.

Or, for example, the October error of Zinoviev and Kamenev, which created a crisis in the Party on the eve of the uprising of October 1917.

Or, for example, the present errors of the opposition bloc, which have evolved into a factional platform and a struggle against the Party.

And so on and so forth.

Is it necessary to combat such errors openly and determinedly? Yes, it is.

Can we keep silent about such errors, when it is a question of disagreements in the Party? Obviously not.

4. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat According to Zinoviev

Zinoviev referred in his speech to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and claimed that Stalin, in his article "Concerning Questions of Leninism," incorrectly explains the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

That is nonsense, comrades. Zinoviev is trying to blame others for his own sins. The fact of the matter is that Zinoviev distorts Lenin's concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Zinoviev has two versions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, neither of which can be called Marxist, and which fundamentally contradict each other.

First version. Proceeding from the correct proposition that the Party is the principal directing force in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Zinoviev arrives at the absolutely incorrect conclusion that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of the Party. In other words, Zinoviev identifies dictatorship of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But what does identifying dictatorship of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat mean?

It means, firstly, placing the sign of equality between class and party, between the whole and a part of the whole, which is absurd and preposterous. Lenin never identified, and never could have identified, party and class. Between the Party and the class there is a whole series of non-Party mass organisations of the proletariat, and behind them stands the whole mass of the proletarian class. To ignore the role and importance of these non-Party mass organisations, and still more the whole mass of the working class, and to think that the Party can replace the non-Party mass organisations of the proletariat and the proletarian mass as a whole, means divorcing the Party from the masses, carrying bureaucratisation of the Party to an extreme point, converting the Party into an infallible force, and implanting "Nechayevism," 21 "Arakcheyevism" 22 in the Party.

It goes without saying that Lenin has nothing in common with such a "theory" of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It means, secondly, understanding dictatorship of the Party not in a figurative sense, not in the sense of the Party's leadership of the working class, which is the way Comrade Lenin understood it, but in the strict meaning of the word "dictatorship," that is, in the sense of the Party replacing leadership of the working class by the use of force against it. For what is dictatorship in the strict meaning of the word? Dictatorship, in the strict meaning of the word, is power based on the use of force; for without the element of force there is no dictatorship,

understood in its strict meaning. Can the Party be a power based on the use of force in relation to its class, in relation to the majority of the working class? Obviously not. Otherwise, it would be a dictatorship not over the bourgeoisie, but over the working class.

The Party is the teacher, the guide, the leader of its class and not a power based on the use of force in relation to the majority of the working class. Otherwise, there would be no point in talking about the method of persuasion as the proletarian party's principal method of work in the ranks of the working class. Otherwise, there would be no point in saying that the Party must convince the broad proletarian masses of the correctness of its policy, and that only when it performs this task can the Party consider itself a real mass party capable of leading the proletariat into battle. Otherwise, the Party would have to replace the method of persuasion by the method of ordering and threatening the proletariat, which is absurd and absolutely incompatible with the Marxist conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

That is the kind of nonsense to which Zinoviev's "theory" leads, the theory which identifies dictatorship (leadership) of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It goes without saying that Lenin has nothing in common with this "theory."

It was against this nonsense that I objected when I opposed Zinoviev in my article "Concerning Questions of Leninism."

It may not be superfluous to state that that article was written and sent to the press with the full agreement and approval of the leading comrades in our Party.

So much for Zinoviev's first version of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

And here is the second version. While the first version distorts Leninism in one way, the second version distorts it in an entirely different way, directly opposite to the first. This second version consists in Zinoviev defining the dictatorship of the proletariat not as the leadership of one class, the proletarian class, but as the leadership of two classes, the workers and the peasants.

Here is what Zinoviev says on this score:

"The leadership, the helm, the direction of state affairs is now in the hands of two classes — the working class and the peasantry" (G. Zinoviev, *The Worker-Peasant Alliance and the Red Army*, Priboy Publishing House, Leningrad 1925, p. 4).

Can it be denied that what exists now in our country is the dictatorship of the proletariat? No, it cannot. What does the dictatorship of the proletariat in our country consist in? According to Zinoviev, it consists, apparently, in the fact that the state affairs of our country are administered by two classes. Is this compatible with the Marxist conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Obviously not.

Lenin says that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule of one class, the proletarian class. Under the conditions of the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry, this monocracy of the proletariat finds expression in the fact that the directing force in this alliance is the proletariat, its party, which does not and cannot share the direction of state affairs with another force or another party. All that is so elementary and incontestable as hardly to need explaining. But it

follows from what Zinoviev says that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the leadership of two classes. Why then should such a dictatorship not be called the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, instead of the dictatorship of the proletariat? And is it not clear that under Zinoviev's conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat we ought to have the leadership of two parties, corresponding to the two classes standing at the "helm of state affairs"? What can there be in common between this "theory" of Zinoviev's and the Marxist conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat?

It goes without saying that Lenin has nothing in common with this "theory."

Conclusion: Quite obviously, both in the first and the second version of his "theory," Zinoviev distorts Lenin's teaching on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

5. Trotsky's Oracular Sayings

I should like, further, to dwell on certain ambiguous statements made by Trotsky, statements which in point of fact were meant to mislead. I wish to mention only a few facts. One fact. When asked what his attitude was towards his Menshevik past, Trotsky struck something of a pose and replied:

"The fact in itself that I joined the Bolshevik Party . . . this fact in itself shows that I deposited on the threshold of the Party everything that had until then separated me from Bolshevism."

What does "depositing on the threshold of the Party everything that separated" Trotsky "from Bolshevism" mean? Remmele was right when he interjected at this point: "How can such things be deposited on the threshold of the Party?" And, indeed, how can one deposit such refuse on the threshold of the Party? (Laughter.) That question was left unanswered by Trotsky.

Besides, what does Trotsky mean when he says that he deposited his Menshevik relics on the threshold of the Party? Did he deposit those things on the threshold of the Party as a reserve for future battles within the Party, or did he simply burn them? It looks as if Trotsky deposited them on the threshold of the Party as a reserve. For how otherwise can one explain Trotsky's permanent disagreements with the Party, which began a little while after his entry into the Party and which have not ceased to this day?

Judge for yourselves. 1918—Trotsky's disagreements with the Party over the Brest Peace, and the struggle within the Party. 1920-21—Trotsky's disagreements with the Party over the trade-union movement, and the all-Russian discussion. 1923—Trotsky's disagreements with the Party over fundamental questions of Party affairs and economic policy, and the discussion in the Party. 1924—Trotsky's disagreements with the Party over the question of the appraisal of the October Revolution and over Party leadership, and the discussion in the Party. 1925-26—the disagreements of Trotsky and his opposition bloc with the Party over fundamental questions of our revolution and current policy. Are not those too many disagreements for a man who had "deposited on the threshold of the Party everything that separated him from Bolshevism"?

Can it be said that Trotsky's permanent disagreements with the Party are a "haphazard happening," and not a systematic phenomenon?

Hardly.

What, then, can be the purpose of this more than ambiguous statement of Trotsky's?

I think that it had only one purpose: to throw dust in the eyes of his hearers and mislead them.

Another fact. We know that Trotsky's "theory" of permanent revolution is a question of no little importance from the viewpoint of the ideology of our Party, from the viewpoint of the perspectives of our revolution. We know that this "theory" had, and still has, pretensions to compete with the Leninist theory of the motive forces of our revolution. It is quite natural, therefore, that Trotsky has been asked repeatedly what his attitude is now, in 1926, to his "theory" of permanent revolution. And what answer did Trotsky give in his speech at the Comintern plenum? One that was more than equivocal. He said that the "theory" of permanent revolution has certain "defects," that certain aspects of this "theory" have not been justified in our revolutionary practice. It follows that while certain aspects of this "theory" constitute "defects," there are other aspects of this "theory" which do not constitute "defects" and should retain their validity. But how can certain aspects of the "theory" of permanent revolution be separated from others? Is not the "theory" of permanent revolution an integral system of views? Can the "theory" of permanent revolution be regarded as a box, two corners of which, say, have rotted, while the other two have remained whole and intact? And further, is it possible here for Trotsky to confine himself to a simple statement about "defects" in general, which commits him to nothing, without stating precisely which "defects" he has in mind, and precisely which aspects of the "theory" of permanent revolution he considers incorrect? Trotsky said that the "theory" of permanent revolution has certain "defects," but precisely which "defects" he had in mind and precisely which aspects of this "theory" he considered incorrect—of this he did not say a word. Trotsky's statement on this subject must therefore be regarded as an evasion of the question, as an attempt to parry it with equivocal talk about "defects" which commits him to nothing.

Trotsky behaved in this instance in the way certain astute oracles did in olden days, who parried inquirers with ambiguous answers like the following: "When crossing a river, a big army will be routed." Which river would be crossed, and whose army would be routed was left for the hearers to interpret. (Laughter.)

6. Zinoviev in the Role of a Schoolboy Quoting Marx, Engels, Lenin

I should like, further, to say a few words about Zinoviev's peculiar manner of quoting the Marxist classics. The characteristic feature of this manner of Zinoviev's is that he mixes up all periods and dates, piles them into one heap, severs individual propositions and formulas of Marx and Engels from their living connection with reality, converts them into worn-out dogmas, and thus violates the fundamental precept of Marx and Engels that "Marxism is not a dogma, but a guide to action."

Here are a few facts:

1) First fact. Zinoviev quoted in his speech the passage from Marx's pamphlet, *The Class Struggles in France (1848-1850)*, which says that "the task of the worker (meaning the victory of socialism — J. St.) is not accomplished anywhere within national walls." 23

Zinoviev further quoted the following passage from Marx's letter to Engels (1858):

"The difficult question for us is this: on the Continent the revolution is imminent and will also immediately assume a socialist character. Is it not bound to be crushed in this little corner,

considering that in a far greater territory the movement of bourgeois society is still on the upgrade?"* (See K. Marx and F. Engels, Letters, pp. 74-75. 24)

Zinoviev quotes these passages from Marx relating to the period of the forties and fifties of the last century and arrives at the conclusion that, by virtue of this, the question of the victory of socialism in individual countries has been answered in the negative for all times and periods of capitalism.

Can it be said that Zinoviev has understood Marx, his standpoint, his basic line, on this question of the victory of socialism in individual countries? No, it cannot. On the contrary, it is apparent from these quotations that Zinoviev has completely misunderstood Marx and distorted Marx's basic standpoint.

Does it follow from these quotations from Marx that the victory of socialism in individual countries is impossible under any conditions of capitalist development? No, it does not. All that follows from Marx's words is that the victory of socialism in individual countries is impossible only if "the movement of bourgeois society is still on the upgrade." But if the movement of bourgeois society as a whole, by virtue of the course of things, changes its direction and begins to be on the downgrade — what then? It follows from Marx's words that in such conditions the basis for denying the possibility of the victory of socialism in individual countries disappears.

Zinoviev forgets that these quotations from Marx relate to the period of pre-monopoly capitalism, when the development of capitalism as a whole was on the upgrade, when the growth of capitalism as a whole was not accompanied by a process of decay in such a capitalistically developed country as Britain, when the law of uneven development did not yet, and could not yet, represent such a mighty factor in the disintegration of capitalism as it came to be later, in the period of monopoly capitalism, the period of imperialism. For the period of pre-monopoly capitalism, Marx's statement that the basic task of the working class cannot be accomplished in individual countries is absolutely correct. As I already said in my report at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.), in the old days, in the period of pre-monopoly capitalism, the question whether the victory of socialism was possible in individual countries was answered in the negative, and quite correctly. But now, in the present period of capitalism, when pre-monopoly capitalism has passed into imperialist capitalism—can it be said now that the development of capitalism as a whole is on the upgrade? No, it cannot. Lenin's analysis of the economic essence of imperialism says that in the period of imperialism bourgeois society as a whole is on the downgrade. Lenin is quite right in saying that monopoly capitalism, imperialist capitalism, is moribund capitalism. Here is what Comrade Lenin says on this score:

"It is clear why imperialism is moribund capitalism, capitalism in transition to socialism: monopoly, which grows out of capitalism, is already capitalism dying out, the beginning of its transition to socialism. The tremendous socialisation of labour by imperialism (what the apologists—the bourgeois economists—call 'interlocking') means the same thing" (see Lenin, Vol. XIX, p. 302).

Pre-monopoly capitalism, whose development as a whole was on the upgrade, is one thing. Imperialist capitalism is another thing, when the world has already been divided up among capitalist groups, when the spasmodic character of capitalist development demands new redivisions of the already divided world through military clashes, when the conflicts and wars

between imperialist groups springing from this soil weaken the capitalist world front, render it easily vulnerable and create the possibility of a breach of this front in individual countries. In the former case, under pre-monopoly capitalism, the victory of socialism in individual countries is impossible. In the latter case, in the period of imperialism, in the period of moribund capitalism, the victory of socialism in individual countries has now become possible.

That is the point, comrades, and that is what Zinoviev refuses to understand.

You see that Zinoviev quotes Marx like a schoolboy, ignoring Marx's standpoint and seizing upon individual quotations from Marx, which he applies not as a Marxist, but as a Social-Democrat.

What does the revisionist manner of quoting Marx consist in? The revisionist manner of quoting Marx consists in replacing Marx's standpoint by quotations from individual propositions of Marx, taken out of connection with the concrete conditions of a specific epoch.

What does the Zinoviev manner of quoting Marx consist in? The Zinoviev manner of quoting Marx consists in replacing Marx's standpoint by the letter of the text, by quotations from Marx, severed from their living connection with the conditions of development of the eighteen-fifties and converted into a dogma.

Comment, I think, is superfluous.

2) Second fact. Zinoviev quotes the words of Engels from "The Principles of Communism" 25 (1847) to the effect that the workers' revolution "cannot take place in one country alone," compares these words of Engels' with my statement at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) to the effect that we had already fulfilled nine-tenths of the twelve requirements enumerated by Engels, and from this draws two conclusions: firstly, that the victory of socialism in individual countries is impossible, and, secondly, that in my statement I had painted too rosy a picture of present-day conditions in the U.S.S.R.

As to the quotations from Engels, it must be said that Zinoviev here commits the same error in interpreting quotations as he did in the case of Marx. Clearly, in the period of pre-monopoly capitalism, in the period when the development of bourgeois society as a whole was on the upgrade, Engels had to give a negative answer to the question of the possibility of the victory of socialism in individual countries. Mechanically to extend Engels' proposition, made in reference to the old period of capitalism, to the new period of capitalism, the imperialist period, is to distort the standpoint of Engels and Marx for the sake of the letter, for the sake of an isolated quotation taken out of connection with the actual conditions of development in the period of pre-monopoly capitalism. As I already said in my report at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.), in its time this formula of Engels' was the only correct one. But, after all, it should be realised that one cannot put on a par the period of the forties of the last century, when there could be no question of moribund capitalism, and the present period of capitalist development, the period of imperialism, when capitalism as a whole is moribund capitalism. Is it so difficult to understand that what was then considered impossible has now, under the new conditions of capitalism, become possible and necessary?

You see that here too, in relation to Engels, as in relation to Marx, Zinoviev has remained true to his revisionist manner of quoting the Marxist classics.

As to Zinoviev's second conclusion, he has directly distorted what Engels said about his 12 requirements, or measures, for the workers' revolution. Zinoviev tries to make out that Engels in his 12 requirements gives a comprehensive programme of socialism, right down to the abolition of classes, the abolition of commodity production and, hence, the abolition of the state. That is quite untrue. It is a complete distortion of Engels. There is not a single word in Engels' 12 requirements either about the abolition of classes, or about the abolition of commodity economy, or about the abolition of the state, or about the abolition of all forms of private property. On the contrary, Engels' 12 requirements presume the existence of "democracy" (by "democracy" Engels at that time meant the dictatorship of the proletariat), the existence of classes and the existence of commodity economy. Engels explicitly says that his 12 requirements envisage a direct "assault on private property" (and not its complete abolition) and "ensuring the existence of the proletariat" (and not the abolition of the proletariat as a class). Here are Engels' words:

"The proletarian revolution, which in all probability is coming, will only gradually remodel present society, and only after that can it abolish private property, when the necessary quantity of means of production has been created. . . . First of all it will establish a democratic system and thereby, directly or indirectly, the political rule of the proletariat. . . . Democracy would be quite useless to the proletariat if it were not used forthwith as a means of carrying out further measures for launching a direct assault on private property and safeguarding the existence of the proletariat. The chief of these measures, which already necessarily follow from the existing conditions, are as follows. . . ."

And then comes the enumeration of the 12 requirements or measures referred to (see Engels, "The Principles of Communism").

You thus see that what Engels had in mind was not a comprehensive programme of socialism, envisaging the abolition of classes, the state, commodity production, etc., but the first steps of the socialist revolution, the first measures necessary for a direct assault on private property, for ensuring the existence of the working class, and for consolidating the political rule of the proletariat.

There is only one conclusion: Zinoviev distorted Engels when he interpreted the latter's 12 requirements as a comprehensive programme of socialism.

What did I say in my reply to the discussion at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.)? I said that in our country, the U.S.S.R., nine-tenths of Engels' requirements, or measures, representing the first steps of the socialist revolution, had already been realised.

Does this mean that we have already realised socialism?

Quite clearly, it does not.

Hence, true to his manner of quoting, Zinoviev performed a "slight" piece of juggling with my statement at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.).

That is what Zinoviev's specific manner of quoting Marx and Engels leads him to.

Zinoviev's manner of quoting reminds me of a rather amusing anecdote about the Social-Democrats which was related by a Swedish revolutionary syndicalist in Stockholm. It was in 1906, at the time of the Stockholm Congress of our Party. This Swedish comrade in his story hit off very amusingly the pedantic manner in which some Social-Democrats quote Marx and Engels, and listening to him, we, the congress delegates, split our sides with laughter. This is the anecdote. It was at the time of the sailors' and soldiers' revolt in the Crimea.

Representatives of the navy and army came to the Social-Democrats and said: "For some years past you have been calling on us to revolt against tsarism. Well, we are now convinced that you are right, and we sailors and soldiers have made up our minds to revolt and now we have come to you for advice." The Social-Democrats became flurried and replied that they couldn't decide the question of a revolt without a special conference. The sailors intimated that there was no time to lose, that everything was ready, and that if they did not get a straight answer from the Social-Democrats, and if the Social-Democrats did not take over the direction of the revolt, the whole thing might collapse. The sailors and soldiers went away pending instructions, and the Social-Democrats called a conference to discuss the matter. They took the first volume of Capital, they took the second volume of Capital, and then they took the third volume of Capital, looking for some instruction about the Crimea, about Sevastopol, about a revolt in the Crimea. But they could not find a single, literally not a single instruction in all three volumes of Capital either about Sevastopol, or about the Crimea, or about a sailors' and soldiers' revolt. (Laughter.) They turned over the pages of other works of Marx and Engels, looking for instructions—but not a single instruction could they find. (Laughter..) What was to be done? Meanwhile the sailors had come expecting an answer. Well, the Social-Democrats had to confess that under the circumstances they were unable to give the sailors and soldiers any instructions. "And so," our Swedish comrade ended, "the sailors' and soldiers' revolt collapsed." (Laughter.)

Undoubtedly, there is a good deal of exaggeration in this story. But undoubtedly, too, it lays its finger very neatly on the basic trouble with Zinoviev's manner of quoting Marx and Engels.

3) Third fact. The matter concerns quotations from Lenin's works. To what pains did Zinoviev not go to scrape together a pile of quotations from the works of Lenin and to "stagger" his hearers. Zinoviev evidently thinks that the more quotations the better, without caring very much what the quotations say and what inferences are to be drawn from them. Yet if you examine these quotations, you will easily find that Zinoviev did not quote a single passage from Lenin's works which speaks, even by implication, in favour of the present capitulatory attitude of the opposition bloc. It should be remarked that for some reason Zinoviev did not quote one of the basic passages of Lenin to the effect that the solution of the "economic problem" of the dictatorship, the victory of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. in solving this problem, should be considered assured.

Zinoviev quoted a passage from Lenin's pamphlet, *On Co-operation*, which says that in the U.S.S.R. there is all that is necessary and sufficient for building a complete socialist society. But he did not even try to make the slightest effort to indicate, if only by implication, what conclusion is to be drawn from this passage, and in whose favour it speaks: in favour of the opposition bloc, or in favour of the C.P.S.U.(B.).

Zinoviev endeavoured to prove that the victory of socialist construction in our country is impossible, but in proof of this proposition he quoted passages from Lenin's works which knock the bottom out of his assertion.

Here, for example, is one of these passages:

"I have had occasion more than once to say that, compared with the advanced countries, it was easier for the Russians to begin the great proletarian revolution, but that it will be more difficult for them to continue it and carry it to a victorious finish, in the sense of the complete organisation of a socialist society"* (see Lenin, Vol. XXIV, p. 250).

It did not even occur to Zinoviev that this passage speaks in favour of the Party, not of the opposition bloc, for it speaks not of the impossibility of building socialism in the U.S.S.R., but of the difficulty of building it, the possibility of building socialism in the U.S.S.R. being recognised in this passage as something self-understood. The Party always said that it would be easier to begin the revolution in the U.S.S.R. than in the West-European capitalist countries, but that to build socialism would be harder. Does this mean that recognition of this fact is equivalent to a denial of the possibility of building socialism in the U.S.S.R.? Of course not. On the contrary, the only conclusion that follows from this fact is that the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R. is fully possible and necessary, in spite of the difficulties.

The question arises: Why did Zinoviev need quotations like these?

Evidently, in order to "stagger" his hearers with a pile of quotations, and to muddy the water. (Laughter.)

But it is now clear, I think, that Zinoviev did not achieve his purpose, that his more than comic manner of quoting the Marxist classics has tripped him up in the most unequivocal fashion.

7. Revisionism According to Zinoviev

Lastly, a few words on Zinoviev's interpretation of the concept "revisionism." According to Zinoviev, any improvement, any refinement of old formulas or individual propositions of Marx or Engels, and still more their replacement by other formulas corresponding to new conditions, is revisionism. Why, one asks? Is not Marxism a science, and does not science develop, becoming enriched by new experience and improving old formulas? The reason, it appears, is that "revision" means "reconsidering," and old formulas cannot be improved or made more precise without to some extent reconsidering them, and, consequently, every refinement and improvement of old formulas, every enrichment of Marxism by new experience and new formulas is revisionism. All this, of course, is comical. But what can you do with Zinoviev, when he puts himself in a comical position and at the same time imagines he is fighting revisionism?

For example, did Stalin have the right to alter and make more precise his own formula concerning the victory of socialism in one country (1924) in full conformity with the directives and basic line of Leninism? According to Zinoviev, he had no such right. Why? Because altering and making more precise an old formula means reconsidering the formula, and in German reconsideration means revision. Is it not then clear that Stalin is guilty of revisionism?

It thus follows that we have a new, Zinoviev criterion of revisionism, one which dooms Marxist thought to complete stagnation for fear of being accused of revisionism.

If, for example, in the middle of the last century Marx said that when capitalism was on the upgrade the victory of socialism within national boundaries was impossible, and Lenin in the fifteenth year of the twentieth century said that when the development of capitalism was on the downgrade, when capitalism was moribund, such a victory was possible, it follows that Lenin was guilty of revisionism in relation to Marx.

If, for example, in the middle of the last century Marx said that a socialist "revolution in the economic relations of any country of the European continent, or of the whole European continent, but without England, would be a storm in a teacup," 26 and Engels, in view of the new experience of the class struggle, later altered this proposition and said of the socialist revolution that "the Frenchman will begin it and the German will finish it," it follows that Engels was guilty of revisionism in relation to Marx.

If Engels said that the Frenchman would begin the socialist revolution and the German would finish it, and Lenin, in view of the experience of the victory of the revolution in the U.S.S.R., changed this formula and replaced it by another saying that the Russian began the socialist revolution and the German, Frenchman and Englishman would finish it, it follows that Lenin was guilty of revisionism in relation to Engels, and even more so in relation to Marx.

Here, for example, is what Lenin said on this score:

"The great founders of socialism, Marx and Engels, having watched the development of the labour movement and the growth of the world socialist revolution for a number of decades, clearly saw that the transition from capitalism to socialism would require prolonged birth-pangs, a long period of proletarian dictatorship, the break-up of all that belonged to the past, the ruthless destruction of all forms of capitalism, the co-operation of the workers of all countries, who would have to combine their efforts to ensure complete victory. And they said that at the end of the nineteenth century 'the Frenchman will begin it, and the German will finish it' — the Frenchman would begin it, because in the course of decades of revolution he had acquired that intrepid initiative in revolutionary action that made him the vanguard of the socialist revolution.

"Today we see a different combination of forces of international socialism. We say that it is easier for the movement to begin in countries that do not belong to the category of exploiting countries, which have better opportunities for robbing and are able to bribe the upper stratum of their workers. . . . Things have turned out differently from what Marx and Engels expected.* They have assigned us, the Russian toiling and exploited classes, the honourable role of being the vanguard of the international socialist revolution, and we can now see clearly how far the development of the revolution will go. The Russian began it—the German, the Frenchman and the Englishman will finish it, and socialism will triumph" (see Lenin, Vol. XXII, p. 218).

You see that Lenin here directly "reconsiders" Engels and Marx and, according to Zinoviev, is guilty of "revisionism."

If, for example, Engels and Marx defined the Paris Commune as a dictatorship of the proletariat, which, as we know, was led by two parties, neither of which was a Marxist party, and Lenin, in view of the new experience of the class struggle under the conditions of imperialism, later said that any developed dictatorship of the proletariat could be realised only

under the leadership of one party, the Marxist party, it follows that Lenin was obviously guilty of "revisionism" in relation to Marx and Engels.

If, in the period prior to the imperialist war, Lenin said that federation was an unsuitable type of state structure, and in 1917, in view of the new experience of the proletarian struggle, he altered, reconsidered, this formula and said that federation was the appropriate type of state structure during the transition to socialism, it follows that Lenin was guilty of "revisionism" in relation to himself and Leninism.

And so on and so forth.

It thus follows from what Zinoviev says that Marxism must not enrich itself by new experience, and that any improvement of individual propositions and formulas of any of the Marxist classics is revisionism.

What is Marxism? Marxism is a science. Can Marxism persist and develop as a science if it is not enriched by the new experience of the class struggle of the proletariat, if it does not digest this experience from the standpoint of Marxism, from the point of view of the Marxist method? Clearly, it cannot.

After this, is it not obvious that Marxism requires that old formulas should be improved and enriched in conformity with new experience, while retaining the standpoint of Marxism and its method, but that Zino-view does the opposite, retaining the letter and substituting the letter of individual Marxist propositions for the Marxist standpoint and method?

What can there be in common between real Marxism and the practice of replacing the basic line of Marxism by the letter of individual formulas and quotations from individual propositions of Marxism?

Can there be any doubt that this is not Marxism, but a travesty of Marxism?

It was "Marxists" like Zinoviev that Marx and Engels had in mind when they said: "Our theory is not a dogma, but a guide to action."

Zinoviev's trouble is that he does not understand the meaning and importance of those words of Marx and Engels.

II

The Question of the Victory of Socialism in Individual Capitalist Countries

I have spoken of various errors of the opposition and of inaccuracies of fact observed in the speeches of the opposition leaders. I have tried to exhaust this subject in the form of miscellaneous remarks in the first part of my speech in reply to the discussion. Permit me now to pass directly to the substance of the matter.

1. The Prerequisites for Proletarian Revolutions in Individual Countries in the Period of Imperialism

The first question is whether the victory of socialism is possible in individual capitalist countries in the period of imperialism. As you see, it is not a question of any one particular country, but of all more or less developed imperialist countries.

What is the fundamental error of the opposition in the question of the victory of socialism in individual capitalist countries?

The fundamental error of the opposition is that it does not, or will not, understand the vast difference between pre-imperialist capitalism and imperialist capitalism, that it does not understand the economic essence of imperialism and confuses two different phases of capitalism—the pre-imperialist phase and the imperialist phase.

From this error springs another error of the opposition, which is that it does not understand the meaning and importance of the law of uneven development in the period of imperialism, counterposes to it a levelling tendency, and thus slides into the Kautskyan position of ultra-imperialism.

These two errors of the opposition lead to a third, which is that it mechanically extends the formulas and propositions derived from pre-imperialist capitalism to imperialist capitalism, and it is this which leads it to deny the possibility of the victory of socialism in individual capitalist countries.

What is the difference between the old, pre-monopoly capitalism and the new, monopoly capitalism, if this difference is defined in a couple of words?

It is that the development of capitalism through free competition has been replaced by development through huge monopolist capitalist combines; that the old, "cultured," "progressive" capital has been replaced by finance capital, "decaying" capital; that the "peaceful" expansion of capital and its spread to "vacant" territories has been replaced by spasmodic development, development through redivisions of the already divided world by means of military conflicts between capitalist groups; that the old capitalism, the development of which as a whole was on the upgrade, has thus been replaced by moribund capitalism, the development of which as a whole is on the downgrade.

Here is what Lenin says on this score:

"Let us recall what caused the change from the former 'peaceful' epoch of capitalism to the present imperialist epoch: free competition gave way to monopolist capitalist combines and the whole terrestrial globe was divided up. It is obvious that both these facts (and factors) are really of world-wide significance: free trade and peaceful competition were possible and necessary as long as capital was in a position to enlarge its colonies without hindrance, and to seize unoccupied land in Africa, etc., while the concentration of capital was still slight and no monopolist undertakings, i.e., undertakings of such a magnitude as to dominate a whole branch of industry, existed. The appearance and growth of such monopolist undertakings . . . make the free competition of former times impossible, they have cut the ground from under its feet, while the division of the globe compels the capitalists to pass from peaceful expansion to armed struggle for the redivision of colonies and spheres of influence" (see Vol. XVIII, p. 254).

And further:

"It is impossible to live in the old way, in the comparatively tranquil, cultured, peaceful surroundings of a capitalism that is smoothly evolving* and gradually spreading to new countries, for a new epoch has been ushered in. Finance capital is ousting and will completely

oust a particular country from the ranks of the Great Powers, will deprive it of its colonies and spheres of influence" (see Vol. XVIII, pp. 256-57)

From this follows Lenin's main conclusion concerning the character of imperialist capitalism:

"It is clear why imperialism is moribund capitalism, capitalism in transition to socialism: monopoly, which grows out of capitalism, is already capitalism dying out, the beginning of its transition to socialism. The tremendous socialisation of labour by imperialism (what the apologists—the bourgeois economists—call 'interlocking') means the same thing" (see Vol. XIX, p. 302).

It is the misfortune of our opposition that it does not understand the extreme importance of this difference between pre-imperialist capitalism and imperialist capitalism.

Hence the starting point for the position of our Party is the recognition of the fact that present-day capitalism, imperialist capitalism, is moribund capitalism.

This, unfortunately, does not mean that capitalism is already extinct. But it undoubtedly does mean that capitalism as a whole is moving towards extinction, and not regeneration, that the development of capitalism as a whole is on the down grade, not the upgrade.

From this general question follows the question of uneven development in the period of imperialism.

What do Leninists mean, as a rule, when they speak of uneven development in the period of imperialism?

Do they mean that there is a big difference in the levels of development of the various capitalist countries, that some lag behind others in their development, and that this difference is becoming wider and wider?

No, they do not mean that. To confuse unevenness of development under imperialism with the difference in the levels of development of the capitalist countries is to be guilty of philistinism. It was precisely this philistinism that the opposition was guilty of at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) when they confused unevenness of development with the difference in economic levels of the various capitalist countries. It was precisely by starting out from this confusion that the opposition at that time arrived at the absolutely incorrect conclusion that the unevenness of development was formerly greater than it is now, under imperialism. It was precisely because of this that Trotsky said at the Fifteenth Conference that "this unevenness was greater in the nineteenth century than in the twentieth" (see Trotsky's speech at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.). Zinoviev at that time said the same thing, asserting that it was "untrue that the unevenness of capitalist development was less before the beginning of the imperialist epoch" (see Zinoviev's speech at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.).

It is true that now, after the discussion at the Fifteenth Conference, the opposition has found it necessary to make a change of front, and in its speeches at the Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. has said something that is the very opposite, or has simply tried to pass over this error of its in silence. Here, for instance, is what Trotsky said in his speech at the Enlarged Plenum: "As to the tempo of development, imperialism has infinitely accentuated this

unevenness." As for Zinoviev, he deemed it wise in his speech at the E.C.C.I. plenum simply to keep silent on this question, although he must have known that the dispute was precisely whether the action of the law of unevenness becomes stronger or weaker in the period of imperialism. But this only shows that the discussion taught the opposition a thing or two and was not without benefit to it.

And so: the unevenness of development of the capitalist countries in the period of imperialism must not be confused with the difference in economic levels of the various capitalist countries.

Can it be said that the diminishing difference in the levels of development of the capitalist countries and the increased levelling of these countries weaken the action of the law of uneven development under imperialism? No, it cannot. Does the difference in the levels of development increase or diminish? It undoubtedly diminishes. Does the degree of levelling grow or decline? It certainly grows. Is there not a contradiction between the growth of levelling and increasing unevenness of development under imperialism? No, there is not. On the contrary, levelling is the background and the basis which make the increasing unevenness of development under imperialism possible. Only people who, like our oppositionists, do not understand the economic essence of imperialism can counterpose levelling to the law of uneven development under imperialism. It is precisely because the lagging countries accelerate their development and tend to become level with the foremost countries that the struggle between countries to outstrip one another becomes more acute; it is precisely this that creates the possibility for some countries to outstrip others and oust them from the markets, thereby creating the pre-conditions for military conflicts, for the weakening of the capitalist world front and for the breaching of this front by the proletarians of different capitalist countries. He who does not understand this simple matter, understands nothing about the economic essence of monopoly capitalism.

And so: levelling is one of the conditions for the increasing unevenness of development in the period of imperialism.

Can it be said that the unevenness of development under imperialism consists in the fact that some countries overtake and then outstrip others economically in the ordinary way, in an evolutionary way, so to speak, without spasmodic leaps, without catastrophic wars, and without redivisions of the already divided world? No, it cannot. This kind of unevenness also existed in the period of pre-monopoly capitalism; Marx knew about it, and Lenin wrote about it in his *Development of Capitalism in Russia*.²⁷ At that time the development of capitalism proceeded more or less smoothly, more or less in an evolutionary way, and some countries outstripped others over a long period of time, without spasmodic leaps, and without the necessary accompaniment of military conflicts on a world scale. It is not this unevenness we are speaking of now.

What, then, is the law of the uneven development of capitalist countries under imperialism?

The law of uneven development in the period of imperialism means the spasmodic development of some countries relative to others, the rapid ousting from the world market of some countries by others, periodic re-divisions of the already divided world through military conflicts and catastrophic wars, the increasing profundity and acuteness of the conflicts in the imperialist camp, the weakening of the capitalist world front, the possibility of this front being

breached by the proletariat of individual countries, and the possibility of the victory of socialism in individual countries.

What are the basic elements of the law of uneven development under imperialism?

Firstly, the fact that the world is already divided up among imperialist groups, that there are no more "vacant," unoccupied territories in the world, and that in order to occupy new markets and sources of raw materials, in order to expand, it is necessary to seize territory from others by force.

Secondly, the fact that the unprecedented development of technology and the increasing levelling of development of the capitalist countries have made possible and facilitated the spasmodic outstripping of some countries by others, the ousting of more powerful countries by less powerful but rapidly developing countries.

Thirdly, the fact that the old distribution of spheres of influence among the various imperialist groups is forever coming into conflict with the new correlation of forces in the world market, and that, in order to establish "equilibrium" between the old distribution of spheres of influence and the new correlation of forces, periodic redivisions of the world by means of imperialist wars are necessary.

Hence the growing intensity and acuteness of the unevenness of development in the period of imperialism.

Hence the impossibility of resolving the conflicts in the imperialist camp by peaceful means.

Hence the untenability of Kautsky's theory of ultra-imperialism, which preaches the possibility of a peaceful settlement of these conflicts.

But it follows from this that, in denying that the unevenness of development becomes more intense and acute in the period of imperialism, the opposition slides into the position of ultra-imperialism.

Such are the characteristic features of the unevenness of development in the period of imperialism.

When was the division of the world among the imperialist groups completed?

Lenin said that the division of the world was completed in the beginning of the twentieth century.

When in point of fact was the question of a redivision of the already divided world first raised?

At the time of the first world imperialist war.

But it follows from this that the law of uneven development under imperialism could only be discovered and substantiated in the beginning of the twentieth century.

I spoke about that in my report at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.), when I said that the law of uneven development under imperialism was discovered and substantiated by Comrade Lenin.

The world imperialist war was the first attempt to redivide the already divided world. That attempt cost capitalism the victory of the revolution in Russia and the undermining of the foundations of imperialism in the colonies and dependencies.

It goes without saying that the first attempt at re-division is bound to be followed by a second attempt, preparations for which are already under way in the imperialist camp.

It is scarcely to be doubted that a second attempt at redivision will cost world capitalism much dearer than the first.

Such are the perspectives of development of world capitalism from the standpoint of the law of uneven development under the conditions of imperialism.

You see that these perspectives point directly and immediately to the possibility of the victory of socialism in individual capitalist countries in the period of imperialism.

We know that Lenin deduced the possibility of the victory of socialism in individual countries directly and immediately from the law of uneven development of the capitalist countries. And Lenin was absolutely right. For the law of uneven development under imperialism completely destroys the basis for "theoretical" exercises on the part of all Social-Democrats concerning the impossibility of the victory of socialism in individual capitalist countries.

Here is what Lenin said on this score in his programmatic article written in 1915:

"Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence* the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country taken separately" (see Vol. XVIII, p. 232).

Conclusions:

a) The fundamental error of the opposition consists in the fact that it does not see the difference between the two phases of capitalism, or avoids stressing this difference. And why does it avoid doing so? Because this difference leads to the law of uneven development in the period of imperialism.

b) The second error of the opposition is that it does not understand, or underestimates, the decisive significance of the law of uneven development of the capitalist countries under imperialism. And why does it underestimate it? Because a correct appraisal of the law of uneven development of the capitalist countries leads to the conclusion that the victory of socialism in individual countries is possible.

c) Hence the third error of the opposition, which consists in denying the possibility of the victory of socialism in individual capitalist countries under imperialism.

Whoever denies the possibility of the victory of socialism in individual countries is obliged to keep silent about the significance of the law of uneven development under imperialism. And

whoever is obliged to keep silent about the significance of the law of uneven development cannot but gloss over the difference between pre-imperialist capitalism and imperialist capitalism.

That is how matters stand with the question of the pre-conditions for proletarian revolutions in the capitalist countries.

What is the significance of this question in practice?

In practice, we are confronted by two lines.

One line is the line of our Party, which calls upon the proletarians of the individual countries to prepare for the coming revolution, to follow vigilantly the course of events and to be ready, when the conditions are favourable, to breach the capitalist front independently, to take power and shake the foundations of world capitalism.

The other line is the line of our opposition, which sows doubts regarding the expediency of independently breaching the capitalist front and calls on the proletarians of the individual countries to wait for the "general denouement."

Whereas the line of our Party is one of intensifying the revolutionary onslaught on one's own bourgeoisie and giving free rein to the initiative of the proletarians of the individual countries, the line of our opposition is one of passive waiting and of fettering the initiative of the proletarians of the individual countries in their struggle against their own bourgeoisies.

The first line is one of activating the proletarians of the individual countries.

The second line is one of sapping the proletariat's will for revolution, the line of passivity and waiting.

Lenin was a thousand times right when he wrote the following prophetic words, which have a direct bearing on our present disputes:

"I know that there are, of course, sages who think they are very clever and even call themselves Socialists, who assert that power should not have been seized until the revolution had broken out in all countries. They do not suspect that by speaking in this way they are deserting the revolution and going over to the side of the bourgeoisie. To wait until the toiling classes bring about a revolution on an international scale means that everybody should stand stock-still in expectation. That is nonsense" (see Vol. XXIII, p. 9).

These words of Lenin should not be forgotten.

2. How Zinoviev "Elaborates" Lenin

I have spoken of the pre-conditions for proletarian revolutions in individual capitalist countries. I should now like to say a few words to show how Zinoviev distorts or "elaborates" Lenin's fundamental article on the preconditions for proletarian revolutions and on the victory of socialism in individual capitalist countries. I have in mind Lenin's well-known article, "The United States of Europe Slogan," written in 1915 and several times quoted in the course of our discussions. Zinoviev reproached me for not having quoted this article in full; but he himself tried to give the article an interpretation which cannot be called other than a complete

distortion of Lenin's views, of his basic line on the question of the victory of socialism in individual countries. Permit me to quote this passage in full. I shall try to indicate by special stress the lines which I omitted previously owing to lack of time. Here is the passage:

"Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country taken separately. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and organised socialist production, would stand up against the rest of the world, the capitalist world, attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, raising revolts in those countries against the capitalists, and in the event of necessity coming out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their states. The political form of the society in which the proletariat is victorious by overthrowing the bourgeoisie will be a democratic republic, which will more and more centralise the forces of the proletariat of the given nation, or nations, in the struggle against the states that have not yet gone over to socialism. The abolition of classes is impossible without the dictatorship of the oppressed class, the proletariat. The free union of nations in socialism is impossible without a more or less prolonged and stubborn struggle of the socialist republics against the backward states" (see Vol. XVIII, pp. 232-33).

Zinoviev, having quoted this passage, made two remarks: the first on the democratic republic, and the second on the organisation of socialist production.

Let us, to begin with, discuss the first remark. Zinoviev thinks that since Lenin speaks here of a democratic republic, he can have in mind at most the seizure of power by the proletariat, and Zinoviev was not ashamed to hint, rather vaguely but insistently, that what Lenin most likely had in mind here was a bourgeois republic. Is that true? Of course not. In order to refute this not altogether honest hint of Zinoviev's, it is enough to read the last lines of the passage, where it speaks of the "struggle of the socialist republics against the backward states." It is clear that in speaking of a democratic republic Lenin had in mind a socialist republic, and not a bourgeois republic.

In 1915 Lenin did not yet know of Soviet power as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin knew already in 1905 that the various Soviets were the embryo of revolutionary power in the period of the overthrow of tsarism. But he did not then yet know of Soviet power united on a country-wide scale as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin discovered the Republic of Soviets as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat only in 1917, and he made a detailed analysis of this new form of political organisation of a transitional society in the summer of 1917, chiefly in his book *The State and Revolution*.²⁸ This, in fact, explains why Lenin in the passage quoted speaks not of a Soviet republic, but of a democratic republic, by which, as is clear from the quotation, he meant a socialist republic. Lenin acted in the same way here as Marx and Engels did in their time, who before the Paris Commune considered the republic in general as the form of political organisation of society in the transition from capitalism to socialism, but after the Paris Commune deciphered this term and said that this republic must be of the type of the Paris Commune. This is apart from the fact that if what Lenin had in mind in the above passage was a bourgeois-democratic republic, there could be no question of "dictatorship of the proletariat," "expropriation of the capitalists," etc.

You see that Zinoviev's attempt to "elaborate" Lenin cannot be called successful.

Let us pass to Zinoviev's second remark. Zinoviev asserts that Comrade Lenin's phrase about "organisation of socialist production" should be understood not in the sense in which normal people generally are bound to understand it, but in some other sense, namely, that what Lenin had in mind here was only proceeding to organise socialist production. Why, on what grounds, Zinoviev did not explain. Permit me to say that Zinoviev is here making another attempt to "elaborate" Lenin. It is directly stated in the passage quoted that "the victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and having organised socialist production, would stand up against the rest of the world, the capitalist world." It says here "having organised," and not "organising." Need it be demonstrated that there is a difference here? Need it be demonstrated either that if what Lenin had in mind was only proceeding to organise socialist production, he would have said "organising," and not "having organised." Consequently, Lenin had in mind not only proceeding to organise socialist production, but also the possibility of organising socialist production, the possibility of completely building socialist production in individual countries.

You see that this second attempt of Zinoviev's to "elaborate" Lenin must likewise be regarded as unsuccessful, to say the least of it.

Zinoviev tried to disguise his attempts to "elaborate" Lenin by facetiously remarking that "you can't build socialism in two weeks or two months by a wave of the wand." I am afraid that Zinoviev needed this facetiousness in order to put "a fair face on a bad business." Where has Zinoviev found people who propose to build socialism in two weeks, or two months, or two years? If there are such people at all, why did he not name them? He did not name them because there are no such people. Zinoviev needed this spurious facetiousness in order to disguise his "work" of "elaborating" Lenin and Leninism.

And so:

a) proceeding from the law of uneven development under imperialism, Lenin, in his fundamental article, "The United States of Europe Slogan," drew the conclusion that the victory of socialism in individual capitalist countries is possible;

b) by the victory of socialism in individual countries, Lenin means the seizure of power by the proletariat, the expropriation of the capitalists, and the organisation of socialist production; moreover, all these tasks are not an end in themselves, but a means of standing up against the rest of the world, the capitalist world, and helping the proletarians of all countries in their struggle against capitalism;

c) Zinoviev tried to whittle down these Leninist propositions and to "elaborate" Lenin in conformity with the present semi-Menshevik position of the opposition bloc. But the attempt has proved futile.

Further comment, I think, is superfluous here.

III

The Question of Building Socialism in the U.S.S.R.

Permit me, comrades, to pass now to the question of building socialism in our country, in the U.S.S.R.

1. The "Manoeuvres" of the Opposition and the "National-Reformism" of Lenin's Party

Trotsky declared in his speech that Stalin's biggest error is the theory of the possibility of building socialism in one country, in our country. It appears, then, that what is in question is not Lenin's theory of the possibility of completely building socialism in our country, but of some unknown "theory" of Stalin's. The way I understand it is that Trotsky set out to give battle to Lenin's theory, but since giving open battle to Lenin is a risky business, he decided to fight this battle under the guise of combating a "theory" of Stalin's. Trotsky in this way wants to make it easier for himself to fight Leninism, by disguising that fight by his criticism of Stalin's "theory." That this is precisely so, that Stalin has nothing to do with the case, that there can be no question of any "theory" of Stalin's, that Stalin never had any pretensions to making any new contributions to theory, but only strove to facilitate the complete triumph of Leninism in our Party, in spite of Trotsky's revisionist efforts—this I shall endeavour to show later. Meanwhile, let it be noted that Trotsky's statement about Stalin's "theory" is a manoeuvre, a trick, a cowardly and unsuccessful trick, designed to cover up his fight against Lenin's theory of the victory of socialism in individual countries, a fight which began in 1915 and is continuing to the present day. Whether this stratagem of Trotsky's is a sign of honest polemics, I leave the comrades to judge.

The starting point for the decisions of our Party on the question whether it is possible to build socialism in our country is to be found in the well-known programmatic works of Comrade Lenin. In those works Lenin says that under the conditions of imperialism the victory of socialism in individual countries is possible, that the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in solving the economic problem of this dictatorship is assured, that we, the proletarians of the U.S.S.R., have all that is necessary and sufficient for building a complete socialist society.

I have just quoted a passage from the well-known article of Lenin's where he for the first time raised the question of the possibility of the victory of socialism in individual countries, and which I therefore shall not repeat here. That article was written in 1915. It says that the victory of socialism in individual countries—he seizure of power by the proletariat, the expropriation of the capitalists and the organisation of socialist production—is possible. We know that Trotsky at that very time, in that same year 1915, came out in the press against this article of Lenin's and called Lenin's theory of socialism in one country a theory of "national narrow-mindedness."

The question arises, what has Stalin's "theory" to do with this?

Further, in my report I quoted a passage from Lenin's well-known work, "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," where it says plainly and definitely that the victory of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R., in the sense of solving the economic problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat, may be considered assured. This work was written in 1919. Here is the passage:

"In spite of the lies and slanders of the bourgeoisie of all countries and of their open or masked henchmen (the 'Socialists' of the Second International), one thing remains beyond dispute, viz., that from the point of view of the basic economic problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the victory of communism over capitalism in our country is assured. Throughout the world the bourgeoisie is raging and fuming against Bolshevism and is organising military expeditions, plots, etc., against the Bolsheviks, just because it fully realises that our success in reconstructing the social economy is inevitable, provided we are

not crushed by military force. And its attempts to crush us in this way are not succeeding"* (see Vol. XXIV, p. 510).

You see that Lenin plainly speaks here of the possibility of the victory of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. in the matter of reconstructing the social economy, in the matter of solving the economic problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We know that Trotsky and the opposition as a whole do not agree with the basic propositions contained in this passage.

The question arises, what has Stalin's "theory" to do with this?

I quoted, lastly, a passage from Lenin's well-known pamphlet, *On Co-operation*, written in 1923. In this passage, it says:

"As a matter of fact, state power over all large-scale means of production, state power in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat, etc.—is not this all that is necessary for building a complete socialist society from the co-operatives, from the co-operatives alone, which we formerly looked down upon as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to look down upon as such now, under NEP? Is this not all that is necessary for building a complete socialist society? This is not yet the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for this building"* (see Vol. XXVII, p. 392).

You see that this passage leaves no doubt whatever about the possibility of building socialism in our country.

You see that this passage enumerates the principal factors in the building of a socialist economy in our country: proletarian power, large-scale production in the hands of the proletarian power, an alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry, leadership of the proletariat in this alliance, co-operation.

Trotsky endeavoured recently, at the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.), to counterpose to this quotation another quotation from the works of Lenin, where it says that "Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country" (see Vol. XXVI, p. 46). But to counterpose these quotations is to distort the basic idea of Lenin's pamphlet, *On Co-operation*. Is not electrification a constituent part of large-scale production, and is electrification possible at all in our country without large-scale production, concentrated in the hands of a proletarian state? Is it not clear that when Lenin says in his pamphlet *On Co-operation* that large-scale production is one of the factors in the building of socialism, this includes electrification?

We know that the opposition is conducting a more or less overt, but mostly covert, fight against the basic propositions formulated in this passage from Lenin's pamphlet, *On Co-operation*.

The question arises, what has Stalin's "theory" to do with this?

Such are the basic propositions of Leninism in the question of the building of socialism in our country.

The Party affirms that fundamentally at variance with these propositions of Leninism are the postulates of Trotsky and the opposition bloc to the effect that "the building of socialism within the framework of national states is impossible," that "the theory of socialism in one country is a theoretical justification of national narrow-mindedness," that "without direct state support from the European proletariat, the working class of Russia will not be able to maintain itself in power" (Trotsky).

The Party affirms that these propositions of the opposition bloc are the expression of a Social-Democratic deviation in our Party.

The Party affirms that Trotsky's formula about "direct state support from the European proletariat" is a formula that makes a complete break with Leninism. For what is implied by making the building of socialism in our country dependent on "direct state support from the European proletariat"? What if the European proletariat does not succeed in seizing power within the next few years? Can our revolution mark time for an indefinite period, pending the victory of the revolution in the West? Can it be expected that the bourgeoisie of our country will agree to wait for the victory of the revolution in the West and renounce its work and its struggle against the socialist elements in our economy? Does not this formula of Trotsky's denote the prospect of a gradual surrender of our positions to the capitalist elements in our economy, and then the prospect of our Party's retiring from power in the event of a victorious revolution in the West being delayed?

Is it not clear that what we have here are two absolutely different lines, one of which is the line of the Party and Leninism, and the other the line of the opposition and Trotskyism?

I asked Trotsky in my report, and I ask him again: Is it not true that Lenin's theory of the possibility of the victory of socialism in individual countries was qualified by Trotsky in 1915 as a theory of "national narrow-mindedness"? But I received no answer. Why? Is silence a sign of courage in polemics?

I asked Trotsky, further, and I ask him again: Is it not true that he repeated the charge of "national narrow-mindedness" against the theory of the building of socialism only quite recently, in September 1926, in his document addressed to the opposition? But I received no answer to this either. Why? Is it not because silence with Trotsky is also a sort of "manoeuvre"?

What does all this show?

It shows that Trotsky adheres to his old position of fighting Leninism on the basic question of the building of socialism in our country.

It shows that Trotsky, not having the courage to come out openly against Leninism, is trying to disguise his fight by criticising a non-existent "theory" of Stalin's.

Let us pass to another "manoeuvrer," Kamenev. He, apparently, was infected by Trotsky and also began to manoeuvre. But his manoeuvre turned out to be cruder than Trotsky's. Trotsky tried to accuse Stalin alone, but Kamenev hurled an accusation against the whole Party, declaring that it, that is, the Party, "replaces the international revolutionary perspective by a national-reformist perspective." How do you like that? Our Party, it appears, replaces the international revolutionary perspective by a national-reformist perspective. But since our

Party is Lenin's party, and since in its decisions on the question of the building of socialism it rests wholly and entirely on Lenin's well-known propositions, it follows that Lenin's theory of the building of socialism is a national-reformist theory. Lenin a "national-reformist"—that is the sort of nonsense Kamenev treats us to.

Are there any decisions of our Party on the question of building socialism in our country? Yes, and even very definite decisions. When were those decisions adopted by the Party? They were adopted at the Fourteenth Conference of our Party in April 1925. I am referring to the resolution of the Fourteenth Conference on the work of the E.C.C.I. and socialist construction in our country. Is this resolution a Leninist resolution? Yes, it is, because this can be vouched for by such competent persons as Zinoviev, who made the report at the Fourteenth Conference in defence of this resolution, and Kamenev, who presided at this conference and voted for this resolution.

Why, then, did not Kamenev and Zinoviev try to convict the Party of contradicting itself, of diverging from the resolution of the Fourteenth Conference on the question of building socialism in our country, which resolution, as we know, was adopted unanimously?

One would think that nothing could be easier: the Party adopted a special resolution on the question of building socialism in our country and Kamenev and Zinoviev voted for it, and now both of them accuse the Party of national-reformism—why, then, should they not base their argument on so important a Party document as the resolution of the Fourteenth Conference, which deals with the building of socialism in our country, and which is obviously Leninist from beginning to end?

Did you notice that the opposition in general, and Kamenev in particular, avoided the Fourteenth Conference resolution as a cat-avoids hot porridge? (Laughter.) Why this fear of the Fourteenth Conference resolution, which was adopted on Zinoviev's motion and passed with the active assistance of Kamenev? Why are Kamenev and Zinoviev scared of mentioning this resolution even casually? Does not this resolution deal with the building of socialism in our country? And is not the question of the building of socialism the basic question at issue in our discussion?

Then what is the trouble?

It is that Kamenev and Zinoviev, who supported the Fourteenth Conference resolution in 1925, afterwards renounced this resolution, and hence, renounced Leninism, went over to the side of Trotskyism, and are now scared of mentioning this resolution even casually, for fear of being exposed.

What does this resolution say?

Here is a quotation from the resolution:

"Generally, the victory of socialism in one country (not in the sense of final victory) is unquestionably possible."* And further:

". . . The existence of two directly opposite social systems gives rise to the constant menace of capitalist blockade, of other forms of economic pressure, of armed intervention, of restoration. Consequently, the only guarantee of the final victory of socialism, i.e., the guarantee against

restoration, is a victorious socialist revolution in a number of countries. It by no means follows from this that it is impossible to build a complete socialist society in a backward country like Russia without the 'state aid'* (Trotsky) of countries more developed technically and economically. An integral part of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution is the assertion that 'real progress of a socialist economy in Russia will become possible only after the victory of the proletariat in the major European countries' (Trotsky, 1922)—an assertion which in the present period condemns the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. to fatalistic passivity. In opposition to such 'theories,' Comrade Lenin wrote: 'Infinitely hackneyed is the argument that they learned by rote during the development of West-European Social-Democracy, namely, that we are not yet ripe for socialism, that, as certain "learned" gentlemen among them express it, the objective economic prerequisites for socialism do not exist in our country' (Notes on Sukhanov)." (Resolution of the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) on "The Tasks of the Comintern and the R.C.P.(B.) in Connection with the Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I." 29)

You see that the Fourteenth Conference resolution is an accurate statement of the basic propositions of Leninism on the question of the possibility of building socialism in our country.

You see that the resolution qualifies Trotskyism as running counter to Leninism, while a number of theses in the resolution are based upon a direct denial of the basic tenets of Trotskyism.

You see that the resolution fully reflects the disputes that have now again broken out over the question of the building of a socialist society in our country.

You know that my report was based on the guiding propositions of this resolution.

You no doubt remember that in my report I made special mention of the Fourteenth Conference resolution and accused Kamenev and Zinoviev of having violated it, of having departed from this resolution.

Why did not Kamenev and Zinoviev try to dispel that accusation?

What is the secret?

The secret is that Kamenev and Zinoviev renounced this resolution long ago and, having renounced it, passed over to Trotskyism.

For either one thing or the other:

either the Fourteenth Conference resolution is not a Leninist resolution—in which case Kamenev and Zinoviev were not Leninists when they voted for it;

or the resolution is a Leninist resolution—in which case Kamenev and Zinoviev, having renounced the resolution, have ceased to be Leninists.

Some of the speakers here said (Riese was one of them, I think) that Zinoviev and Kamenev had not gone over to Trotskyism, but, on the contrary, Trotsky had gone over to Zinoviev and Kamenev. That is all nonsense, comrades. The fact that Kamenev and Zinoviev have

renounced the Fourteenth Conference resolution is direct proof that it is precisely Kamenev and Zinoviev that have gone over to Trotskyism.

And so:

Who has renounced the Leninist line in the question of the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R., as formulated in the resolution of the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.)?

It turns out that Kamenev and Zinoviev have.

Who has "replaced the international revolutionary perspective" by Trotskyism?

It turns out that Kamenev and Zinoviev have.

If Kamenev now howls and clamours about the "national-reformism" of our Party, it is because he is trying to divert the attention of the comrades from his fall from grace and to blame others for his own sins.

This is why Kamenev's "manoeuvre" about the "national-reformism" of our Party is a trick, an unseemly and crude trick, designed to cover up his renunciation of the Fourteenth Conference resolution, his renunciation of Leninism, his desertion to Trotskyism, by clamouring about "national-reformism" in our Party.

2. We Are Building and Can Completely Build the Economic Basis of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.

I said in my report that the political basis of socialism has already been created in our country—it is the dictatorship of the proletariat. I said that the economic basis of socialism is still far from having been created, and has yet to be created. I said, further, that in consequence of this the question stands as follows: have we the possibility of building the economic basis of socialism in our country by our own efforts? I said, lastly, that if this question is put in class language, it takes the following form: have we the possibility of overcoming our, Soviet, bourgeoisie by our own efforts?

Trotsky asserted in his speech that when I spoke of overcoming the bourgeoisie in the U.S.S.R., I meant overcoming it politically. That, of course, is not true. It is a factional fancy of Trotsky's. It will be seen from my report that when I spoke of overcoming the bourgeoisie in the U.S.S.R., I meant overcoming it economically, because, politically, it has already been overcome.

What does overcoming the bourgeoisie in the U.S.S.R. economically mean? Or in other words: what does creating the economic basis of socialism in the U.S.S.R. mean?

"To create the economic basis of socialism means welding agriculture and socialist industry into one integral economy, subordinating agriculture to the leadership of socialist industry, regulating relations between town and country on the basis of an exchange of the products of agriculture and industry, closing and eliminating all the channels which facilitate the birth of classes and, above all, of capital, and, in the long run, establishing such conditions of production and distribution as will lead directly and immediately to the abolition of classes" (see Stalin's report at the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.).

That is how I defined in my report the essence of the economic basis of socialism in the U.S.S.R.

This definition is an exact formulation of the definition of the "economic essence," the "economic basis" of socialism given by Lenin in his draft of the pamphlet, *The Tax in Kind*.
30

Is this definition correct, and can we count on the possibility of completely building the economic basis of socialism in our country?—that is now the fundamental point of our disagreements.

Trotsky did not even touch upon this question. He simply avoided it, apparently considering that it would be wiser to say nothing about it.

But that we are building, and can completely build, the economic basis of socialism is evident if only from the fact that:

a) our socialised production is large-scale and united production, whereas non-nationalised production in our country is small-scale and dispersed production, and it is known that the superiority of large-scale, and moreover united, production over small-scale production is an indisputable fact;

b) our socialised production is already directing and beginning to bring under its control small-scale production, irrespective whether the latter is urban or rural;

c) on the front of the struggle between the socialist elements in our economy and the capitalist elements, the former have undoubted superiority over the latter and are progressing step by step, overcoming the capitalist elements in our economy both in the sphere of production and in the sphere of circulation.

I shall not stop to mention other factors which make for the victory of the socialist elements in our economy over the capitalist elements.

What grounds are there for supposing that the process of overcoming the capitalist elements in our economy will not continue in future?

Trotsky said in his speech:

"Stalin says that we are engaged in the building of socialism, that is, are working for the abolition of classes and the state, that is, are overcoming our bourgeoisie. Yes, comrades, but the state needs an army against external enemies" (I quote from the verbatim report. — J. St.).

What does this mean? What is the sense of this passage? From this passage, only one conclusion can be drawn: since completely building the economic basis of socialism implies abolition of classes and the state, and since we shall nevertheless need an army for the protection of the socialist homeland, while an army without a state is impossible (so Trotsky thinks), it follows that we cannot completely build the economic basis of socialism until the necessity for armed defence of the socialist homeland has disappeared.

That, comrades, is a mixing up of all concepts. Either what is meant by the state here is simply an apparatus for the armed defence of socialist society—which is absurd, for the state is primarily the weapon of one class against other classes, and it is self-evident that if there are no classes there cannot be a state. Or an army for the defence of socialist society is here considered inconceivable without the existence of a state—which again is absurd, for it is theoretically quite possible to grant the existence of a state of society in which there are no classes and no state, but there is an armed people defending its classless society against external enemies. Sociology provides quite a number of examples of the existence in the course of human history of societies which had no classes and no state, but which defended themselves in one way or another against external enemies. It is similarly possible to conceive a future classless society which, having no classes and no state, may nevertheless have a socialist militia, essential for defence against external enemies. I consider it hardly likely that such a state of things may occur in our country, because there is no reason to doubt that the achievements of socialist construction in our country, and still more the victory of socialism and the abolition of classes, will be facts of such historic significance that they cannot fail to evoke a mighty impulse towards socialism among the proletarians of the capitalist countries, can not fail to evoke revolutionary explosions in other countries. But, theoretically, a state of society is quite conceivable in which there is a socialist militia, but no classes and no state.

Incidentally, this question is to a certain extent dealt with in the programme of our Party. Here is what it says:

"The Red Army, as an instrument of the proletarian dictatorship must necessarily be of a frankly class character, that is, it must be recruited exclusively from the proletariat and the related semi-proletarian strata of the peasantry. Only with the abolition of classes will such a class army be converted into a socialist militia of the whole people"* (see Programme of the C.P.S.U.(B.) 31).

Trotsky has evidently forgotten this point in our programme.

In his speech Trotsky spoke of the dependence of our national economy on world capitalist economy, and asserted that "from isolated War Communism we are coming more and more to coalescence with world economy."

It follows from this that our national economy, with its struggle between the capitalist and socialist elements, is coalescing with world capitalist economy. I say capitalist world economy because at the present time no other world economy exists.

That is not true, comrades. It is absurd. It is a factional fancy of Trotsky's.

No one denies that there exists a dependence of our national economy on world capitalist economy. No one denies this, or has denied it, just as no one denies that there exists a dependence of every country and every national economy, not excluding the American national economy, on international capitalist economy. But this dependence is mutual. Not only does our economy depend upon the capitalist countries, but the capitalist countries, too, depend upon our economy, upon our oil, our grain, our timber and, lastly, our boundless market. We receive credits, say, from Standard Oil. We receive credits from German capitalists. But we receive them not because of our bright eyes, but because the capitalist countries need our oil, our grain and our market for the disposal of their machinery. It must not be forgotten that our country constitutes one-sixth of the world, that it constitutes a huge

market, and the capitalist countries cannot manage without some connection or other with our market. All this means that the capitalist countries depend upon our economy. The dependence is mutual.

Does this mean that the dependence of our national economy on the capitalist countries precludes the possibility of building a socialist economy in our country? Of course not. To depict a socialist economy as something absolutely self-contained and absolutely independent of the surrounding national economies is to talk nonsense. Can it be asserted that a socialist economy will have absolutely no exports or imports, will not import products it does not itself possess, and will not, in consequence of this, export its own products? No, it cannot. And what are exports and imports? They are an expression of the dependence of countries upon other countries. They are an expression of economic interdependence.

The same must be said of the capitalist countries of today. You cannot imagine a single country which does not export and import. Take America, the richest country in the world. Can it be said that the present-day capitalist states, Britain or America, say, are absolutely independent countries? No, it cannot. Why? Because they depend on exports and imports, they depend on the raw materials of other countries (America, for instance, depends on rubber and other raw materials), they depend on the markets in which they sell their machinery and other finished goods.

Does this mean that since there are no absolutely independent countries, the independence of individual national economies is thereby precluded? No, it does not. Our country depends upon other countries just as other countries depend upon our national economy; but this does not mean that our country has thereby lost, or will lose, its independence, that it cannot uphold its independence, that it is bound to become a cog in international capitalist economy. A distinction must be drawn between the dependence of some countries on others and the economic independence of these countries. Denying the absolute independence of individual national economic units does not mean, and cannot mean, denying the economic independence of these units.

But Trotsky speaks not only of the dependence of our national economy. He converts this dependence into a coalescence of our economy with capitalist world economy. But what does the coalescence of our national economy with capitalist world economy mean? It means its conversion into an appendage of world capitalism. But is our country an appendage of world capitalism? Of course not! It is nonsense to say so, comrades. It is not talking seriously.

If it were true, we should be quite unable to uphold our socialist industry, our foreign trade monopoly, our nationalised transport system, our nationalised credit system, our planned direction of economy.

If it were true, our socialist industry would already be on the way to degenerating into ordinary capitalist industry.

If it were true, we should have no successes on the front of the struggle of the socialist elements of our economy against the capitalist elements.

Trotsky said in his speech: "In reality, we shall always be under the control of world economy."

It follows from this that our national economy will develop under the control of world capitalist economy, because at the present time no other world economy than capitalist world economy exists.

Is that true? No, it is not. That is the dream of the capitalist sharks, but one that will never be realised.

What does the control of capitalist world economy mean? In the mouths of the capitalists, control is not an empty word. In the mouths of the capitalists, control is something real.

Capitalist control means first of all financial control. But have not our banks been nationalised, and are they functioning under the direction of European capitalist banks? Financial control means the establishment in our country of branches of big capitalist banks, the formation of what are known as "subsidiary" banks. But are there such banks in our country? Of course not! Not only are there no such banks, but there never will be so long as Soviet power exists.

Capitalist control means control over our industry, the denationalisation of our socialist industry, the denationalisation of our transport system. But is not our industry nationalised and is it not developing precisely as nationalised industry? Does anyone intend to denationalise even a single one of our nationalised enterprises? I don't know, of course, what they are thinking of in Trotsky's Chief Concessions Committee. (Laughter.) But that there will be no room for denationalisers in our country so long as Soviet power exists, of that you may be certain.

Capitalist control means a free run of our market, it means abolition of the monopoly of foreign trade. I know that the Western capitalists have time and again dashed their heads against the wall, trying to shatter the armour-plate of the foreign trade monopoly. You know that the foreign trade monopoly is the shield and protection of our young socialist industry. But have the capitalists achieved any success in liquidating the foreign trade monopoly? Is it so hard to understand that so long as Soviet power exists, the foreign trade monopoly will continue to live and flourish, in spite of everything?

Capitalist control, lastly, means political control, the destruction of the political independence of our country, the adaptation of its laws to the interests and tastes of international capitalist economy. But is not our country a politically independent country? Are not our laws dictated by the interests of the proletariat and the masses of the working people of our country? Why not cite facts, even one fact, to show that our country is losing its political independence? Let them try to do so.

That is how the capitalists understand control, if, of course, we are speaking of real control, and not chattering idly about some imaginary control.

If it is real capitalist control of this nature we are discussing—and it is only such control we can discuss, because only wretched scribblers can indulge in idle chatter about imaginary control—I must say that in our country there is no such control, and there never will be so long as our proletariat lives and so long as we have Soviet power. (Applause.)

Trotsky said in his speech:

"The idea is, within the encirclement of the capitalist world economy, to build an isolated socialist state. This can be achieved only if the productive forces of this isolated state will be superior to the productive forces of capitalism; because, looked at from the perspective not of one year or even ten years, but of a half-century or even a century, only such a state, such a new social form can firmly establish itself, whose productive forces prove to be more powerful than the productive forces of the old economic system" (see verbatim report of Trotsky's speech at the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.).

It follows from this that some fifty or even a hundred years will be needed for the socialist system of economy to prove in practice its superiority over the capitalist system of economy from the standpoint of the development of productive forces.

That is not true, comrades. It is a mixing up of all concepts and perspectives.

It required, I think, about two hundred years, or somewhat less, for the feudal system of economy to prove its superiority over the slave system of economy. And it could not be otherwise, since the rate of development at that time was dreadfully slow, and the technique of production was more than primitive.

It required about a hundred years, or somewhat less, for the bourgeois system of economy to prove its superiority over the feudal system of economy. Already in the depths of feudal society the bourgeois system of economy revealed that it was superior, far superior, to the feudal system of economy. The difference in the periods is to be explained by the faster rate of development and the more highly developed technology of the bourgeois system of economy.

Since then technology has achieved unprecedented successes, and the rate of development has become truly furious. What grounds, then, has Trotsky for assuming that the socialist system of economy will require about a hundred years to prove its superiority over the capitalist system of economy? Is not the fact that our production will be headed not by parasites, but by the producers themselves—is not this a most powerful factor ensuring that the socialist system of economy will have every chance of advancing the economy with giant strides, and of proving its superiority over the capitalist system of economy in a much shorter period?

Does not the fact that socialist economy is the most united and concentrated economy, that socialist economy is conducted on planned lines—does not this fact indicate that socialist economy will have every advantage, and be able in a comparatively short period to prove its superiority over the capitalist system of economy, which is torn by internal contradictions and corroded by crises?

In view of all this, is it not clear that to hold out here a perspective of fifty or a hundred years means to suffer from the superstitious faith of the scared petty bourgeois in the almighty power of the capitalist system of economy? (Voices: "Quite right!")

And what are the conclusions? There are two conclusions.

Firstly. In controverting the possibility of building socialism in our country, Trotsky retreated from his old polemical stand and adopted another. Formerly the opposition based its objections on internal contradictions, on the contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry, considering these contradictions insuperable. Now Trotsky stresses external

contradictions, the contradictions between our national economy and world capitalist economy, considering these contradictions insuperable. Whereas, formerly, Trotsky believed that the stumbling-block of socialist construction in our country is the contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry, now he has changed front, retreated to another stand from which to criticise the Party's position, and asserts that the stumbling-block of socialist construction is the contradictions between our system of economy and capitalist world economy. Thereby he has in fact admitted the untenability of the opposition's old arguments.

Secondly. But Trotsky's retreat is a retreat into the wilderness, into the morass. Trotsky has, in point of fact, retreated to Sukhanov, directly and openly. What, in point of fact, do Trotsky's "new" arguments amount to? They amount to this: owing to our economic backwardness we are not ripe for socialism, we have not the objective prerequisites for building a socialist economy, and as a result our national economy is being converted, and is bound to be converted, into an appendage of capitalist world economy, into an economic unit controlled by world capitalism.

But this is "Sukhanovism," open and undisguised.

The opposition has sunk to the position of the Menshevik Sukhanov, to his attitude of bluntly denying the possibility of the victorious building of socialism in our country.

3. We Are Building Socialism in Alliance with the World Proletariat

That we are building socialism in alliance with the peasantry is something, I think, which our opposition does not venture openly to deny. Whether we are building socialism in alliance with the world proletariat, this the opposition is inclined to doubt. Some of the oppositionists even assert that our Party underestimates the importance of this alliance. And one of them, Kamenev, has even gone so far as to accuse the Party of national-reformism, of replacing the international revolutionary perspective by a national-reformist perspective.

That, comrades, is nonsense. The most arrant nonsense. Only madmen can deny the paramount importance of an alliance of the proletarians of our country with the proletarians of all other countries in the building of socialism. Only madmen can accuse our Party of underestimating the importance of an alliance of the proletarians of all countries. Only in alliance with the world proletariat is it possible to build socialism in our country.

The whole point is how this alliance is to be understood.

When the proletarians of the U.S.S.R. seized power in October 1917, this was assistance to the proletarians of all countries; it was an alliance with them.

When the proletarians of Germany made a revolution in 1918, this was assistance to the proletarians of all countries, especially the proletarians of the U.S.S.R.; it was an alliance with the proletariat of the U.S.S.R.

When the proletarians of Western Europe frustrated intervention against the U.S.S.R., refused to transport arms for the counter-revolutionary generals, set up councils of action and undermined the rear of their capitalists, this was assistance to the proletarians of the U.S.S.R.; it was an alliance of the West-European proletarians with the proletarians of the U.S.S.R. Without this sympathy and this support of the proletarians of the capitalist countries, we could not have won the Civil War.

When the proletarians of the capitalist countries send a series of delegations to our country, check our constructive work and then spread the news of the successes of our constructive work to all the workers of Europe, this is assistance to the proletarians of the U.S.S.R., it is support of the highest value for the proletarians of the U.S.S.R., it is an alliance with the proletarians of the U.S.S.R., and a curb on possible imperialist intervention in our country. Without this support and without this curb, we should not now be having a "respite," and without a "respite" there could be no widely developed work on the building of socialism in our country.

When the proletarians of the U.S.S.R. consolidate their dictatorship, put an end to economic disruption, develop constructive work and achieve successes in the building of socialism, this is support of the highest value for the proletarians of all countries, for their struggle against capitalism, their struggle for power; because the existence of the Soviet Republic, its steadfastness, its successes on the front of socialist construction, are factors of the highest value for the world revolution, factors that encourage the proletarians of all countries in their struggle against capitalism. It can scarcely be doubted that the destruction of the Soviet Republic would be followed by the blackest and most savage reaction in all capitalist countries.

The strength of our revolution and the strength of the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries lie in this mutual support and in this alliance of the proletarians of all countries.

Such are the diverse forms of the alliance between the proletarians of the U.S.S.R. and the world proletariat.

The error of the opposition consists in the fact that it does not understand or does not recognise these forms of alliance. The trouble of the opposition is that it recognises only one form of alliance, the form of "direct state support" rendered to the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. by the proletarians of Western Europe, i.e., a form which, unfortunately, is not yet being applied; and the opposition makes the fate of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. directly dependent upon such support being rendered in the future.

The opposition thinks that only by recognising this form of support can the Party retain its "international revolutionary perspective." But I have already said that if the world revolution should be delayed, this attitude can only lead to endless concessions on our part to the capitalist elements in our economy and, in the long run, to capitulationism, to defeatism.

It therefore follows that "direct state support" from the European proletariat, which the opposition holds out as the only form of alliance with the world proletariat, would, if the world revolution should be delayed, serve as a screen for capitulationism.

Kamenev's "international revolutionary perspective" as a screen for capitulationism—this, it appears, is where Kamenev is heading for.

One can therefore only wonder at the audacity with which Kamenev spoke here, in accusing our Party of national reformism.

Whence this, to put it mildly, audacity of Kamenev's, who has never been distinguished either for his revolutionary spirit or his internationalism?

Whence this audacity of Kamenev's, who has always been considered by us a Bolshevik among Mensheviks, and a Menshevik among Bolsheviks? (Laughter.)

Whence this audacity of Kamenev's, whom Lenin at one time with full justification called a "black-leg" of the October Revolution?

Kamenev wants to know whether the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. is internationalist. I must declare that the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. needs no testimonial from a "black-leg" of the October Revolution. You want to know the extent of the internationalism of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R.? Well, ask the British workers, ask the German workers (stormy applause), ask the Chinese workers—they will tell you about the internationalism of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R.

4. The Question of Degeneration

It may therefore be regarded as demonstrated that the attitude of the opposition is one of direct denial of the possibility of victoriously building socialism in our country.

But denying the possibility of victoriously building socialism leads to the perspective of the degeneration of the Party, and the perspective of degeneration, in its turn, leads to retirement from power and the issue of forming another party.

Trotsky pretended that he could not take this seriously. But that was camouflage.

There can be no doubt that, if we cannot build socialism, and the revolution in other countries is delayed, while capital in our country grows, just as the "coalescence" of our national economy with world capitalist economy also grows—then, from the point of view of the opposition, there can be only two alternatives:

- a) either to remain in power and pursue a bourgeois-democratic policy, to take part in a bourgeois government, hence, to pursue a "Millerandist" policy;
- b) or to retire from power, so as not to degenerate, and, parallel with the official party, to form a new party—which indeed is what our opposition was striving for and, in point of fact, is continuing to strive for now.

The theory of two parties, or the theory of a new party, is the direct result of denying the possibility of victoriously building socialism, the direct result of the perspective of degeneration.

Both these alternatives lead to capitulationism, to defeatism.

How did the question stand in the period of the Civil War? It stood as follows: if we do not succeed in organising an army and repulsing our enemies, the dictatorship of the proletariat will fall and we shall lose power. At that time the war held first place.

How does the question stand now, when the Civil War is over and the tasks of economic construction have come to hold first place? Now the question stands as follows: if we cannot build a socialist economy, then the dictatorship of the proletariat will have to make more and more serious concessions to the bourgeoisie and must degenerate and follow in the wake of bourgeois democracy.

Can Communists agree to pursue a bourgeois policy, with the dictatorship of the proletariat in process of degenerating?

No, they cannot, and must not.

Hence the way out: to retire from power and form a new party, having cleared the way for the restoration of capitalism.

Capitulationism as the natural result of the present attitude of the opposition bloc—such is the conclusion.

IV

The Opposition and the Question of Party Unity

I pass to the last question, the question of the opposition bloc and the unity of our Party.

How was the opposition bloc formed?

The Party affirms that the opposition bloc was formed by the passing over of the "New Opposition," the passing over of Kamenev and Zinoviev, to Trotskyism.

Zinoviev and Kamenev deny this, and hint that it was not they who went over to Trotsky, but Trotsky who came over to them.

Let us turn to the facts.

I have spoken of the Fourteenth Conference resolution on the building of socialism in our country. I said that Kamenev and Zinoviev renounced that resolution, a resolution which Trotsky does not and cannot accept, and renounced it in order to come closer to Trotsky and to go over to Trotskyism. Is that true or not? Yes, it is true. Did Kamenev and Zinoviev try in any way to controvert that assertion? No, they did not. They passed over the question in silence.

We have, further, the resolution of the Thirteenth Conference of our Party which qualifies Trotskyism as a petty-bourgeois deviation and a revision of Leninism. 32 This resolution, as you know, was endorsed by the Fifth Congress of the Comintern. I said in my report that Kamenev and Zinoviev had renounced this resolution and, in their special statements, had declared that in its struggle against the Party in 1923 Trotskyism was right. Is that true or not? Yes, it is true. Did Zinoviev and Kamenev try in any way to controvert that assertion? No, they did not. They passed it over in silence.

Here are some more facts. In 1925, Kamenev wrote as follows about Trotskyism:

"Comrade Trotsky has become the channel through which the petty bourgeois elemental forces manifest themselves in our Party. The whole character of his pronouncements and his whole past history prove that this is so. In his fight against the Party he has already become a symbol in the country for everything opposed to our Party." . . . "We must take every measure to prevent this non-Bolshevik teaching from infecting those sections of our Party which it reckons to capture, namely, our youth, those who will have in the future to take the destiny of the Party into their hands. It must therefore be the immediate task of our Party to adopt every means of explaining the incorrectness of Comrade Trotsky's position, that it is necessary to

choose between Trotskyism and Leninism, that the two cannot be combined"* (see Kamenev, "The Party and Trotskyism," in the symposium For Leninism, pp. 84-86).

Would Kamenev be bold enough to repeat those words now? If he is prepared to repeat them, why is he now in a bloc with Trotsky? If he does not venture to repeat them, is it not clear that Kamenev has deserted his old position and has gone over to Trotskyism?

In 1925, Zinoviev wrote this about Trotskyism:

"Comrade Trotsky's latest pronouncement (The Lessons of October) is nothing but a fairly open attempt to revise or even directly liquidate the fundamentals of Leninism.* It will not be very long before this becomes clear to our whole Party and the whole International" (see Zinoviev, "Bolshevism or Trotskyism," in the symposium For Leninism, p. 120).

Compare this quotation from Zinoviev with what Kamenev said in his speech—"We are with Trotsky because he does not revise Lenin's fundamental ideas"—and you will realise the full depth of Kamenev's and Zinoviev's fall.

In that same year, 1925, Zinoviev wrote this about Trotsky:

"The question now being decided is, what is the R.C.P. in 1925? In 1903, it was decided by the attitude towards the first paragraph of the Rules, and in 1925 by the attitude towards Trotsky and Trotskyism. Whoever says that Trotskyism may be a 'legitimate shade' in the Bolshevik Party, himself ceases to be a Bolshevik. Whoever now wants to build the Party in alliance with Trotsky, in collaboration with that Trotskyism which is openly coming out against Bolshevism, is retreating from the fundamentals of Leninism.* It must be realised that Trotskyism is a stage of the past, that the Leninist party can now be built only in opposition to Trotskyism" (Pravda, February 5, 1925).

Would Zinoviev be bold enough to repeat those words now? If he is prepared to repeat them, why is he now in a bloc with Trotsky? If he cannot repeat them, is it not clear that Zinoviev has deserted Leninism and gone over to Trotskyism?

What do all these facts show?

That the opposition bloc was formed by the passing over of Kamenev and Zinoviev to Trotskyism.

What is the platform of the opposition bloc?

The platform of the opposition bloc is the platform of a Social-Democratic deviation, the platform of a Right-wing deviation in our Party, a platform for gathering together all kinds of opportunist trends for the purpose of organising a fight against the Party, against its unity, against its authority. Kamenev speaks of a Right-wing deviation in our Party, hinting at the Central Committee. But that is a trick, a crude and dishonest trick, designed to screen the opportunism of the opposition bloc by means of loud accusations against the Party. In actual fact, it is the opposition bloc that is the expression of a Right-wing deviation in our Party. We judge the opposition not by its statements, but by its deeds. And the deeds of the opposition show that it is a rallying centre and hotbed for all kinds of opportunist elements, from Ossovsky and the "Workers' Opposition" to Souvarine and Maslow, Korsch and Ruth Fischer.

The restoration of factionalism, the restoration of the theory of freedom of factions in our Party, a rallying of all the opportunist elements in our Party, a fight against the unity of the Party, a fight against its leading cadres, a fight for the formation of a new party—that is what the opposition is now driving for, if we are to judge from Kamenev's speech. In this respect Kamenev's speech marks a turning point from the opposition's "statement" of October 1926 to a resumption of the opposition's splitting policy.

What is the opposition bloc from the point of view of Party unity?

The opposition bloc is the embryo of a new party within our Party. Is it not a fact that the opposition had its own Central Committee and its own parallel local committees? In its "statement" of October 16, 1926, the opposition gave assurances that it had renounced factionalism. But does not Kamenev's speech show that it has gone back to the factional struggle? What guarantee is there that the opposition has not already re-established its central and local parallel organisations? Is it not a fact that the opposition collected special membership dues for its treasury? What guarantee is there that it has not resumed this splitting course?

The opposition bloc is the embryo of a new party, undermining the unity of our Party.

The task is to smash this bloc and liquidate it. (Stormy applause.)

Comrades, at a time when imperialism is dominant in other countries, when one country and only one country has succeeded in breaching the front of capital, under such conditions the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot exist for a single moment without a united party armed with iron discipline. Attempts to undermine the Party's unity, attempts to form a new party, must be rooted out if we want to preserve the dictatorship of the proletariat, if we want to build socialism.

The task therefore is to liquidate the opposition bloc and consolidate the unity of our Party.

V

Conclusion

I am concluding, comrades.

If we sum up the discussion, we can arrive at one general conclusion that is beyond all doubt, namely, that the Fourteenth Congress of our Party was right when it said that the opposition is infected with disbelief in the strength of our proletariat, disbelief in the possibility of victoriously building socialism in our country. That is the general residual impression and the general conclusion which the comrades cannot have failed to form.

Thus, you have before you two forces. On the one hand, you have our Party, which is confidently leading the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. forward, building socialism and summoning the proletariat of all countries to the struggle. On the other hand, you have the opposition, hobbling along behind our Party like a decrepit old man with rheumatic legs, an aching back and a pain in the head—an opposition that sows pessimism around it and poisons the atmosphere with its twaddle to the effect that nothing will come of socialism in the U.S.S.R., that over there, among the bourgeois, everything is all right, and that over here, among the proletarians, everything is all wrong.

Those, comrades, are the two forces confronting you. It is for you to make your choice between them. (Laughter.)

I have no doubt that you will make the right choice. (Applause.)

The opposition, in its factional blindness, regards our revolution as something devoid of all independent strength, as a sort of gratuitous supplement to the future revolution in the West, which has not yet won victory.

That is not the way Comrade Lenin regarded our revolution, the Republic of Soviets. Comrade Lenin regarded the Republic of Soviets as a torch which illumines the-path of the proletarians of all countries.

Here is what Comrade Lenin said on this score:

"The example of the Soviet Republic will stand before them (that is, the proletarians of all countries. — J. St.) for a long time to come. Our socialist Republic of Soviets will stand secure as a torch of international socialism and as an example to all the labouring masses. Over there—conflict, war, bloodshed, the sacrifice of millions of lives, capitalist exploitation; here—a genuine policy of peace and a socialist Republic of Soviets" (see Vol. XXII, p. 218).

Around this torch two fronts have formed: the front of the enemies of the proletarian dictatorship, who are striving to discredit this torch, to upset and extinguish it, and the front of the friends of the dictatorship of the proletariat, who are striving to hold the torch aloft and to fan its flame.

The task is to hold this torch aloft and to make its existence secure for the sake of the victory of the world revolution.

Comrades, I do not doubt that you will do all you can that the torch may burn bright and illumine the road of all the oppressed and enslaved.

I do not doubt that you will do all you can to fan this torch into full flame, to the terror of the enemies of the proletariat.

I do not doubt that you will do all you can so that similar torches may be lighted in all parts of the world, to the joy of the proletarians of all countries. (Continuous and prolonged applause. All delegates rise and sing the "Internationale," followed by three cheers.)

Pravda, Nos. 285, 286, 294, 295 and 296; December 9, 10, 19, 21, and 22, 1926

Notes

1. The Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern was held in Moscow from November 22 to December 16, 1926. It discussed reports: on the international situation and the tasks of the Communist International; on China and Britain; on trustification, rationalisation and the tasks of Communists in the trade unions; on inner-Party questions of the C.P.S.U.(B.); on Germany and Holland. It also examined the cases of Maslow-Ruth Fischer, of Brandler and Thalheimer, and of Souvarine. A political, a Chinese, a British, a

German and other commissions were set up at the plenum. J. V. Stalin was elected to the political, Chinese and German commissions. After discussing J. V. Stalin's report on "Inner-Party Questions of the C.P.S.U.(B.)," the plenum branded the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition bloc in the C.P.S.U.(B.) as a bloc of splitters who, in their platform, had sunk to the Menshevik position. The plenum made it obligatory for the sections of the Comintern to conduct a determined struggle against all attempts of the opposition in the C.P.S.U.(B.) and their followers in other Communist Parties to disrupt the ideological and organisational unity of the Comintern and of Lenin's party, the leader of the first proletarian state in the world. The plenum endorsed the resolution of the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) on "The Opposition Bloc in the C.P.S.U.(B.)," and resolved to append it to the plenum's resolutions as its own decision. J. V. Stalin's report on "Inner-Party Questions of the C.P.S.U.(B.)," and his reply to the discussion were published in December 1926 as a separate pamphlet entitled *Once More on the Social-Democratic Deviation in Our Party*.

2. The Anti-Socialist Law was introduced in Germany in 1878 by the Bismarck government. It prohibited all organisations of the Social-Democratic Party, mass labour organisations and the labour press. On the basis of this law, socialist literature was confiscated and repressive measures were taken against Social-Democrats. The German Social-Democratic Party was forced into illegality. The law was repealed in 1890 under the pressure of the mass working-class movement.

3. *Der Sozialdemokrat* — an illegal newspaper, the organ of German Social-Democracy; published from September 1879 to September 1890, first in Zurich and from October 1888 in London.

4. See Frederick Engels's Letter to Ed. Bernstein 20/X, 1882.

5. This refers to the anti-Party group in the R.C.P.(B.) which called itself the group of "Democratic Centralism." The group was formed in the period of War Communism, and was headed by Sapronov and Ossinsky. Its adherents denied the leading role of the Party in the Soviets, opposed one-man management and the personal responsibility of factory directors, opposed Lenin's line on organisational questions, and demanded freedom for factions and groups in the Party. The Ninth and Tenth Party Congresses vigorously condemned the "Democratic Centralists." Together with active members of the Trotsky opposition, the group was expelled from the Party by the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.) in 1927.

6. The "Workers' Opposition" — an anti-Party anarchist-syndicalist group in the R.C.P.(P.), headed by Shlyapnikov, Medvedev and others. It was formed in the latter half of 1920 and fought the Leninist line of the Party. The Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) condemned the "Workers' Opposition" and laid down that propaganda of the ideas of the anarchist-syndicalist deviation was incompatible with membership of the Communist Party. Subsequently the remnants of the routed "Workers' Opposition" linked up with counter-revolutionary Trotskyism, and were crushed as enemies of the Party and the Soviet regime.

7. The Fifth World Congress of the Communist International took place in Moscow from June 17 to July 8, 1924. Having discussed "The Economic Situation in the U.S.S.R. and the Discussion in the R.C.P.(B.)," it unanimously gave its support to the Bolshevik Party in its struggle against Trotskyism. The congress endorsed the resolution of the Thirteenth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) on "Results of the Discussion and the Petty-Bourgeois Deviation

in the Party," which had been confirmed by the Thirteenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), and decided to publish it as its resolution.

8. The Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) took place from October 26 to November 3, 1926. The theses on "The Opposition Bloc in the C.P.S.U.(B.)" were drawn up by J. V. Stalin on the instructions of the Political Bureau of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.), and were unanimously adopted by the conference on November 3 as its resolution. The same day the resolution was endorsed by a Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U.(B.) (see J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. 8, pp. 225-44).

9. This refers to the resolution of the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) on "The Tasks of the Comintern and the R.C.P.(B.) in Connection With the Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I." (see Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U. Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums, Part II, Moscow 1953, pp. 43-52).

10. Sotsial-Demokrat — an illegal newspaper, the Central Organ of the R.S.D.L.P. It was published from February 1908 to January 1917; fifty-eight numbers appeared. The first number was published in Russia, the rest abroad, first in Paris and later in Geneva. In conformity with a decision of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., the editorial board of the Sotsial-Demokrat consisted of representatives of the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and the Polish Social-Democrats. The uncompromising struggle Lenin waged on the editorial board of the newspaper for a consistent Bolshevik line led to the resignation of the representatives of the Mensheviks and Polish Social-Democrats from the editorial board. From December 1911 onwards the Sotsial-Demokrat was edited by Lenin. It published a number of articles by J. V. Stalin. V. I. Lenin's article "The United States of Europe Slogan" was published in Sotsial-Demokrat, No. 44, August 23, 1915 (see V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 21, pp. 308-11).

11. Nashe Slovo (Our Word) — a Menshevik-Trotskyist newspaper published in Paris from January 1915 to September 1916.

12. See V. I. Lenin, The Tax in Kind (Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 32, pp. 308-43).

13. See J. V. Stalin, The Social-Democratic Deviation in Our Party (Works, Vol. 8, pp. 245-310).

14. This refers to the British general strike of May 3-12, 1926. Over five million organised workers in all the major branches of industry and transport took part in the strike. For the causes of the strike and of its collapse, see J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. 8, pp. 164-77.

15. See V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 32, p. 301.

16. The Weddingites — one of the "ultra-Left" groups in the German Communist Party organisation; it existed in Wedding, a northwestern district of inner Berlin. The leaders of the "Wedding Opposition" supported the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition bloc in the C.P.S.U.(B.). The Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. emphatically condemned the "Wedding Opposition," and demanded that it completely cease factional activity, break off all connection with elements expelled from the German Communist Party and hostile to the Party, and unreservedly obey the decisions of the German Communist Party and the Comintern.

17. *Posledniye Novosti* (Latest News) — a daily newspaper, central organ of Milyukov's counter-revolutionary bourgeois party; published in Paris from April 1920 to July 1940.
18. See V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution" (Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 24, pp. 1-7).
19. The Zimmerwald Left — a group of Left Internationalists, formed by V. I. Lenin at the First International Conference of Internationalists, which took place August 23-26 (September 5-8), 1915, at Zimmerwald, in Switzerland. The Bolshevik Party, headed by V. I. Lenin, took the only correct stand in the Zimmerwald Left, that of absolutely consistent opposition to the war. Concerning the Zimmerwald Left, see the History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course, Moscow 1952, pp. 257-58.
20. *Smena-Vekhite* — a supporter of the bourgeois political trend which arose in 1921 among the Russian bourgeois émigrés, and which received its name from the magazine *Smena Vekh* (Change of Landmarks). The trend reflected the views of the new bourgeoisie and bourgeois intelligentsia in Soviet Russia, who, owing to the introduction of the New Economic Policy, renounced open armed struggle against the Soviet government and counted on the Soviet system gradually degenerating into an ordinary bourgeois republic. Ustryalov was an ideologist of *Smena-Vekhism*.
21. *Nechayevism* — conspiratorial and terrorist tactics; from the name of a Russian Bakuninist anarchist, S. G. *Nechayev*. Towards the end of the sixties of the nineteenth century, he formed a narrow conspiratorial organisation which was isolated from the masses, and whose members were allowed no opportunity to express their will or opinion.
22. *Arakcheyevism* — a regime of unrestricted police despotism, military tyranny and the violence against the people, established in Russia in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It was so named after the reactionary statesman Count *Arakcheyev*.
23. See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow 1951, p. 193.
24. See Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Abt. 3, Bd. 2, S. 342.
25. See Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Abt. 1, Bd. 6, S. 509-522.
26. See Karl Marx, *Die revolutionäre Bewegung in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Nr. 184 vom 1/I, 1849.
27. See V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 3, pp. 1-535.
28. See V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 25, pp. 353-462.
29. See Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U. Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums, Part II, Moscow 1953, pp. 43-52.
30. This refers to the "Plan of the Pamphlet on The Tax in Kind" (see Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 32, pp. 299-307).

31. See Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U. Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums, Part I, Moscow 1953, pp. 409-30.

32. This refers to the resolution on "Results of the Discussion and the Petty-Bourgeois Deviation in the Party," adopted by the Thirteenth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) on J. V. Stalin's report on "Immediate Tasks in Party Affairs" (see Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U. Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums, Part I, Moscow 1953, pp. 778-85).

Letter to Ksenopontov

I have read your letter and the draft of the article. I apologise for being late in replying.

Here are my comments:

1) I object to your calling yourself “a disciple of Lenin and Stalin.” I have no disciples. Call yourself a disciple of Lenin; you have the right to do so, notwithstanding Shatskin’s criticism. But you have no grounds for calling yourself a disciple of a disciple of Lenin’s. It is not true. It is out of place.

2) I object to your referring in a controversy with Shatskin at the close of 1926 to a personal letter from me written in July 1924. All the more because the question under discussion, about a definition of Leninism, was formulated by me in March 1924, before the appearance of my book, *On Lenin and Leninism*.¹ That is apart from the fact that such a reference to a passage in my letter, while not helping you in the least in your controversy with Shatskin, confuses the issue and carries the argument on to another plane, and may compel me to come out with a statement in the press that would not be in your favour (which I would not like to do).

3) I consider that in the main Shatskin is right and you are wrong. I regret that I did not have the Opportunity of looking through your new pamphlet on strategy. I would certainly have dissuaded you from publishing a work so hastily and carelessly compiled and containing a number of gross errors and incorrect formulations.

4) That, of course, does not mean that Shatskin is right in everything. I shall enumerate his principal errors.

Shatskin, for instance, is mistaken in that passage of his article in which he regards Marx’s formula about the impossibility of accomplishing the task of the working class within national boundaries as being almost identical with Lenin’s formula about the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country. Instead of bringing out the difference between these formulas and disclosing its historical roots, Shatskin evaded the issue with a note that says absolutely nothing, thus slurring over a most important question. But an evasion is not a solution of a question.

Shatskin is also mistaken when he unwittingly contrasts two of Lenin’s formulas about the dictatorship of the proletariat (the dictatorship as the rule of one class, and the dictatorship as a special form of alliance between the proletariat and the toiling sections of the non-proletarian classes, with leadership of the state by the proletariat). Shatskin is right in rejecting the idea of the peasantry being a partner in power, the idea of a division of power between two classes under the dictatorship. But he is wrong when he contrasts these two formulas, for by contrasting them, he shows that he does not understand them.

Nor do I like the crudely self-assured tone of Shatskin’s articles; he himself preaches modesty, but in fact he displays the utmost self-assurance.

5) I advise you not to start a controversy in the press, because you are wrong and Shatskin, in the main, is right. You would do better to devote yourself to a diligent and thoughtful study of Leninism. Furthermore, I advise you to give up once and for all the habit of hastily concocting booklets on Leninism. It will not do.

December 30, 1926

Published for the first time

Notes

1. J. V. Stalin's book *On Lenin and Leninism* was published in May 1924. It contained two items: "Lenin: A Speech delivered at a Memorial Meeting of the Kremlin Military School, January 28, 1924" and "The Foundations of Leninism: Lectures delivered at the Sverdlov University" (See J. V. Stalin).

**Speech Delivered at the Fifteenth
Moscow Gubernia Party Conference¹
January 14, 1927**

Comrades, I did not intend to take the floor. I did not intend to do so because everything that needed to be said at the conference has already been said by other comrades, there was nothing new to say here—and to repeat what has already been said would be pointless. However, in view of the requests of a number of delegations, I shall have to say a few words.

What is the chief and characteristic feature of the situation of our country, looked at from the point of view of its administration, from the point of view of the direction of all our constructive work?

The chief and characteristic feature is that the Party has been able to hit upon the correct policy—the basic line of the Party has proved correct, and its guiding directives have proved sound.

Lenin said:

Ten or twenty years of a correct policy towards the peasantry, and our victory is assured.

What does that mean? It means that at the present moment of history the question of the mutual relations between the proletariat and the peasantry is the chief question for us. Well, our practical activity, our work, the work of the Party, shows that the Party has been able to hit upon the correct solution of this question.

What is required in order that the Party's policy in this basic question should be correct?

What is required, firstly, is that the Party's policy should ensure the bond, the alliance between the working class and the peasantry.

What is required, secondly, is that the Party's policy should ensure the leadership of the proletariat within this alliance, within this bond.

In order to guarantee the bond, it is necessary that our financial policy in general, and our taxation policy in particular, should be in conformity with the interests of the labouring masses, that our price policy should be a correct one, one that answers to the interests of the working class and the peasantry, and that a co-operative communal life should be implanted in the towns and, especially, in the countryside systematically, day by day.

I think that in this respect we are on the right road. Otherwise, we should be having most serious complications.

I shall not say that we have no difficulties in this field. There are difficulties, and very grave ones. But we are surmounting them. And we are surmounting them because our policy is in the main correct.

And what is required to ensure the proletariat's leadership of the peasantry? What is essential for that is the industrialisation of the country. What is essential for that is that our socialist

industry should grow and strengthen. What is essential for that is that our growing socialist industry should give the lead to agriculture.

Lenin said that every new mill and every new factory will strengthen the position of the working class, as regards leadership of the countryside, to such an extent that no petty-bourgeois elemental forces will have any terrors for us. He said that in 1921. Five years have passed since then. In this period our industry has grown, new mills and factories have made their appearance. And we find that every new factory and every new mill is a new fortress in the hands of the proletariat, assuring its leadership of the vast masses of the peasantry.

You see that in this field, too, the Party has been able to hit on the correct policy.

I shall not say that we have no difficulties in this field. There are difficulties, of course, but we are not afraid of them, and we are overcoming them because our policy is basically correct.

It is said that the Soviet government is the most stable of all the existing governments in the world. That is true. And what is the explanation of it? The explanation is that the policy of the Soviet government is the only correct policy.

But is it enough merely to have a correct policy to be able to vanquish each and every difficulty that arises in our path?

No, it is not.

For that at least two other conditions are required.

First condition. It is necessary, above all, that the correct policy elaborated by the Party should be actually put into effect, should be actually carried out wholly and completely.

The first thing, of course, is to have a correct policy. But if that policy is not put into effect, or if it is distorted in practice when being put into effect, what is the use of such a policy? There are cases when a policy is correct but is not carried out, or not in the way it should be carried out. We have quite a number of such cases just now. It was just such cases that Lenin had in mind when at the Eleventh Congress, in the last report he made,² he said:

Our policy is correct, but that is not enough; hence the point now is to arrange for the proper selection of personnel and to organise the checking of fulfilment.

Selection of personnel and the checking of fulfilment—those are the points on which Lenin focussed attention in his last report. I think that we should have this directive of Lenin's in mind during the whole period of our constructive work. In order to guide the work of construction, it is not enough to have correct directives; it is necessary in addition that we appoint to the leading posts in our Soviet, economic, co-operative and all other work of construction people who understand the meaning and importance of those directives, who are capable of carrying them out honestly and conscientiously, and who regard the carrying out of those directives not as an empty formality, but as a matter of honour, a matter of supreme duty to the Party and the proletariat.

That is the way we must understand Lenin's slogan: proper selection of personnel and the checking of fulfilment.

Yet we sometimes find the very opposite occurring. There are people who to all appearances recognise the instructions of the higher organs of the Party and the Soviet government, but in actual practice pigeon-hole them and continue to pursue an entirely different policy. Is it not a fact that sometimes certain directors of some apparatuses—economic, co-operative, and other—pigeon-hole the Party's correct instructions and continue to follow the old beaten track? If, for example, the central organs of the Party and of the Soviet government decide that the immediate task of our policy is to lower retail prices, but a number of co-operative officials, and trade officials generally, ignore this decision, preferring to evade it—what are we to call that? What is that, if not a frustration of that correct policy upon the conscientious implementation of which depends the fate of the bond, the fate of the alliance between the workers and the peasants, the fate of the Soviet regime?

It was just such cases Lenin had in mind when he said:

Our line is correct, but the machine is not moving in the direction in which it should be moving.

And what is the explanation of this disharmony between the line and the machine? Why, to the fact that the constituents of the machine, of the apparatus, are not always of good quality.

That is why proper selection of personnel and the checking of fulfilment now constitute one of the immediate tasks of the Party and the Soviet government.

That is why the Party must be keenly attentive to see that the leading officials in charge of our constructive work are selected with a view to the conscientious implementation of the policy of the Party and the Soviet government.

Second condition. But that, of course, does not exhaust the matter. It is necessary, in addition, to secure an improvement in the quality of the Party's leadership of the masses and thus facilitate the broad mass of the workers, and of the peasants as well, being drawn into all our constructive work. The first thing, of course, is to ensure leadership by the proletariat. But the proletariat manifests its will to lead through the Party. It is impossible to lead our constructive work if there is a bad party at the head. For the proletariat to be able to lead, its party must be equal to its mission of being the supreme leader of the masses. And what does that require? It requires that the Party's leadership should not be formal, not on paper, but effective. It requires that the Party's leadership should be flexible to the maximum degree.

It is said that if the broad masses of the working class are not brought into action, we cannot be victorious on the construction front. That is perfectly true. But what does it mean? It means that if the broad masses are to be drawn into our work of construction, they must be led correctly, flexibly, and not heedlessly. And who must lead the masses? The Party must lead the masses. But the Party cannot lead the masses if it does not take into account the changes that have taken place among the workers and peasants in recent years. One cannot now carry out leadership in the old way—merely by issuing orders and instructions. The time for that kind of leadership has passed. Nowadays, more formal leadership can only cause irritation. Why? Because the activity of the working class has grown, and its requirements have grown; the workers have become more sensitive to shortcomings in our work, and they have become more exacting.

Is that a good thing? Of course, it is. That is what we have always been striving for. But it follows that leading the working class is becoming a more complicated matter, and that the character of the leadership must be more flexible. Formerly, it could happen that you trod on people's toes—and it did not matter. But that won't do now, comrades! Now the utmost attentiveness is required even to the most insignificant trifles, for it is of these trifles that the life of the workers is made up.

The same must be said of the peasants. The peasant today is not what he was two or three years ago. He, too, has become more sensitive and politically conscious. He reads the articles of those who are called leaders and discusses them; he picks every one of the leaders to pieces and forms his own opinion of them. Don't run away with the idea that he is stupid, as certain wiseacres sometimes try to make out. No, comrades, the peasant is cleverer than many wiseacres of the towns. Well then, he wants to be treated with consideration. Here, as in the case of the workers, you cannot confine yourself merely to resolutions. Here, as in the case of the workers, you have to explain the instructions of the Party and the Soviet government, explain them patiently and attentively, so that people may understand what the Party wants and in what direction it is leading the country. If they don't understand it today, be good enough to explain it the next day. If they don't understand it the next day, be good enough to explain it the day after that. Without this, there will not and cannot be any leadership nowadays.

That, of course, does not mean that we must give up leadership. No. The masses cannot respect the party if it gives up leadership, if it ceases to lead. The masses themselves want to be led, and they are looking for firm leadership. But the masses want the leadership to be not formal, not on paper, but effective and comprehensible to them. Precisely for that reason it is necessary patiently to explain the aims and objects, the directives and instructions of the Party and the Soviet government. Leadership must not be given up; neither must it be relaxed. On the contrary, it must be strengthened. But if it is to be strengthened, it must be made more flexible, and the Party must arm itself with the utmost sensitiveness to the requirements of the masses.

I am concluding, comrades. Our policy is correct, and therein lies our strength. But two conditions at least must be fulfilled if our policy is not to become a dead letter. Firstly, proper selection of personnel and checking of fulfilment of the Party's directives. Secondly, flexible leadership of the masses and the utmost sensitiveness to the requirements of the masses—sensitiveness, and again sensitiveness. (Loud, prolonged applause and an ovation from the whole hall. All rise and sing the "Internationale.")

Notes

1. The Fifteenth Moscow Gubernia Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) was held on January 8-15, 1927. It discussed questions of the international and internal situation of the U.S.S.R., a report on the immediate tasks of the Central Control Commission and Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, a report on the work of the Moscow Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.) and other items. J. V. Stalin delivered a speech at the evening sitting on January 14. The Conference approved the policy of the Leninist Central Committee, C.P.S.U.(B.).

2. See V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 33, pp. 271-76.

Letter to Comrade Zaitsev

I am late in replying about Comrade Zhirov's article. But better late than never.

I objected to Comrade Zhirov's article on the uneven development of the capitalist countries being published in the Bolshevik for the following reasons.

1) The article, in my opinion, is schoolboyish. It is evident that the author has not mastered the subject and has no idea of its complexity. Such articles may conveniently be printed in school magazines, where people can practise with a view to one day becoming mature writers. But the Bolshevik is a journal of leadership; it is expected to give guidance on fundamental questions of theory and policy, and therefore to print Comrade Zhirov's article in the Bolshevik means, firstly, to confuse the mind of the reader, and, secondly, to damage the reputation of the Bolshevik as a journal of leadership.

2) Comrade Zhirov is clearly mistaken when he puts on a par the political aspect of the law of uneven development of the capitalist countries and its economic aspect. That these two aspects constitute the substance of the law of uneven development is, of course, true. But that political unevenness does not just now constitute an urgent question for us from the standpoint of our present disputes with the opposition in the C.P.S.U.(B.) is not open to the slightest doubt. What is to be regarded as the most glaring expression of political unevenness at the present time from the angle of world development? The fact that we have an advanced form of government, proletarian government, Soviet government, whereas the most technically and culturally developed countries have a backward form of government, that is, bourgeois government. Does the opposition deny the possibility or the existence of this political unevenness? No, it does not. On the contrary, it considers that the seizure of power by the proletariat in one country is quite possible.

Hence, it is not in this field that our disagreements lie.

Our disagreements begin with the question—is it possible to defeat the bourgeoisie economically, that is, is it possible, given the existence of Soviet power, to build socialism in one country that is encircled by capitalist countries? Consequently, the disagreements lie in the economic field. That is why we give prominence to the economic aspect of the law of uneven development of the capitalist countries. Comrade Zhirov's mistake is that he has overlooked this specific feature of our disputes with the opposition, and has taken the prominence given to the economic aspect of the law of uneven development as a negation of the political aspect of this law.

In brief, Comrade Zhirov has failed to see the point of our disputes with the opposition.

This is apart from the fact that the economic aspect of the law of uneven development is, in itself, the basis of all the catastrophes, including political catastrophes, in the sphere of the development of capitalist world economy.

3) Comrade Zhirov fails to see the full profundity of the difference between pre-imperialist and imperialist capitalism. For him, the law of uneven development becomes a more matter of "disproportion and disharmony" in the development of world capitalism. But if that is so, whence the difference between capitalism whose development is on the upgrade and moribund capitalism, the development of which is on the downgrade? Whence the difference

between capitalism which is smoothly evolving and capitalism whose development is a process of decay, of spasmodic leaps and catastrophes? Why is it that the victory of socialism in separate countries was impossible formerly, but has become possible now? Can we disregard such facts as the dominance of finance capital, the gigantic advance of technology, the levelling tendency, the division of the world into spheres of influence, the impetuous and spasmodic development of capitalist countries, accompanied by catastrophes and periodic redivisions of the already divided world and by the possibility of the victory of socialism in separate countries?

In what way does Comrade Zhirov's attitude differ in this instance from that of our opposition, and why indeed, on what grounds, is he quarrelling with the opposition?

Comrade Zhirov evidently does not realise that, unlike sociological laws, which are applicable to all phases of social development, the laws of development of capitalism may and must change. Under pre-imperialist capitalism, the law of uneven development had one form, with corresponding consequences; under imperialist capitalism, the law assumes a different form, and its consequences are accordingly different. That is why one can, and should, speak of uneven development of the capitalist countries under imperialism, in contrast to the uneven development under the old capitalism. How the laws of capitalism alter at different stages of capitalist development, how their action becomes more limited or more powerful depending on the changing conditions—this is a question of special theoretical interest, to which a man who undertakes to write a special article on the law of uneven development should first of all have given consideration. Comrade Zhirov's misfortune (not his fault) is that he completely fails to see this aspect of the question.

4) I shall not deal with other questions touched upon in Comrade Zhirov's article and on which, in my opinion, he himself is not clear—such as the “non-subjectivity of the world capitalist system,” and so on. It is evident to me that Comrade Zhirov is itching to say something distinctive and startling. 5) As to the suggested editorial note to Comrade Zhirov's article, I consider that such editorial notes are out of place in so responsible a journal as the Bolshevik. To declare that the editorial board “is not in agreement with some of the author's propositions,” and not to say what those propositions are, would be to evade the issue and perplex the reader. I think that notes of that kind should not be given in the Bolshevik.

With communist greetings,
J. Stalin
January 28, 1927
Published for the first time

To the Lena Workers

The shooting down of the Lena workers in April fifteen years ago was one of the bloodiest atrocities of the tsarist autocracy. The gallant fight of our comrades slain by tsarist bullets in the far-off taiga has not been forgotten by the victorious proletariat. Looking back on the path they have travelled, the workers of the Soviet Union can say: Not a single drop of the blood of the Bodaibo workers was shed in vain, for the enemies of the proletariat have received their deserts, and the proletariat has already established its victory over them.

Now, delivered from tsarist and capitalist oppression, you are in a position to mine gold on the banks of the Vitim not for the enrichment of parasites, but for the enhancement of the might of your own workers' state, the first of its kind in the world.

Honour and glory to those who laid down their lives fighting for the victory of the working class!

Greeting you, dear comrades, on this day of remembrance of the heroic struggle of our fallen comrades, permit me to express my confidence that you will firmly and unswervingly carry on the struggle for the full victory of socialism in our country.

February 22, 1927

Printed in the newspaper Lensky Shakhtyor
(Bodaibo town), No. 87,
April 17, 1927

Greetings to the Stalingrad Newspaper Borba

Dear Comrades,

The ten years of Borba's militant activity at its revolutionary post gives rise to a glorious anniversary of which the workers of Stalingrad may be proud.

The struggle against the generals—Krasnov and Denikin—the driving out of the counter-revolutionaries and Western interventionists, the overcoming of economic disruption, the achievements on the front of the peaceful building of a new life—such are the chief events in the life of the Stalingrad proletariat during these past ten years. Throughout this period Borba has stood in the front ranks of the fighters for socialism, lighting the way for the working people.

Ardent greetings to Borba! I wish it fresh successes!

J. Stalin

February 22, 1927

The newspaper Borba (Stalingrad), No. 122,

May 31, 1927

Notes

1. Borba (Struggle)—a newspaper, which was published from May 1917 as the organ of the Tsaritsyn Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), and from the end of 1917 as the organ of the Tsaritsyn Soviet of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and Cossacks' Deputies. When Tsaritsyn was renamed Stalingrad, the newspaper became the organ of the Stalingrad gubernia and city Party and Soviet organisations. Its last issue, No. 58 (4670), appeared on March 14, 1933.

**Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Workers of the Stalin Railway Workshops, October
Railway
March 1, 1927
(Abbreviated Report)**

Comrades, it is usually “expected” of an orator to hold forth without end while others listen to him without end. I think that on this occasion we shall adopt a somewhat different procedure. I shall confine myself to answering the questions put to me in written form by various comrades. I think that that will be more lively. If you agree, I shall get down to business.

The majority of the questions boil down to one: shall we have war this year, in the spring or autumn of this year?

My reply is that we shall not have war this year, neither in the spring nor in the autumn.

The reason we shall not have war this year is not that there is no danger at all of imperialist wars. No, the danger of war exists. There will be no war this year because our enemies are not ready to go to war, because they more than anyone else fear the outcome of a war, because the workers of the West do not want to fight the U.S.S.R., and to fight without the workers is impossible, and, lastly, because we are conducting a firm and unwavering policy of peace, and this fact makes it difficult to make war on our country.

Having substantiated this opinion by facts drawn from the sphere of our relations with the Western Powers, great and small, Comrade Stalin went on to speak of the policy of the U.S.S.R. in the East.

We are told that our policy of friendship with the dependent and colonial peoples of the East is fraught with certain concessions on our part, and, consequently, involves certain expenses for us. That, of course, is true. But any other policy would be unacceptable to us not only from the standpoint of principle, but also from the standpoint of the cost of our foreign policy. That we cannot in principle pursue any other policy than one of friendship follows from the very nature of the Soviet power, which has shattered the fetters of imperialism and built its might on this basis. Hence I shall not dilate on this point.

Let us examine the matter from the standpoint of the cost of our foreign policy. Our state frontiers with the countries in the East, with China, Afghanistan, Persia and Turkey, have, as you know, a length of several thousand versts. On these frontiers we now maintain an insignificant number of troops, who are on friendly relations with the inhabitants of the border states, and we are able to allow ourselves this gigantic economy in regard to the protection of our frontiers precisely because we pursue a policy of friendship with those states.

But let us assume that our relations with those countries were not friendly, but hostile, as they were at the time of the Russian autocracy. We should then be obliged to maintain several armies on those frontiers armed from head to foot, and a whole number of warships in the Far East, as certain imperialist countries now do. And what would the maintenance of several armies on those frontiers and a corresponding navy mean? It would mean an annual expenditure of hundreds of millions of rubles out of public money for those armies and that navy. That also would be an Eastern policy. But it would be the most unthrifty, the most wasteful and most dangerous of all conceivable policies. That is why I think that our policy in

the East is the most correct in principle, the surest from the point of view of political results, and the most economical of all possible policies in the East.

This is apart from the fact that such a policy assures us stable peace in the East not only with the colonial and dependent countries, but also with Japan.

After a number of speakers had taken part in the discussion on the mandate to the deputies, Comrade Stalin again took the floor to reply to a number of new questions submitted in writing by members of the audience.

Comrades, permit me to reply to the additional notes sent in by comrades. Two questions stand out in these notes: the possibility of a rupture of Anglo-Soviet diplomatic relations, and the question of the principal achievements in our work of economic construction. Will Britain break the 1921 trade agreement? Will she sever diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R.?

Of course, a rupture of relations on the part of Britain is not excluded. But I think it is hardly likely. It is hardly likely because a rupture can only be of disadvantage to Britain. This is apart from the fact that, in view of the peaceful policy of the U.S.S.R., responsibility for a rupture would be the heaviest of all possible heavy responsibilities that the British Government could take upon itself at the present time. . . .

What is our principal achievement in the work of economic construction?

We are told that there are shortcomings in our constructive work. We are told that these shortcomings have not yet been eliminated. That is all true, comrades. There are many shortcomings in our mills and factories, as also in our administrative apparatus. It would be strange if there were no shortcomings, bearing in mind the colossal scale of the work we have undertaken. But the crux of the matter does not lie in these shortcomings. The crux of the matter now is that we have succeeded in starting the industrialisation of our country by our own efforts.

What does the industrialisation of our country mean? It means transforming an agrarian country into an industrial country. It means putting our industry on a new technical basis and developing it on that basis.

Nowhere in the world before has a huge and backward agrarian country been transformed into an industrial country without plundering colonies or foreign countries, or without big loans and long-term credits from abroad. Recall the history of the industrial development of Britain, Germany, America, and you will realise that this is so. Even America, the mightiest of all the capitalist countries, was obliged after the civil war to exert itself for not less than thirty or forty years in order to build up her industry with the help of loans and long-term credits from abroad and the plundering of neighbouring countries and islands.

Can we adopt this “tried and tested” course? No, we cannot, because the nature of the Soviet regime is such that it will not tolerate colonial robbery, and because we have no grounds for counting on large loans or long-term credits.

The old Russia, tsarist Russia, took a different road towards industrialization—by negotiating enslaving loans and by granting enslaving concessions for the main branches of our industry. You know that practically the whole of the Donbas, more than half the industry of St.

Petersburg, the Baku oil-fields and a number of the railways, to say nothing of the electrical industry, were in the hands of foreign capitalists. That was industrialisation at the expense of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and against the interests of the working class. It is obvious that we cannot adopt that course; we did not fight against the capitalist yoke, we did not overthrow capitalism, in order later to place ourselves voluntarily under the yoke of capitalism.

Only one course remains, that of accumulating our own funds, that of economising, that of thrifty management of our economy in order to accumulate the necessary resources for the industrialisation of our country. It goes without saying that that is a difficult task. But despite its difficulty, we are already accomplishing it. Yes, comrades, four years after the Civil War, we are already accomplishing this task. That is the point, comrades, and that is our principal achievement.

This year we are assigning 1,300 million rubles for the needs of industry. With that money we are building new plants and repairing old ones, installing new machinery, and increasing the numbers of the working class. We have thus reached a position where we are laying the foundation of a new industry on the basis of our own accumulations. We have reached a position where we are erecting the majestic edifice of a new, socialist industry with our own resources. That is our principal achievement, comrades.

It is said that this majestic edifice has certain defects—that the plastering is not what it should be, that here and there the wallpaper is peeling off, that in some corners there is litter that has not yet been swept up, and so on. All that is true. But is that the point, is that the chief thing? Is the majestic edifice of a new industry being erected, or is it not? Yes, it is. And is this edifice being built with our own resources, or is it not? Yes, with our own resources. Is it not clear that in the matter of economic construction, in the matter of industrialisation, we are already achieving the chief and principal things?

That is the basis of our achievements.

Some comrades are inclined to ascribe these successes exclusively to our Party. That, in fact, explains why some comrades praise our Party out of all proportion. It is to this, too, that must be attributed the fact that some Communists are disposed to brag and to become conceited—a weakness to which, unfortunately, our comrades are still given. Of course, the basically correct policy of our Party has played a very great part in achieving these successes. But the policy of our Party would not be worth a farthing, were it not for the truly friendly support it receives from the vast masses of non-Party workers. Indeed, our Party is strong precisely because it has the support of the masses of non-Party workers. That, comrades, should never be forgotten. (Stormy applause.)

Letter to Comrades Tsvetkov and Alypov

Your inquiry of March 1, 1927, is in my opinion based on a misunderstanding. And for the following reasons.

1) I did not in my report¹ speak of the formation of an “autocratic system” in Russia, but of the formation of centralised multi-national states in Eastern Europe (Russia, Austria, Hungary). It is not difficult to understand that these are two different subjects, although they cannot be regarded as being unconnected.

2) Neither in my report, nor in my theses² did I say that a centralised state was formed in Russia “not as a result of economic development, but in the interest of the struggle against the Mongols and other Oriental peoples” (see your letter). It is you that must answer for making this contrast, not I. All I said was that, owing to the requirements of defence, the process of formation of centralised states in Eastern Europe was more rapid than the process of the constitution of people into nations, as a result of which multi-national states were formed in these parts before the abolition of feudalism. This, as you see, is not what you incorrectly ascribe to me.

Here is a quotation from my report:

“In Eastern Europe, on the contrary, the process of formation of nations and of the liquidation of feudal disunity did not coincide in time with the process of formation of centralised states. I have in mind Hungary, Austria and Russia. In those countries capitalism had not yet developed; it was, perhaps, only just beginning to develop; but the needs of defence against the invasion of the Turks, Mongols and other Oriental peoples called for the immediate formation of centralised states capable of checking the onslaught of the invaders. Since the process of formation of centralised states in Eastern Europe was more rapid than the process of the constitution of people into nations, mixed states were formed there, consisting of several peoples who had not yet formed themselves into nations, but who were already united in a common state.”³

And here is a quotation from my theses, adopted by the Tenth Party Congress:

“Where the formation of nations on the whole coincided in time with the formation of centralised states, the nations naturally assumed state forms, they developed into independent bourgeois national states. That is what happened in Britain (excluding Ireland), in France and Italy. In Eastern Europe, on the contrary, the formation of centralised states, accelerated by the needs of self-defence (invasion by Turks, Mongols, etc.), took place before feudalism was liquidated; hence, before the formation of nations. As a consequence, the nations here did not, and could not, develop into national states; instead, several mixed, multi-national bourgeois states were formed, usually consisting of one strong dominant nation and of several weak, subject nations. Examples: Austria, Hungary, Russia.”⁴

I would request you to give attention to the words emphasised in these passages.

3) If you examine the whole of my report at the Tenth Congress, and also the theses on the national question (the first part), you will have no difficulty in convincing yourselves that the

theme of the report is not the formation of an “autocratic system,” but the formation of multi-national centralised states in Eastern Europe and the factors which accelerated that process.

With communist greetings,
J. Stalin
March 7, 1927

Published for the first time.

Notes

1. J. V. Stalin, Vol. 9
2. This refers to J. V. Stalin’s theses on “The Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question” submitted to the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B) (see Works, Vol. 5, pp. 16-30).
3. See J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. 5, p. 34.
4. See J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. 5, pp. 16-17.

Concerning the Questions of a Workers' and Peasants' Government Reply to Dmitriev

Your letter of January 14, 1927, to the Bolshevik on the subject of a workers' and peasants' government was forwarded to me at the Central Committee for reply. Owing to pressure of work I am answering with some delay, for which please excuse me.

1) The question must not be put in the way that some comrades put it: "a workers' and peasants' government—is it a fact or an agitational slogan?" One must not say that, although we actually do not have a workers' and peasants' government, we can nevertheless speak of a workers' and peasants' government as an agitational slogan. From such a formulation it follows that our Party is capable of issuing slogans that are intrinsically false, that are actually untenable, slogans in which the Party itself does not believe, but which it nevertheless puts into circulation in order to deceive the masses. Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and bourgeois democrats may act in that way, because divergence between words and deeds and deception of the masses are one of the principal weapons of these moribund parties. But that can never, under any circumstances, be the attitude of our Party, for it is a Marxist party, a Leninist party, an ascending party, and one that draws its strength from the fact that its words are not at variance with its deeds, that it does not deceive the masses, tells them nothing but the truth, and builds its policy not on demagoguery, but on a scientific analysis of class forces.

The question must be put this way: either we do not have a workers' and peasants' government, in which case the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government must be discarded as superfluous and false; or we do in fact have a workers' and peasants' government, and its existence is in conformity with the state of the class forces, and in that case the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government is a correct and revolutionary one. Either the one or the other. You have to choose.

2) You call the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government "Comrade Stalin's formula." That is quite untrue. In point of fact, this slogan or, if you like, this "formula" is Lenin's slogan and nobody else's. I merely repeated it in my Questions and Answers.¹ Take Lenin's Works, Vol. XXII, pp. 13, 15, 90, 133, 210; Vol. XXIII, pp. 93, 504; Vol. XXIV, p. 448, and Vol. XXVI, p. 184, where Lenin speaks of Soviet power as a "workers' and peasants' government." Take Vol. XXIII, pp. 58, 85, 86, 89; Vol. XXIV, pp. 115, 185, 431, 433, 436, 539, 540; Vol. XXV, pp. 82, 146, 390, 407, and Vol. XXVI, pp. 24, 39, 40, 182, 207, 340, where Lenin speaks of Soviet power as "workers' and peasants' power." Take all these, and certain other works of Lenin as well, and you will realise that the slogan or "formula" of a workers' and peasants' government is Lenin's slogan or "formula," and nobody else's.

3) Your basic error is that you confuse:

a) the question of our government with that of our state;

b) the question of the class nature of our state and of our government with that of the day-to-day policy of our government.

Our state must not be confused, and, hence, identified, with our government. Our state is the organisation of the proletarian class as the state power, whose function it is to crush the resistance of the exploiters, to organise a socialist economy, to abolish classes, etc. Our government, however, is the top section of this state organisation, its top leadership. The

government may make mistakes, may commit blunders fraught with the danger of a temporary collapse of the dictatorship of the proletariat; but that would not mean that the proletarian dictatorship, as the principle of the structure of the state in the transition period, is wrong or mistaken. It would only mean that the top leadership is bad, that the policy of the top leadership, the policy of the government, is not in conformity with the dictatorship of the proletariat and must be changed in conformity with the demands of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The state and the government are alike in their class nature, but the government is narrower dimensionally, and does not embrace the whole state. They are organically connected and interdependent, but that does not mean that they may be lumped together.

You see, then, that our state must not be confused with our government, just as the proletarian class must not be confused with the top leadership of the proletarian class.

But it is still less permissible to confuse the question of the class nature of our state and of our government with that of the day-to-day policy of our government. The class nature of our state and of our government is self-evident—it is proletarian. The aims of our state and our government are also evident—they amount to crushing the resistance of the exploiters, to organising a socialist economy, abolishing classes, etc. All that is evident.

But what, in that case, does the day-to-day policy of our government amount to? It amounts to the ways and means by which the class aims of the proletarian dictatorship can be realised in our peasant country. The proletarian state is needed in order to crush the resistance of the exploiters, to organise a socialist economy, to abolish classes, etc. Our government, however, is needed in order, in addition to all this, to chart the ways and means (the day-to-day policy), without which the accomplishment of these tasks would be unthinkable in our country, where the proletariat constitutes a minority, and the peasantry the overwhelming majority.

What are these ways and means? What do they amount to? Fundamentally, to measures designed to preserve and strengthen the alliance between the workers and the main mass of the peasantry, to preserve and strengthen within this alliance the leading role of the proletariat, which is in power. It scarcely needs proof that without such an alliance, and apart from such an alliance, our government would be powerless, and we should not be in a position to accomplish those tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat of which I have just spoken. How long will this alliance, this bond, exist, and until when will the Soviet government continue its policy of strengthening this alliance, this bond? Obviously, just so long as there are classes, and just so long as there is a government, as an expression of class society, as an expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Moreover, it must be borne in mind that:

a) we need the alliance of the workers and the peasants not in order to preserve the peasantry as a class, but to transform and remould it in a way that will contribute to the victory of socialist construction;

b) the Soviet government's policy of strengthening this alliance is designed not to perpetuate, but to abolish classes, to hasten the tempo of their abolition.

Lenin was therefore absolutely right when he wrote:

“The supreme principle of the dictatorship is the maintenance of the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry in order that the proletariat may retain its leading role and state power” (Vol. XXVI, p. 460).

There is no need to prove that it is precisely this proposition of Lenin’s, and nothing else, that constitutes the guiding line of the Soviet government in its day-to-day policy, that the Soviet government’s policy at the present stage of development is essentially a policy of preserving and strengthening precisely such an alliance between the workers and the main mass of the peasantry. It is in this sense—and in this sense alone, and not in the sense of its class nature—that the Soviet government is a workers’ and peasants’ government.

Not to recognise this is to depart from the path of Leninism and to take the path of rejecting the idea of a bond, of an alliance, between the proletariat and the labouring masses of the peasantry.

Not to recognise this means to believe that the bond is a manoeuvre and not a real revolutionary matter, to believe that we introduced NEP for the purpose of “agitation,” and not for the purpose of building socialism in conjunction with the main mass of the peasantry.

Not to recognise this is to believe that the fundamental interests of the main mass of the peasantry cannot be satisfied by our revolution, that these interests are in irreconcilable contradiction to the interests of the proletariat, that we cannot, and must not, build socialism in conjunction with the main mass of the peasantry, that Lenin’s co-operative plan is unworkable, that the Mensheviks and their echoers are right and so forth.

One has only to put these questions in this way to realise how utterly putrid and worthless is the “agitational” approach to this cardinal question of the bond. That is why I said in my Questions and Answers that the slogan of a workers’ and peasants’ government is not “demagogy” and not an “agitational” manoeuvre, but an absolutely correct and revolutionary slogan.

In brief, the class nature of the state and the government, which determines the principal objectives of the development of our revolution, is one thing, and the day-to-day policy of the government, the ways and means of carrying out this policy in order to attain those objectives, is another. The two, unquestionably, are interconnected. But that does not mean that they are identical, that they may be lumped together.

You see, then, that the question of the class nature of the state and the government must not be confused with that of the day-to-day policy of the government.

It may be said that there is a contradiction here: how can a government which is proletarian in its class nature be called a workers’ and peasants’ government? But the contradiction is only a seeming one. As a matter of fact, there is the same sort of “contradiction” here as some of our wiseacres try to discern between Lenin’s two formulas about the dictatorship of the proletariat, one of which says that “the dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule of one class” (Vol. XXIV, p. 398), and the other that “the dictatorship of the proletariat is a special form of class alliance* between the proletariat, the vanguard of the working people, and the numerous non-proletarian strata of working people (the petty bourgeoisie, the small proprietors, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, etc.)” (Vol. XXIV, p. 311).

Is there any contradiction between these two formulas? Of course not. How, then, is the power of one class (the proletariat) achieved when there is a class alliance with, say, the main mass of the peasantry? By carrying out in practice within this alliance the leading role of the proletariat (“the vanguard of the working people”), which is in power. The power of one class, the proletarian class, which is exercised with the help of an alliance of this class with the main mass of the peasantry by way of state leadership of the latter—that is the underlying meaning of these two formulas. Where, then, is the contradiction?

And what does state leadership of the main mass of the peasantry by the proletariat mean? Is it the sort of leadership which existed, for example, in the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, when we were striving for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry? No, not that sort of leadership. State leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat is leadership under the dictatorship of the proletariat. State leadership by the proletariat signifies that:

- a) the bourgeoisie has already been overthrown,
- b) the proletariat is in power,
- c) the proletariat does not share power with other classes,
- d) the proletariat is building socialism, and giving the lead to the main mass of the peasantry. Leadership by the proletariat at the time of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry signifies that:

- a) capitalism remains the foundation,
- b) the revolutionary-democratic bourgeoisie is in power and constitutes the predominant force in the government,
- c) the democratic bourgeoisie shares power with the proletariat,
- d) the proletariat is emancipating the peasantry from the influence of the bourgeois parties, leading it ideologically and politically, and preparing for a struggle for the overthrow of capitalism.

The difference, as you see, is fundamental.

The same must be said of the workers’ and peasants’ government. What contradiction can there be in the statement that the proletarian nature of our government, and the socialist objectives that follow therefrom, far from preventing, impel it, necessarily impel it to pursue a policy of preserving and strengthening the worker-peasant alliance as a cardinal means of achieving the socialist class objectives of the proletarian dictatorship in our peasant country, and that this government is called a workers’ and peasants’ government because of this?

Is it not obvious that Lenin was right in putting forward the slogan of a workers’ and peasants’ government and in describing our government as such a government?

Generally speaking, it must be said that “the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat”—with the help of which the power of one class, of the proletariat, is exercised in our country—is a fairly complex thing. I know that this complexity is displeasing, distasteful to some of our

comrades. I know that many of them, on “the principle of the least expenditure of energy,” would prefer to have a simpler and easier system. But what can you do about it? In the first place, Leninism must be taken as it actually is (it must not be simplified and vulgarised); in the second place, history tells us that the simplest and easiest “theories” are far from always being the most correct.

4) In your letter, you complain:

“All comrades who discuss this question sin in that they speak only of the government or only of the state, and therefore do not give a complete answer, since they leave entirely out of account what should be the relation between these concepts.”

I must admit that our leading comrades are indeed guilty of this “sin,” especially when it is remembered that certain not over-diligent “readers” do not want to delve properly into the meaning of Lenin’s works themselves and expect to have every sentence thoroughly masticated for them. But what can you do about it? In the first place, our leading comrades are too busy, and overburdened with current work, which prevents them from busying themselves with explaining Leninism, so to say, point by point; in the second place, something, surely, must be left to the “reader”—who must, after all, pass from a light reading of Lenin’s works to a serious study of Leninism. And it must be said that unless the “reader” does make a serious study of Leninism, complaints like yours and “misunderstandings” will always arise.

Take, for example, the question of our state. It is obvious that, both in its class nature and in its programme, its fundamental tasks, its actions, its deeds, our state is a proletarian state, a workers’ state—true, with a certain “bureaucratic distortion.” Recall Lenin’s definition:

“A workers’ state is an abstraction. Actually, what we have is, firstly, a workers’ state with the peculiarity that the population of our country is not predominantly working class, but peasant; and, secondly, a workers’ state with a bureaucratic distortion” (Vol. XXV1, p. 91).

Only Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and certain of our oppositionists are capable of doubting this. Lenin explained time and again that our state is the state of a proletarian dictatorship, and that proletarian dictatorship is the rule of one class, the rule of the proletariat. All this has long been known. Yet there are plenty of “readers” who had and still have a grievance against Lenin because he sometimes called our state a “workers’ and peasants’” state, although it should not be difficult to understand that in doing so Lenin was not defining the class nature of our state, and still less denying its proletarian nature, but that what he had in mind was that the proletarian nature of the Soviet state necessitated a bond between the proletariat and the main mass of the peasantry, and, consequently, that the policy of the Soviet government must be directed to strengthening that bond.

Take, for example, Vol. XXII, p. 174; Vol. XXV, pp. 50 and 80; Vol. XXVI, pp. 40, 67, 207, 216, and Vol. XXVII, p. 47. In all these works, and in certain others as well, Lenin describes our state as a “workers’ and peasants’” state. But it would be strange not to realise that in all these instances Lenin is not describing the class nature of our state, but defining that policy of strengthening the bond which follows from the proletarian nature and socialist objectives of our state in the conditions of our peasant country. In this qualified and restricted sense, and in this sense alone, one may say that ours is a “workers’ and peasants’” state, as Lenin does in the indicated passages in his works.

As to the class nature of our state, I have already said that Lenin gave us a most precise formulation which does not permit of the slightest misconstruction—namely: a workers’ state, with a bureaucratic distortion, in a country with a predominantly peasant population. That, one would think, is clear. Nevertheless, certain “readers,” who are able to “read” words but who refuse to understand what they read, continue to complain that Lenin has got them “confused” about the nature of our state, and that his “disciples” refuse to “disentangle” the “confusion.” That is rather funny. . . .

How are “misunderstandings” to be removed, you will ask?

There is only one way, in my opinion, and that is to study not isolated quotations from Lenin, but the substance of his works, and to study seriously, thoughtfully and assiduously.

I see no other way.

Notes

1. See J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 158-214.

* My italics.—J. St.

Letter to Shinkevich

I apologise for being late in replying.

1) You refer to what Lenin said against vodka (see Vols. XXVI and XXVII 1). The Party's Central Committee is familiar, of course, with what Lenin said. And if it agreed to introduce vodka, nevertheless, it was because it had Lenin's consent to this, given in 1922.

Lenin did not consider it excluded that we might, with certain sacrifices on our part, arrive at a settlement on the debts with the bourgeois states and receive a substantial loan or substantial long-term credits. That was what he thought at the time of the Genoa Conference.² With such an arrangement, there would have been no need, of course, to introduce vodka. But as that arrangement did not materialise, and as we had no money for industry, and without a certain minimum of monetary funds we could not count upon any satisfactory development of our industry—on the development of which the fate of our entire national economy depends—we, along with Lenin, came to the conclusion that vodka would have to be introduced.

Which was better: enslavement to foreign capital or introduction of vodka?—that was the question that faced us. Naturally, we decided on vodka, because we considered, as we still consider, that if we had to dirty our hands a little for the sake of the victory of the proletariat and the peasantry, we would resort even to this extreme expedient in the interests of our cause.

The question came up for discussion in the Central Committee of our Party in October 1924. Some members of the Central Committee objected to the introduction of vodka, without, however, indicating the sources from which we could derive the funds needed for industry. In reply to this, seven C.C. members, myself among them, submitted the following statement to the plenum of the Central Committee:

“In the summer of 1922 and the autumn of the same year (September), Comrade Lenin said several times to each of us that, since there was no hope of receiving a loan from abroad (failure of the Genoa Conference), it would be necessary to introduce a vodka monopoly, and that this was particularly necessary in order to create a minimum fund for the maintenance of the currency and the maintenance of industry. We consider it our duty to make a statement about all this in view of the fact that some comrades refer to earlier statements of Lenin on this subject.”

The plenum of the Central Committee of our Party decided to introduce a vodka monopoly.

2) As to your desire to “maintain contact with me by correspondence,” I am prepared to meet your wish, and ask you to write on such subjects as may interest you. It is possible that I shall reply with some delay. But I shall certainly reply.

With communist greetings,
J. Stalin
March 20, 1927

Published for the first time

Notes

1. See V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 32, p. 403 and Vol. 33, p. 279

2. The international economic conference in Genoa (Italy) was held from April 10 to May 19, 1922. There took part in it, on the one hand, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan and other capitalist states, and, on the other hand, Soviet Russia. The representatives of the capitalist countries presented to the Soviet delegation demands which, if conceded, would have meant transforming the Soviet country into a colony of West-European capital (the demand for payment of all war and pre-war debts, for restitution to foreigners of nationalised property formerly owned by them, etc.). The Soviet delegation rejected the claims of the foreign capitalists. For the Genoa Conference, see V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 33, pp. 186-200 and 235-38.

Speech Delivered at the Fifth-Union Conference of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League¹
March 29, 1927

Comrades, permit me to greet you in the name of the Central Committee of our Party.
(Applause.)

Permit me to wish you success in your difficult work of organising and politically educating the working-class and peasant youth of our country.

The Young Communist League has always marched in the front ranks of our fighters. Let us hope that the Young Communist League will continue to be in the front ranks, bearing aloft and carrying forward the banner of socialism. (Applause.)

And now, after these greetings, allow me to pass to two questions about which some of your comrades of the Young Communist League have just spoken to me.

The first question is that of our industrial policy. That, so to speak, belongs to our home affairs. The second question is that of the Nanking events.² That, consequently, is a matter of foreign affairs.

Comrades, the basic line which our industry must follow, the basic line which must determine all its subsequent steps, is that of systematically reducing industrial production costs, that of systematically reducing wholesale prices of manufactured goods. That is the high road our industry must take if it is to develop and grow strong, if it is to give the lead to agriculture, and if it is to strengthen and broaden the foundation of our socialist economy.

What is the origin of this line?

What are the causes that make this line necessary and expedient?

There are, at least, four basic reasons which determine this line.

The first reason is that an industry which is based upon high prices is not, and cannot be, a real industry, for it must inevitably degenerate into a hot-house plant that has not and cannot have any vitality. Only an industry that systematically reduces the prices of commodities, only an industry based on systematically reducing the costs of production, hence only an industry that systematically improves its methods of production, technical equipment and Organisation of labour and its methods and forms of management—only such an industry do we need, for it alone can go on developing, and it alone can guarantee the proletariat complete victory.

The second reason is that our industry is based on the home market. We cannot, indeed we are unable, to compete with the capitalists in the foreign market. The home market is the basic market for our industry. But it follows from this that our industry can develop and grow strong only to the extent that our home market, its capacity, the mass demand for manufactured goods, develops and expands. And on what does the expansion of our home market, the enlargement of its capacity depend? It depends, among other things, on a systematic reduction of the prices of manufactured goods, that is, on that basic line of development of our industry of which I have already spoken.

The third reason is that unless prices of manufactured goods are reduced, unless manufactured goods are made systematically cheaper, it will be out of the question to preserve those conditions which are indispensable for a further rise of workers' wages. In the first place, the workers themselves are consumers of manufactured goods, in view of which a reduction of the prices of these goods cannot but be of substantial importance for maintaining and raising real wages. In the second place, on a reduction of the prices of manufactured goods depends the stability of the prices of the agricultural produce consumed in the towns, principally by the workers, which likewise cannot but be of substantial importance for maintaining and raising real wages. Can our socialist state refrain from systematically increasing the wages of the workers? No, it cannot. But it follows from this that a systematic reduction of the prices of manufactured goods is one of the essential prerequisites for a progressive rise in the standard of living of the working class.

The fourth and last reason is that, unless prices of manufactured goods are reduced, we cannot preserve that bond between the proletariat and the peasantry, between industry and peasant economy, which is the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat in our country. You know that the peasant is paying too much for manufactured goods, for textiles, machines, etc. You know that this is a cause of serious discontent among the peasantry and hinders the progress of agriculture. And what follows from this? The only thing that follows is that we must pursue a policy of systematically reducing prices of manufactured goods, if we really want to preserve the bond, the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, and to promote the development of agriculture.

But what is required to make the policy of reducing industrial production costs and wholesale prices of commodities possible and quite practicable? For that it is essential to have a radical improvement of the technology of production, a radical improvement of the organisation of labour in the factories, a radical improvement and simplification of the entire economic apparatus and a determined fight against bureaucracy in this apparatus. All this is what we call socialist rationalisation of production and of the management of economy. Our industry has entered a phase of development when a substantial increase of the productivity of labour and a systematic reduction of industrial production costs are becoming impossible unless new and better technical equipment is introduced, unless a new and better organisation of labour is introduced, and unless our economic apparatus is simplified and made cheaper. We need all this not only in order to raise labour productivity and reduce the prices of manufactured goods, but also in order that the resulting economies may be used for the further development and expansion of our industry. That is why we need socialist rationalisation of production and of the management of economy.

We thus get a chain: we cannot develop industry further unless we systematically reduce industrial production costs and wholesale prices; but it is impossible to reduce prices of manufactured goods unless we introduce new technical equipment, new forms of the organisation of labour and new simplified managerial methods. Hence the question of socialist rationalisation of production and of the management of economy is one of the decisive questions of the day.

That is why I think that the recent decision of our Party's Central Committee on rationalisation of production and of the management of economy³ is one of the most important decisions of our Party, one that determines our industrial policy for the period immediately ahead.

It is said that rationalisation entails certain temporary sacrifices on the part of certain groups of workers, including the youth. That is true, comrades.

The history of our revolution tells us that not a single important step has been taken which did not involve certain sacrifices on the part of individual groups of the working class in the interests of the whole working class of our country. Take, for instance, the Civil War, although the present inconsiderable sacrifices will not bear any comparison with the serious sacrifices that were made during the Civil War. You see that we are already being compensated with interest for those sacrifices.

It scarcely needs proof that the present inconsiderable sacrifices will be more than compensated for in the near future. That is why I think that we should not hesitate to make certain inconsiderable sacrifices in the interests of the working class as a whole.

The Young Communist League has always been in the front ranks of our fighters. I know of no instance when it has lagged behind the developments in our revolutionary life. I do not doubt that now, too, in carrying out socialist rationalisation, the Young Communist League will take its due place. (Applause.)

Permit me now to pass to the second question—that of the Nanking events. I think that the Nanking events should not have come as a surprise to us. Imperialism cannot live without violence and robbery, without bloodshed and shooting. That is the nature of imperialism. The events in Nanking cannot, therefore, be a surprise to us.

What do the Nanking events indicate?

What is their political meaning?

They indicate a turn in the policy of imperialism, a turn from armed peace to armed war against the Chinese people.

Before the Nanking events, imperialism endeavoured to hide its intentions by unctuous talk about peace and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries, by a mask of “civilisation” and “humanitarianism,” the League of Nations and so forth. After the Nanking events, imperialism is discarding its unctuous speeches, its talk of non-intervention, the League of Nations and all the other masks. Now imperialism stands exposed to the eyes of the world in all its nakedness as an avowed plunderer and oppressor.

Bourgeois pacifism has sustained another telling blow. For what, indeed, have those who sing the praises of imperialist pacifism, such as the Boncours, the Breitscheids and others, to oppose to the fact of the massacre of Nanking inhabitants except their false pacifist talk? The League of Nations has been given another slap in the face. For who but lackeys of imperialism can consider it “normal” that one member of the League of Nations massacres the citizens of another member, while the League of Nations itself is compelled to keep silent and assume that the matter does not concern it?

It is now proved that our Party was right when it assessed the dispatch of troops to Shanghai by the imperialist countries as the prelude to armed attacks on the Chinese people. For one must be blind not to see now that imperialism needed troops in Shanghai in order to pass from “words” to “deeds.”

Such is the meaning of the Nanking events.

What could have been the intentions of the imperialists in risking the Nanking gamble?

It is possible that by stripping off their mask and having recourse to their artillery in Nanking, the imperialists wanted to turn back the wheel of history, to put an end to the growing revolutionary movement in all countries, and to undertake a fight for the restoration of that relative stability of world capitalism which existed before the imperialist war.

We know that capitalism emerged from the imperialist war with incurable wounds.

We know that ten years ago the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. breached the front of capital and inflicted an incurable wound on it.

We know that the imperialist war shook the foundations of imperialist rule in the colonies and dependent countries.

We know that, ten years after October, the Chinese workers and peasants have also begun to breach the imperialist front, and there is no reason to assume that they will not finally breach it.

Well then, it is possible that the imperialists wanted to wipe out all this at one stroke and begin a "new page" of history. And if that is what they really wanted, it has to be admitted that they have missed the mark. For one must be in one's dotage to think that the laws of artillery are stronger than the laws of history, that the wheel of history can be turned back by the firing in Nanking.

It is possible that when the imperialists bombarded Nanking they wanted to intimidate the oppressed peoples of other countries who are straining for liberty, as though to say: The Nanking affair is meant for your benefit. That is by no means excluded, comrades. The policy of intimidation has its "grounds" in the history of imperialism. But that this policy is unsuitable and is not achieving its purpose is hardly to be doubted. It was applied "with success" by Russian tsarism in its day. But how did it end? You know that it ended in the complete collapse of tsarism.

It is possible, lastly, that in bombarding Nanking the imperialists wanted to strike at the very heart of the Chinese revolution and to make impossible, firstly, the further advance of the South Chinese troops and the unification of China, and, secondly, the carrying out of the terms of the concessions negotiations held in Hankow. That is quite possible and, perhaps, quite probable. That the imperialists do not want a united China and prefer to have two Chinas in order to be able to "manoeuvre more effectively" has been blurted out by the capitalist press more than once. As to the Shanghai and other concessions, there is scarcely room for doubt that many of the imperialists "do not sympathise" with the terms which were worked out and endorsed in Hankow. And so, in bombarding Nanking the imperialists evidently wanted to make it known that they preferred in future to negotiate with the national government under pressure and to the accompaniment of artillery fire. Such indeed is the musical taste of the imperialists. That this strange music smacks of the music of cannibals is something which apparently does not disturb the imperialists. . . .

Whether they will achieve their aim, the near future will show. It should be observed, however, that so far they have achieved only one thing, and that is to intensify the hatred of imperialism among the Chinese, to unite the forces of the Kuomintang,⁴ and to swing the revolutionary movement in China further to the Left.

There can scarcely be any doubt that so far the results are the opposite of what was expected.

It turns out, then, that in bombarding Nanking the imperialists were striving for one thing, but what actually happened was something else, moreover something the very opposite of what they were striving for.

Such are the results and perspectives of the Nanking events.

Such is the policy of the wisecracks of the conservative camp.

Not without reason is it said: whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad. (Stormy and prolonged applause.)

Notes

1. The Fifth All-Union Conference of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League was held in Moscow, March 24-31, 1927. It discussed reports: on the work of the C.C., Y.C.L.; on current affairs and the policy of the Party; on the participation of the youth in production and on the tasks of the economic work of the Leninist Y.C.L.; on participation of the Y.C.L. in promoting agriculture and rural co-operation; and others. J. V. Stalin delivered a speech at the evening sitting on March 29. In its resolutions, the conference assured the Party that the Leninist Y.C.L. would continue to act, as the Party's faithful assistant in the work of building socialism in the U.S.S.R.

2. On March 23, 1927, in the course of successful battles against the Northern militarists for the unification of China, units of the national revolutionary army occupied Nanking. In an effort to crush the revolution, the imperialist powers passed from assisting the Chinese militarists to outright intervention in China, and on March 24 British and American warships bombarded Nanking.

3. The decision on "Questions of the rationalisation of production," adopted by the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) on March 24, 1927, was published in Pravda, No. 68, March 25, 1927.

4. The Kuomintang—the political party in China formed by Sun Yat-sen in 1912 to fight for the establishment of a republic and the national independence of the country. The entry of the Chinese Communist Party into the Kuomintang (1924) helped to convert the latter into a people's revolutionary mass party. In the first stage of development of the Chinese revolution, 1925-27, when it was an anti-imperialist revolution of a united all-national front, the Kuomintang was the party of a bloc of the proletariat, the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie and part of the big national bourgeoisie. In the second stage, in the period of the agrarian bourgeois-democratic revolution, after the national bourgeoisie had deserted to the camp of counterrevolution, the Kuomintang represented a bloc of the proletariat, the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, and pursued an anti-imperialist revolutionary policy. The development of the agrarian revolution and the pressure of the feudal lords on the Kuomintang, on the one hand, and the pressure of the imperialists, who demanded that the Kuomintang break with the Communists, on the other hand, frightened the petty-bourgeois

intellectuals (the Lefts in the Kuomintang), who swung over to the counter-revolution. When the Kuomintang Lefts began to desert the revolution (summer of 1927), the Communists withdrew from the Kuomintang, and the latter became a centre of struggle against the revolution.

Letter to Chugunov

I am extremely late in replying. My apologies.

1) The criticism of Sun Yat-sen that Lenin gave in 1912¹ is, of course, not out-of-date and retains its validity. But it was a criticism of the old Sun Yat-sen. Sun Yat-sen, after all, did not remain at a stand-still. He went on developing, just as everything in the world develops. After October, and especially in 1920-21, Lenin had a great respect for Sun Yat-sen, chiefly because Sun Yat-sen began to draw closer to the Chinese Communists and to co-operate with them. This circumstance must be borne in mind when speaking of Lenin and Sun Yat-senism. Does this mean that Sun Yat-sen was a Communist? No, it does not. The difference between Sun Yat-senism and communism (Marxism) remains. If, nevertheless, the Chinese Communists cooperate with the Kuomintangists within one party, the Kuomintang party, the reason is that Sun Yat-sen's three principles—Democracy, Nationality, Socialism—constitute a fully acceptable basis for joint work of Communists and Sun Yat-senists within the Kuomintang party at the present stage of development of the Chinese revolution.

The argument that at one time Russia was also on the eve of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, yet the Communists and the Socialist-Revolutionaries did not belong to one common party, is devoid of all foundation. The point is that Russia at that time was not a nationally oppressed country (she herself was not averse to oppressing other nations), in consequence of which there was in Russia no powerful national factor to draw the revolutionary forces of the country together into one camp; whereas in present-day China the national factor not only exists, but is the predominating factor (the struggle against the imperialist oppressors) determining the character of the relations between the revolutionary forces of China within the Kuomintang.

2) In my report at the Fourteenth Congress² not a single word is said about “concessions to Japan,” and, what is more, “at the expense of China.” That is not being serious, Comrade Chugunov! All I spoke of was friendly relations with Japan. And what is meant by friendly relations from the diplomatic standpoint? It means that we do not want war with Japan, that we stand for a policy of peace.

3) As to the ambiguous policy of the United States, its ambiguity is so transparent and unmistakable as to need no explanation.

With communist greetings,
J. Stalin
April 9, 1927

Published for the first time

Notes

1. See V. I. Lenin, “Democracy and Narodism in China,” Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 18, pp. 143-49.

2. See J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 300-301.

The Party's Three Fundamental Slogans on the Peasant Question Reply to Yan—sky

I duly, received your letter, of course. I am replying after some delay, for which please forgive me.

1) Lenin says that “the main question of every revolution is the question of state power” (see Vol. XXI, p. 142). In the hands of which class, or which classes, is power concentrated; which class, or which classes, must be overthrown; which class, or which classes, must take power—such is “the main question of every revolution.”

The Party's fundamental strategic slogans, which retain their validity during the whole period of any particular stage of the revolution, cannot be called fundamental slogans if they are not wholly and entirely based on this cardinal thesis of Lenin's.

Fundamental slogans can be correct only if they are based on a Marxist analysis of class forces, if they indicate the correct plan of disposition of the revolutionary forces on the front of the class struggle, if they help to bring the masses to the front of the struggle for the victory of the revolution, to the front of the struggle for the seizure of power by the new class, if they help the Party to form from the broad masses of the people the large and powerful political army which is essential for the fulfilment of this task.

During any particular stage of the revolution there may occur defeats and retreats, failures and tactical errors, but that does not mean that the fundamental strategic slogan is wrong. Thus, for instance, the fundamental slogan at the first stage of our revolution—“together with the whole of the peasantry, against the tsar and the landlords, while neutralising the bourgeoisie, for the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution” was an absolutely correct slogan, in spite of the fact that the Revolution of 1905 suffered defeat.

Consequently, the question of the fundamental slogan of the Party must not be confused with the question of the successes or failures of the revolution at any particular stage of its development.

It may happen that in the course of the revolution the fundamental slogan of the Party has already led to the overthrow of the power of the old classes, or of the old class, but a number of vital demands of the revolution, arising out of that slogan, have not been achieved, or their achievement has been spread over a whole period of time, or a new revolution may be required for their achievement; but this does not mean that the fundamental slogan was wrong. Thus, for instance, the February Revolution of 1917 overthrew tsardom and the landlords, but did not lead to the confiscation of the landlords' land, etc.; but this does not mean that our fundamental slogan at the first stage of the revolution was wrong.

Or another example: the October Revolution overthrew the bourgeoisie and transferred power to the proletariat, but did not immediately lead to: a) the completion of the bourgeois revolution, in general, and b) the isolation of the kulaks in the countryside, in particular—these were spread over a certain period of time; but this does not mean that our fundamental slogan at the second stage of the revolution—“together with the poor peasantry, against capitalism in town and country, while neutralising the middle peasantry, for the power of the proletariat”—was wrong.

Consequently, the question of the fundamental slogan of the Party must not be confused with the question of the time and forms of achieving particular demands arising out of that slogan.

That is why the strategic slogans of our Party must not be appraised from the point of view of episodic successes or defeats of the revolutionary movement in any particular period; still less can they be appraised from the point of view of the time or forms of achieving any particular demands that arise out of those slogans. The strategic slogans of the Party can be appraised only from the point of view of a Marxist analysis of the class forces and of the correct disposition of the revolutionary forces on the front of the struggle for the victory of the revolution, for the concentration of power in the hands of the new class.

Your error consists in overlooking this extremely important methodological question, or not understanding it.

2) You write in your letter:

“Is it correct to assert that we were in alliance with the whole of the peasantry only up to October? No, it is not. The slogan ‘alliance with the whole of the peasantry’ was valid before October, during October and in the first period after October, inasmuch as the whole of the peasantry was interested in completing the bourgeois revolution,”

Thus, from this quotation it follows that the strategic slogan of the Party at the first stage of the revolution (1905 to February 1917), when the task was to overthrow the power of the tsar and the landlords and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, did not differ from the strategic slogan at the second stage of the revolution (February 1917 to October 1917), when the task was to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Consequently, you deny the fundamental difference between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the proletarian-socialist revolution. You commit this error because, evidently, you refuse to understand so simple a matter as that the fundamental theme of a strategic slogan is the question of power at the particular stage of the revolution, the question as to which class is, being overthrown and into the hands of which class power is being transferred. It scarcely needs proof that on this point you are radically wrong.

You say that at the time of October and in the first period after October we applied the slogan, “alliance with the whole of the peasantry,” inasmuch as the whole peasantry was interested in completing the bourgeois revolution. But who told you that the October uprising and the October Revolution were confined to, or took as their main task, the completion of the bourgeois revolution? Where did you get that from? Is it possible for the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat to be effected within the framework of the bourgeois revolution? Does not the achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat mean going beyond the framework of the bourgeois revolution?

How can it be asserted that the kulaks (who, of course, are also peasants) could support the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the transfer of power to the proletariat?

How can it be denied that the decree on the nationalisation of the land, the abolition of private ownership of land, the prohibition of the purchase and sale of land, etc., in spite of the fact

that it cannot be regarded as a socialist decree, was put into effect by us in a struggle against the kulaks, and not in alliance with them?

How can it be asserted that the kulaks (who are also peasants) could support the decrees of the Soviet government on the expropriation of mills, factories, railways, banks, etc., or the slogan of the proletariat on transforming the imperialist war into a civil war?

How can it be asserted that the fundamental thing in October was not these and similar acts, not the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the completion of the bourgeois revolution?

No one denies that one of the main tasks of the October Revolution was to complete the bourgeois revolution, that without the October Revolution it could not have been completed, just as the October Revolution itself could not have been consolidated without completing the bourgeois revolution; and since the October Revolution did complete the bourgeois revolution it was bound to meet with the sympathy of all the peasants. All that is undeniable. But can it be asserted on these grounds that the completion of the bourgeois revolution was not a derivative phenomenon in the course of the October Revolution but its essence or its principal aim? What then, according to you, has become of the principal aim of the October Revolution, namely, the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war, the expropriation of the capitalists, etc.?

And if the main theme of a strategic slogan is the fundamental question of every revolution, i.e., the question of the transfer of power from one class to another class, is it not clear from this that the question of the completion of the bourgeois revolution by the proletarian power must not be confused with the question of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and achieving this proletarian power, i.e., with the question that is the main theme of the strategic slogan at the second stage of the revolution?

One of the greatest achievements of the dictatorship of the proletariat is that it completed the bourgeois revolution and swept away all the filth of medievalism. For the countryside that was of supreme and indeed decisive importance. Without it the combination of peasant wars with the proletarian revolution, of which Marx spoke in the second half of the past century,¹ could not have been brought about. Without it, the proletarian revolution itself could not have been consolidated.

Moreover, the following important circumstance must be borne in mind. The completion of the bourgeois revolution cannot be accomplished at one stroke. Actually, it was spread over a whole period embracing not only parts of 1918, as you assert in your letter, but also parts of 1919 (the Volga area and the Urals) and of 1919-29 (the Ukraine). I am referring to the advance of Kolchak and Denikin, when the peasantry as a whole was faced with the danger of the restoration of the power of the landlords and when the peasantry, precisely as a whole, was compelled to rally around the Soviet power in order to ensure the completion of the bourgeois revolution and to retain the fruits of that revolution. This complexity and diversity of the processes of living reality, this "odd" interweaving of the directly socialist tasks of the proletarian dictatorship with the task of completing the bourgeois revolution, must always be kept in mind in order correctly to understand the passages you quote from the works of Lenin and the mechanics of putting the Party's slogans into effect.

Can it be said that this interweaving indicates that the Party's slogan at the second stage of the revolution was wrong, and that this slogan did not differ from the slogan at the first stage of the revolution? No, it cannot. On the contrary, this interweaving merely confirms the correctness of the Party's slogan at the second stage of the revolution: together with the poor peasantry, against the capitalist bourgeoisie in town and country, for the power of the proletariat, etc. Why? Because in order to complete the bourgeois revolution it was necessary in October first to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and to set up the power of the proletariat, for only such a power is capable of completing the bourgeois revolution. But in order to set up the power of the proletariat in October it was essential to prepare and organise for October the appropriate political army, an army capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and of establishing the power of the proletariat; and there is no need to prove that such a political army could be prepared and organised by us only under the slogan: alliance of the proletariat with the poor peasantry against the bourgeoisie, for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is clear that without such a strategic slogan, which we carried through from April 1917 until October 1917, we could not have had such a political army, and that, therefore, we could not have triumphed in October, we would not have overthrown the power of the bourgeoisie and, consequently, we would not have been able to complete the bourgeois revolution.

That is why the completion of the bourgeois revolution must not be counterposed to the strategic slogan at the second stage of the revolution, a slogan which had the task of ensuring the seizure of power by the proletariat.

There is only one way to avoid all these "contradictions," namely, to recognise the fundamental difference between the strategic slogan of the first stage of the revolution (the bourgeois-democratic revolution) and the strategic slogan of the second stage of the revolution (the proletarian revolution), to recognise that during the first stage of the revolution we marched together with the whole of the peasantry for the bourgeois-democratic revolution, whereas during the second stage of the revolution we marched together with the poor peasantry against the power of capital and for the proletarian revolution.

And this must be recognised because an analysis of the class forces at the first and second stages of the revolution obliges us to do so. Otherwise it would be impossible to explain the fact that until February 1917 we carried on our work under the slogan of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, while after February 1917 this slogan was replaced by the slogan of the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry.

You will agree that this replacement of one slogan by another in March-April 1917 cannot be explained under your scheme.

This fundamental difference between the two strategic slogans of the Party was already pointed out by Lenin in his pamphlet *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*. He formulated the Party's slogan in preparing for the bourgeois-democratic revolution as follows:

"The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie" (see Vol. VIII, p. 96).

In other words: with the whole of the peasantry against the autocracy, while neutralising the bourgeoisie—for a democratic revolution.

As to the Party's slogan in the period of preparation for the socialist revolution, he formulated it as follows:

“The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie” (ibid.).

In other words: together with the poor peasantry and the semi-proletarian strata of the population in general, against the bourgeoisie, while neutralising the petty bourgeoisie in town and country, for the socialist revolution.

That was in 1905.

In April 1927, Lenin, characterising the political situation at that time as the interweaving of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry with the actual power of the bourgeoisie, said:

“The specific feature of the present situation in Russia consists in the transition from the first* stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class consciousness and organisation of the proletariat, placed the power in the hands of the bourgeoisie—to the second stage, which must place the power in the hands of the proletariat and the poor strata* of the peasantry” (see Lenin's April Theses-Vol. XX, p. 88).

At the end of August 1917, when the preparations for the October Revolution were in full swing, Lenin, in a special article entitled “Peasants and Workers,” wrote as follows:

“Only the proletariat and the peasantry* can overthrow the monarchy—such was the fundamental definition of our class policy for that time (it refers to 1905.—J. St.). And that definition was a correct one. February and March 1917 have confirmed this once again. Only the proletariat, leading the poor peasantry* (the semi-proletarians, as our programme says), can end the war by a democratic peace, heal the wounds it has caused, and begin to take steps towards socialism, which have become absolutely essential and urgent—such is the definition of our class policy now” (see Vol. XXI, p. 111).

That must not be understood to mean that we now have a dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry. That, of course, is not so. We marched towards October under the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry, and in October we put it into effect formally inasmuch as we had a bloc with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and shared the leadership with them, although actually the dictatorship of the proletariat already existed, since we Bolsheviks constituted the majority. The dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry ceased to exist formally, however, after the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries' “putsch,”² after the rupture of the bloc with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, when the leadership passed wholly and entirely into the hands of one party, into the hands of our Party, which does not and cannot share the leadership of the state with another party. That is what we call the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Finally, in November 1918, Lenin, casting a retrospective glance at the path the revolution had travelled, wrote:

“Yes, our revolution is a bourgeois revolution so long as we march with the peasantry as a whole. This has been as clear as clear can be to us; we have said it hundreds and thousands of times since 1905, and we have never attempted to skip this necessary stage of the historical process or abolish it by decrees. . . . But in 1917, beginning with April, long before the October Revolution, before we seized* power, we publicly declared and explained to the people: the revolution cannot now stop at this stage, for the country has gone forward, capitalism has advanced, ruin has reached unprecedented dimensions, which (whether one likes it or not) will demand steps forward, to socialism; for there is no other way of advancing, of saving the country, which is racked by war, and of alleviating the sufferings of the toilers and exploited. Things turned out just as we said they would. The course taken by the revolution confirmed the correctness of our reasoning. First, with the ‘whole’ of the peasantry against the monarchy, against the landlords, against the medieval regime (and to that extent the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). Then, with the poor peasantry, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited, against capitalism, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers,* and to that extent the revolution becomes a socialist one” (see Vol. XXIII, pp. 390-91).

As you see, Lenin repeatedly emphasised the profound difference between the first strategic slogan, in the period of preparation for the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and the second strategic slogan, in the period of preparation for October. The first slogan was: with the whole of the peasantry against the autocracy; the second: with the poor peasantry against the bourgeoisie.

The fact that the completion of the bourgeois revolution was spread over a whole period after October and that, inasmuch as we were completing the bourgeois revolution, the “whole” of the peasantry could not but sympathise with us—this fact, as I said above, does not in the least shake the fundamental thesis that we marched towards October and achieved victory in October together with the poor peasantry, that we overthrew the power of the bourgeoisie and established the dictatorship of the proletariat (one of the tasks of which was to complete the bourgeois revolution) together with the poor peasantry, against the resistance of the kulaks (also peasants) and with the middle peasantry vacillating.

That is clear, I think.

3) You write further in your letter:

“Is the assertion true that ‘we arrived at October under the slogan of alliance with the rural poor, while neutralising the middle peasant’? No, it is not true. For the reasons mentioned above, and from the quotations from Lenin, it will be seen that this slogan could arise only when ‘the class division among the peasantry had matured’ (Lenin), i.e., ‘in the summer and autumn of 1918.’”

From this quotation it follows that the Party adopted the policy of neutralising the middle peasant, not in the period of preparation for October and during October, but after October, and particularly after 1918, subsequent to the Committees of Poor Peasants. That is quite wrong.

On the contrary, the policy of neutralising the middle peasant did not begin, but ended subsequent to the Committees of Poor Peasants, after 1918. The policy of neutralising the middle peasant was abolished (and not introduced) in our practical work after 1918. It was after 1918, in March 1919, that Lenin, opening the Eighth Congress of our Party, stated:

“The best representatives of socialism of the old days—when they still believed in revolution and served it theoretically and ideologically—spoke of neutralising the peasantry, i.e., of turning the middle peasantry into a social stratum which, if it did not actively aid the revolution of the proletariat, at least would not hinder it, would be neutral and not take the side of our enemies. This abstract, theoretical presentation of the problem is perfectly clear to us. But it is not enough.* We have entered a phase of socialist construction* in which we must draw up concrete and detailed basic rules and instructions which have been tested by the experience of our work in the countryside, and by which we must be guided in order to achieve a stable alliance with the middle peasantry” (see Vol. XXIV, p. 114).

As you see, this amounts to the very opposite of what you say in your letter; you turn our actual Party practice upside down by confusing the beginning of neutralisation with its end.

The middle peasant whined and wavered between revolution and counter-revolution while the bourgeoisie was being overthrown and while the power of the Soviets was not consolidated; therefore it was necessary to neutralise him. The middle peasant began to turn towards us when he began to be convinced that the bourgeoisie had been overthrown “for good,” that the power of the Soviets was being consolidated, that the kulak was being overcome and that the Red Army was beginning to achieve victory on the fronts of the Civil War. And it was precisely after this turning point that the third strategic slogan of the Party, issued by Lenin at the Eighth Party Congress, became possible, namely: while relying on the poor peasants and establishing a stable alliance with the middle peasants—forward to socialist construction!

How could you forget this well-known fact?

From your letter it also follows that the policy of neutralising the middle peasant during the transition to the proletarian revolution and in the first days after the victory of that revolution is wrong, unsuitable and therefore unacceptable. That is quite wrong. The very opposite is the case. It is precisely while the power of the bourgeoisie is being overthrown and before the power of the proletariat has been consolidated that the middle peasant wavers and resists most of all. It is precisely in this period that alliance with the poor peasant and neutralisation of the middle peasant are necessary.

Persisting in your error, you assert that the question of the peasantry is very important, not only for our country, but also for other countries “which more or less resemble the economic system of pre-October Russia.” This latter statement is, of course, true. But here is what Lenin said in his theses on the agrarian question at the Second Congress of the Comintern³ regarding the policy of proletarian parties towards the middle peasant in the period when the proletariat is taking power. After defining the poor peasantry, or more precisely, “the toiling and exploited masses in the countryside,” as a separate group consisting of agricultural labourers, semi-proletarians, or allotment holders and small peasants, and then passing to the question of the middle peasantry as a separate group in the countryside, Lenin says:

“By ‘middle peasants’ in the economic sense are meant small cultivators who also hold, either as owners or tenants, small plots of land, but such, firstly, as, under capitalism, provide them

as a general rule not only with a meagre upkeep for their families and households, but also with the possibility of securing a certain surplus, which, at least in the better years, may be converted into capital; and, secondly, fairly frequently (for example, one farm out of two or three) resort to the hire of outside labour. . . . The revolutionary proletariat cannot set itself the task—at least in the immediate future and in the initial period of the dictatorship of the proletariat—of winning over this stratum, but must confine itself to the task of neutralising it, i.e., leaving it neutral in the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie”* (see Vol. XXV, pp. 271-72).

How, after this, can it be asserted that the policy of neutralising the middle peasant “arose” in our country “only” “in the summer and autumn of 1918,” i.e., after the decisive successes achieved in consolidating the power of the Soviets, the power of the proletariat?

As you see, the question of the strategic slogan of proletarian parties at the moment of transition to the socialist revolution and the consolidation of the power of the proletariat, as also the question of the neutralisation of the middle peasant, is not as simple as you imagine.

4) From all that has been said above, it is evident that the passages from the works of Lenin you quote can in no way be counterposed to the fundamental slogan of the Party at the second stage of the revolution, since these quotations: a) deal not with the fundamental slogan of the Party before October, but with the completion of the bourgeois revolution after October, and b) do not refute, but confirm the correctness of that slogan.

I have already said above, and I must repeat, that the strategic slogan of the Party at the second stage of the revolution, in the period before the seizure of power by the proletariat, the main theme of which is the question of power, must not be counterposed to the task of completing the bourgeois revolution which is effected in the period after the proletariat has taken power.

5) You speak of Comrade Molotov’s article in Pravda entitled “The Bourgeois Revolution in Our Country” (March 12, 1927), which, it appears, “induced” you to apply to me for an explanation. I do not know how you read articles. I, too, have read Comrade Molotov’s article and I think that it does not in any way contradict what I said in my report at the Fourteenth Congress of our Party on our Party’s slogans regarding the peasantry.⁴

In his article, Comrade Molotov does not deal with the Party’s fundamental slogan in the period of October, but with the fact that, since the Party after October completed the bourgeois revolution, it enjoyed the sympathy of all the peasants. But I have already said above that the statement of this fact does not refute, but, on the contrary, confirms the correctness of the fundamental thesis that we overthrew the power of the bourgeoisie and established the dictatorship of the proletariat together with the poor peasantry, while neutralising the middle peasant, against the bourgeoisie of town and country; that without this we could not have completed the bourgeois revolution.

Notes

1. See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow 1951, p. 412.

* My italics.—J. St.

* My italics.—J. St.

* My italics.—J. St.

* My italics.—J. St.

2. The reference is to the counter-revolutionary revolt of the “Left” Socialist-Revolutionaries in Moscow, July 6-7, 1918, which was put down within a few hours.

* My italics.—J. St.

* My italics.—J. St.

* My italics.—J. St.

* My italics.—J. St.

3. See V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 31, pp. 129-41.

* My italics.—J. St.

4. See J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 332-41.

Questions of the Chinese Revolution
Theses for Propagandists, Approved by the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.)

I
PROSPECTS OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

Basic factors determining the character of the Chinese revolution:

- a) the semi-colonial status of China and the financial and economic domination of imperialism;
- b) the oppression of feudal survivals, aggravated by the oppression of militarism and bureaucracy;
- c) the growing revolutionary struggle of the vast masses of the workers and peasants against feudal and bureaucratic oppression, against militarism, and against imperialism;
- d) the political weakness of the national bourgeoisie, its dependence on imperialism, its fear of the sweep of the revolutionary movement;
- e) the growing revolutionary activity of the proletariat, its mounting prestige among the vast masses of the working people;
- f) the existence of a proletarian dictatorship in the neighbourhood of China.

Hence, two paths for the development of events in China:

either the national bourgeoisie smashes the proletariat, makes a deal with imperialism and together with it launches a campaign against the revolution in order to end the latter by establishing the rule of capitalism;

or the proletariat pushes aside the national bourgeoisie, consolidates its hegemony and assumes the lead of the vast masses of the working people in town and country, in order to overcome the resistance of the national bourgeoisie, secure the complete victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and then gradually convert it into a socialist revolution, with all the consequences following from that.

One or the other.

The crisis of world capitalism and the existence in the U.S.S.R. of a proletarian dictatorship whose experience may be successfully utilised by the Chinese proletariat considerably enhance the possibility of the Chinese revolution taking the second path.

On the other hand, the fact that imperialism is attacking the Chinese revolution, in the main with a united front, that there is not at the present time that division and war among the imperialists which, for instance, existed in the imperialist camp prior to the October Revolution, and which tended to weaken imperialism—this fact indicates that on its path to victory the Chinese revolution will encounter far greater difficulties than did the revolution in Russia, and that the desertions and betrayals in the course of this revolution will be incomparably more numerous than during the Civil War in the U.S.S.R.

Hence, the struggle between these two paths revolution constitutes the characteristic feature of the Chinese revolution.

Precisely for this reason, the basic task of the Communists is to fight for the victory of the second path of development of the Chinese revolution.

II

THE FIRST STAGE OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

In the first period of the Chinese revolution, at the time of the first march to the North—when the national army was approaching the Yangtse and scoring victory after victory, but a powerful movement of the workers and peasants had not yet unfolded—the national bourgeoisie (not the compradors¹) sided with the revolution. It was the revolution of a united all-national front.

This does not mean that there were no contradictions between the revolution and the national bourgeoisie. All it means is that the national bourgeoisie, in supporting the revolution, tried to utilise it for its own purposes and, by directing it chiefly along the lines of territorial conquest, to restrict its scope. The struggle between the Rights and the Lefts in the Kuomintang at that period was a reflection of these contradictions. Chiang Kai-shek's attempt in March 1926 to expel the Communists from the Kuomintang was the first serious attempt of the national bourgeoisie to curb the revolution. As is known, already at that time the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) considered that "the line must be to keep the Communist Party within the Kuomintang," and that it was necessary "to work for the resignation or expulsion of the Rights from the Kuomintang" (April 1926).

This line was one directed towards further development of the revolution, close co-operation between the Lefts and the Communists within the Kuomintang and within the national government, strengthening the unity of the Kuomintang and, at the same time, exposing and isolating the Kuomintang Rights, compelling them to submit to Kuomintang discipline, utilising the Rights, their connections and their experience, if they submitted to Kuomintang discipline, or expelling them from the Kuomintang if they violated that discipline and betrayed the interests of the revolution.

Subsequent events fully confirmed the correctness of this line. The powerful development of the peasant movement and the organisation of peasant associations and peasant committees in the countryside, the powerful wave of strikes in the towns and the formation of trade-union councils, the victorious advance of the national army on Shanghai, which was besieged by imperialist warships and troops—all these and similar facts indicate that the line adopted was the only correct one.

This circumstance alone can explain the fact that the attempt made by the Rights in February 1927 to split the Kuomintang and set up a new centre in Nanchang failed in face of the unanimous resistance of the revolutionary Kuomintang in Wuhan.

But this attempt was a sign that a regrouping of class forces was taking place in the country, that the Rights and the national bourgeoisie would not desist, that they would intensify their work against the revolution.

The C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) was therefore right when it said in March 1927 that:

a) “at the present time, in connection with the regrouping of class forces and concentration of the imperialist armies, the Chinese revolution is passing through a critical period, and that it can achieve further victories only by resolutely adopting the course of developing the mass movement”;

b) “it is necessary to adopt the course of arming the workers and peasants and converting the peasant committees in the localities into actual organs of governmental authority equipped with armed self-defence”;

c) “the Communist Party should not cover up the treacherous and reactionary policy of the Kuomintang Rights, and should mobilise the masses around the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party with a view to exposing the Rights” (March 3, 1927).

It will therefore be easily understood that the subsequent powerful sweep of the revolution, on the one hand, and the imperialist onslaught in Shanghai, on the other hand, were bound to throw the Chinese national bourgeoisie into the camp of counter-revolution, just as the occupation of Shanghai by national troops and the strikes of the Shanghai workers were bound to unite the imperialists in order to strangle the revolution.

And that is what happened. The Nanking massacre served in this respect as a signal for a new demarcation of the contending forces in China. In bombarding Nanking and presenting an ultimatum, the imperialists desired to make it known that they were seeking the support of the national bourgeoisie for a joint struggle against the Chinese revolution.

Chiang Kai-shek, on the other hand, in firing upon workers' meetings and engineering a coup, was, as it were, replying to the call of the imperialists and saying that he was ready to make a deal with them together with the national bourgeoisie against the Chinese workers and peasants.

III

THE SECOND STAGE OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

Chiang Kai-shek's coup marks the desertion of the national bourgeoisie from the revolution, the emergence of a centre of national counter-revolution, and the conclusion of a deal between the Kuomintang Rights and the imperialists against the Chinese revolution. Chiang Kai-shek's coup signifies that in South China there will now be two camps, two governments, two armies, two centres—the revolutionary centre in Wuhan and the counter-revolutionary centre in Nanking. Chiang Kai-shek's coup signifies that the revolution has entered the second stage of its development, that a swing has begun away from the revolution of an all-national united front and towards a revolution of the vast masses of the workers and peasants, towards an agrarian revolution, which will strengthen and broaden the struggle against imperialism, against the gentry and the feudal landlords, and against the militarists and Chiang Kai-shek's counter-revolutionary group.

This means that the struggle between the two paths of the revolution, between those who favour its further development and those who favour its liquidation, will grow more acute from day to day and fill the entire present period of the revolution.

It means that, by waging a resolute struggle against militarism and imperialism, the revolutionary Kuomintang in Wuhan will become in fact the organ of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, while Chiang Kai-shek's counter-

revolutionary group in Nanking, by severing itself from the workers and peasants and drawing closer to imperialism, will in the end share the fate of the militarists.

But it follows from this that the policy of preserving the unity of the Kuomintang, the policy of isolating the Rights within the Kuomintang and utilising them for the purposes of the revolution, no longer accords with the new tasks of the revolution. It must be replaced by a policy of resolutely expelling the Rights from the Kuomintang, a policy of resolutely fighting the Rights until they are completely eliminated politically, a policy of concentrating all power in the country in the hands of a revolutionary Kuomintang, a Kuomintang without its Right elements, a Kuomintang that is a bloc between the Kuomintang Lefts and the Communists.

It follows, further, that the policy of close co-operation between the Lefts and the Communists within the Kuomintang acquires particular value and significance at this stage, that this co-operation reflects the alliance between the workers and peasants that is taking shape outside the Kuomintang, and that without such co-operation the victory of the revolution will be impossible.

It follows, further, that the principal source of strength of the revolutionary Kuomintang lies in the further development of the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants and the strengthening of their mass organisations—revolutionary peasant committees, workers' trade unions and other mass revolutionary organisations—as the preparatory elements of the future Soviets, and that the principal pledge of the victory of the revolution is the growth of the revolutionary activity of the vast masses of the working people, and the principal antidote to counter-revolution is the arming of the workers and peasants.

It follows, lastly, that while fighting in the same ranks as the revolutionary Kuomintangists, the Communist Party must more than ever before preserve its independence, as an essential condition for ensuring the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

IV

ERRORS OF THE OPPOSITION

The basic error of the opposition (Radek and Co.) is that it does not understand the character of the revolution in China, the stage it is now passing through, and its present international setting.

The opposition demands that the Chinese revolution should develop at approximately the same pace as the October Revolution did. The opposition is dissatisfied because the Shanghai workers did not give decisive battle to the imperialists and their underlings.

But it does not realise that the revolution in China cannot develop at a fast pace, one reason being that the international situation today is less favourable than it was in 1917 (the imperialists are not at war with one another).

It does not realise that decisive battle must not be given in unfavourable conditions, when the reserves have not yet been brought up—just as the Bolsheviks, for example, did not give decisive battle either in April or in July 1917.

The opposition does not realise that not to avoid decisive battle in unfavourable conditions (when it can be avoided) means making things easier for the enemies of the revolution.

The opposition demands the immediate formation of Soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies in China. But what would forming Soviets now mean?

In the first place, they cannot be formed at any desired moment—they are formed only when the tide of revolution is running particularly high.

In the second place, Soviets are not formed for the sake of talk—they are formed primarily as organs of struggle against the existing power, as organs of struggle for power. That was the case in 1905. It was also the case in 1917.

But what would forming Soviets mean at the present moment in the area of action, say, of the Wuhan government? It would mean issuing the slogan of a struggle against the existing power in that area. It would mean issuing a slogan for the formation of new organs of power, a slogan of struggle against the power of the revolutionary Kuomintang, which includes Communists working in a bloc with the Kuomintang Lefts, for no other power exists now in that area except the power of the revolutionary Kuomintang.

It would mean, further, confusing the task of creating and strengthening mass organisations of the workers and peasants—in the shape of strike committees, peasant associations and committees, trade-union councils, factory committees, etc.—on which the revolutionary Kuomintang already relies, with the task of establishing a Soviet system, as a new type of state power, in place of the power of the revolutionary Kuomintang.

It would mean, lastly, a failure to understand what stage the revolution in China is now passing through. It would mean placing in the hands of the enemies of the Chinese people a new weapon against the revolution, enabling them to spread new legends to the effect that what is taking place in China is not a national revolution, but artificially transplanted “Moscow Sovietisation.”

Hence, in advancing the slogan of the formation of Soviets at the present moment, the opposition is playing into the hands of the enemies of the Chinese revolution.

The opposition considers inexpedient the participation of the Communist Party in the Kuomintang. The opposition, consequently, considers expedient a withdrawal of the Communist Party from the Kuomintang. But what would withdrawal from the Kuomintang mean now, when the entire imperialist gang with all its underlings are demanding the expulsion of the Communists from the Kuomintang? It would mean deserting the battlefield and abandoning its allies in the Kuomintang, to the glee of the enemies of the revolution. It would mean weakening the Communist Party, undermining the revolutionary Kuomintang, facilitating the work of the Shanghai Cavaignacs and surrendering the banner of the Kuomintang, the most popular of all the banners in China, to the Kuomintang Rights.

That is precisely what the imperialists, the militarists and the Kuomintang Rights are now demanding. It follows, therefore, that by declaring for a withdrawal of the Communist Party from the Kuomintang at the present moment, the opposition is playing into the hands of the enemies of the Chinese revolution.

The recent plenum of the Central Committee of our Party therefore acted quite rightly in categorically rejecting the platform of the opposition.²

Notes

1. Compradors—part of the big native merchant bourgeoisie in the colonies and dependent countries who act as intermediaries between foreign capital and the local market. In China, the comprador bourgeoisie showed itself to be an agency of foreign imperialism and a bitter enemy of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27.

2. This refers to the plenum of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) held April 13 to 16, 1927. It discussed a number of questions connected with the congresses of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. and R.S.F.S.R., and fixed the date for the convening of the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.). On April 13, J. V. Stalin spoke on the question of agenda of the plenum and in the discussion on M. I. Kalinin's report on "Questions of the Congresses of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. and the R.S.F.S.R." After discussing a communication of the Political Bureau of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) on the decisions adopted by it in connection with international developments (events in China, etc.), the plenum approved the Political Bureau's policy on international affairs and emphatically rejected the anti-Party platform of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition.

**To Pravda
(On the Occasion of Its Fifteenth Anniversary)**

Ardent greetings to Pravda, champion of Lenin's behests and standard-bearer of the proletariat's revolutionary struggle for communism!

J. Stalin
Pravda, No. 99,
May 5, 1927

Concerning Questions of the Chinese Revolution Reply to Comrade Marchulin

Your letter to the *Derevensky Kommunist*¹ on the question of Soviets in China has been forwarded to me by the editorial board for reply. Presuming that you will have no objection, I am sending you a brief answer to your letter.

I think, Comrade Marchulin, that your letter is based upon misunderstanding. And for the following reasons:

1) Stalin's theses for propagandists oppose the immediate formation of Soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies in present-day China. You, however, join issue with Stalin and refer to Lenin's theses and speech at the Second Congress of the Comintern,² where he speaks only of peasants' Soviets, of toilers' Soviets, of Soviets of the working people, but does not utter a single word about the formation of Soviets of workers' deputies.

Why does Lenin say nothing about the formation of Soviets workers' deputies either in his theses or in his speech? Because, both in his speech and in his theses, Lenin has in mind countries where there can be no question of a purely proletarian movement, where there is practically no industrial proletariat (see Vol. XXV, p. 353). Lenin definitely says in his speech that he has in mind such countries as Central Asia, Persia, where there is practically no industrial proletariat (*ibid*).

Can one include among such countries China, with its industrial centres, such as Shanghai, Hankow, Nanking, Changsha, where there are already some three million workers organized in trade unions? Obviously not.

It is clear that in the case of present-day China, where there is a certain minimum of industrial proletariat, one must envisage the formation not simply of peasants' Soviets, or toilers' Soviets, but Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies.

It would be another matter if we were considering Persia, Afghanistan, etc. But, as you know, Stalin's theses deal not with Persia, Afghanistan, etc., but with China.

Consequently your objection to Stalin's theses and your reference to Lenin's speech and theses at the Second Congress of the Comintern are mistaken and pointless.

2) You quote in your letter a passage from the "Supplementary Theses of the Second Congress of the Comintern" on the national and colonial question, where it is said that in the East "the proletarian parties must carry on intensive propaganda of communist ideas and at the first opportunity establish workers' and peasants' Soviets." In so doing, you make it appear as if these "Supplementary Theses" and the passage you quote from them are Lenin's. That is not so, Comrade Marchulin. You have simply made a mistake. The "Supplementary Theses" are Roy's. It was indeed as Roy's theses that they were submitted at the Second Congress and adopted as a "supplement" to Lenin's theses (see verbatim report of the Second Congress of the Comintern, pp. 122-26).

Why were the "Supplementary Theses" needed? In order to single out from the backward colonial countries which have no industrial proletariat such countries as China and India, of

which it cannot be said that they have practically no industrial proletariat. Read the “Supplementary Theses”, and you will realise that they refer chiefly to China and India (see verbatim report of the Second Congress of the Comintern, p. 122).

How could it happen that Roy’s special theses were needed to “supplement” Lenin’s theses? The fact is that Lenin’s theses had been written and published long before the Second Congress opened, long before the representatives from the colonial countries had arrived, and prior to the discussion in the special commission of the Second Congress. And since the discussion in the congress commission revealed the necessity for singling out from the backward colonies of the East such countries as China and India, the necessity for the “Supplementary Theses” arose.

Consequently, Lenin’s speech and theses must not be confused with Roy’s “Supplementary Theses”, nor must it be forgotten that, in the case of countries like China and India, one must envisage the formation of workers’ and peasants’ Soviets, and not simply of peasants’ Soviets.

3) Will it be necessary to form workers’ and peasants’ Soviets in China? Yes, it certainly will. That is plainly stated in Stalin’s theses for propagandists, which say:

“The principal source of strength of the revolutionary Kuomintang lies in the further development of the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants and the strengthening of their mass organizations—revolutionary peasant committees, workers’ trade unions and other mass revolutionary organizations—as the preparatory elements of the future Soviets.” . . .*

The whole question is when to form them, in what circumstances, in what situation.

Soviets of workers’ deputies are an all-embracing, and therefore the best, revolutionary organisation of the working class. But that does not necessarily mean that they can be formed at any time and in any circumstances. When Khrustalyov, the first chairman of the St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers’ Deputies, suggested the formation of soviets of workers’ deputies in the summer of 1906, after the tide of revolution had receded, Lenin objected and said that at that moment, when the rearguard (the peasantry) had not yet caught up with the vanguard (the proletariat), the formation of Soviets of workers’ deputies was inexpedient. And Lenin was quite right. Why? Because Soviets of workers’ deputies are not a simple workers’ organisation. Soviets of workers’ deputies are organs of the struggle of the working class against the existing power, organs of an uprising, organs of a new revolutionary power, and only as such can they develop and gain strength. And if the conditions do not exist for a direct mass struggle against the existing power, for a mass uprising against that power, for the organisation of a new revolutionary power, then the formation of workers’ Soviets is inexpedient, since, in the absence of these conditions, they run the risk of decaying and becoming mere talkshops.

Here is what Lenin said about Soviets of workers’ deputies:

“Soviets of workers’ deputies are organs of direct struggle of the masses. ... It was not some kind of theory, not appeals on somebody’s part, not tactics of somebody’s invention, not a party doctrine, but the logic facts that faced these non-Party, mass organs with the necessity of an uprising, and made them organs of an uprising. And to establish such organs at the present

time would mean creating organs of an uprising,† and to call forth their establishment would mean calling for an uprising.‡ To forget this, or to veil it from the eyes of the broad mass of the people would be the most unpardonable short-sightedness and the worst of policies” (see Vol. X, p. 15).

Or again:

“The whole experience of both revolutions, that of 1905 and that of 1917, and all the decisions of the Bolshevik Party, all its political statements for many years past, boil down to this—that a Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies is practicable only as the organ of an uprising††, only as an organ of revolutionary power‡‡. If this is not their purpose, Soviets become empty playthings that are bound to lead to apathy, indifference and disillusionment among the masses, who quite naturally become fed up with the endless repetition of resolutions and protests” (see Vol. XXI, p. 288).

That being the case, what would it mean to call for the immediate formation of Soviets of workers’, peasants’ and soldiers’ deputies in present-day South China, in the area, say, of the Wuhan government, where the revolutionary Kuomintang is now in power, and the movement is developing under the slogan “All power to the revolutionary Kuomintang”? To call now for the formation of Soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies in this area would mean calling for an uprising against the power of the revolutionary Kuomintang. Would that be expedient? Obviously not. Obviously, whoever at the present time calls for the immediate formation of Soviets of workers’ deputies in this area is trying to skip over the Kuomintang phase of the Chinese revolution, is running the risk of putting the revolution in China in a most difficult position.

That, Comrade Marchulin, is how matters stand with the question of the immediate formation of Soviets of workers’, peasants’ and soldiers’ deputies in China.

At the Second Congress of the Comintern a special resolution was adopted entitled: “When and in What Circumstances Soviets of Workers’ Deputies May Be Formed.” Lenin was present when that resolution was adopted. I would advise you to read it. It is not without interest (see verbatim report of the Second Congress of the Comintern, pp. 580-83).

4) When will it be necessary to form Soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies in China? Soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies will necessarily have to be formed in China at the moment when the victorious agrarian revolution has developed to the full, when the Kuomintang, as a bloc of the revolutionary Narodniks of China (the Kuomintang Left) and the Communist Party, begins to outlive its day, when the bourgeois-democratic revolution, which has not yet triumphed and will not triumph so soon, begins to manifest its negative features, when it becomes necessary to pass step by step from the present, Kuomintang type of state organisation to a new, proletarian type of organisation of the state.

It is in this way that the passage on workers’ and peasants’ Soviets in Roy’s “Supplementary Theses” adopted at the Second Congress of the Comintern should be understood.

Has that moment already arrived?

There is no need to prove that it has not yet arrived.

What, then, is to be done at this moment? The agrarian revolution in China must be broadened and deepened. Mass workers' and peasants' organisations of every kind must be created and strengthened—from trade-union councils and strike committees to peasant associations and peasant revolutionary committees—with a view to converting them, as the revolutionary movement grows and achieves success, into organisational and political bases for the future Soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies.

That is the task now.

May 9, 1927

Notes

1. Derevensky Kommunist (Rural Communist)—a fortnightly magazine for Party active in the countryside, organ of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B). It was published from December 1924 to August 1930. Until February 1927, its editor-in-chief was V.M. Molotov.

2. See V.I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 31, pp. 122-28 and 215-20.

* See this volume, p. 231.—Ed.

† My italics.—J. St.

‡ My italics.—J. St.

†† My italics.—J. St.

‡‡ My italics.—J. St.

Talk with Students of the Sun Yat-Sen University May 13, 1927

Comrades, unfortunately, I can devote only two or three hours to today's talk. Next time, perhaps, we shall arrange a longer conversation. Today, I think, we might confine ourselves to an examination of the questions which you have formulated in writing. I have received ten questions in all. I shall reply to them in today's talk. If there are additional questions—and I am told there are—I shall try to answer them in our next talk. Well then, let us get down to business.

First Question

"Why is Radek wrong in asserting that the struggle of the peasantry in the Chinese countryside is directed not so much against feudal survivals as against the bourgeoisie?"

"Can it be affirmed that merchant capitalism predominates in China, or feudal survivals?"

"Why are the Chinese militarists, who are owners of big industrial enterprises, at the same time representatives of feudalism?"

Radek does, indeed, assert something similar to what is stated in this question. As far as I recall, in his speech to the activists of the Moscow organisation, he either completely denied the existence of feudal survivals in the Chinese countryside, or attached no great importance to them.

That, of course, is a grave error on Radek's part.

If there were no feudal survivals in China, or if they were not of very great importance for the Chinese countryside, there would be no soil for an agrarian revolution, and there would then be no point in speaking of the agrarian revolution as one of the chief tasks of the Communist Party at the present stage of the Chinese revolution.

Does merchant capital exist in the Chinese countryside? Yes, it does. And it not only exists, but is sucking the blood of the peasantry no less effectively than any feudal lord. But this merchant capital of the type of primitive accumulation is peculiarly combined in the Chinese countryside with the domination of the feudal lord, of the landlord, and adopts the latter's medieval methods of exploiting and oppressing the peasants. That is the point, comrades.

Radek's mistake is that he has not grasped this peculiarity, this combination of the domination of feudal survivals with the existence of merchant capital in the Chinese countryside, along with the preservation of medieval feudal methods of exploiting and oppressing the peasantry.

Militarism, tuchuns, all kinds of governors and the entire present flint-hearted and rapacious bureaucracy, military and non-military, constitute a superstructure on this peculiar feature in China.

Imperialism supports and strengthens the whole of this feudal-bureaucratic machine.

The fact that some of the militarists who own landed estates are at the same time owners of industrial enterprises does not alter anything at bottom. Many of the Russian landlords, too, in

their time owned factories and other industrial enterprises, which, however, did not prevent them from being representatives of feudal survivals.

If in a number of regions 70 per cent of the peasants' earnings go to the gentry, the landlords, if the landlord actually wields power both in the economic sphere and in the administrative and judicial sphere, if the purchase and sale of women and children is still practised in a number of provinces—then it must be admitted that the predominating power in this medieval situation is the power of feudal survivals, the power of the landlords and of the land-owning bureaucracy, military and non-military, in a peculiar combination with the power of merchant capital.

It is these peculiar conditions that create the soil for the peasant agrarian movement which is growing, and will continue to grow, in China.

In the absence of these conditions, in the absence of feudal survivals and feudal oppression, there would be no question in China of an agrarian revolution, of the confiscation of the landlords' land, and so forth.

In the absence of these conditions, an agrarian revolution in China would be incomprehensible.

Second Question

" Why is Radek wrong in asserting that, since Marxists do not admit the possibility of a party of several classes, the Kuomintang is a petty-bourgeois party?"

This question calls for a few observations.

Firstly. The question is put incorrectly. We do not say, and never have said, that the Kuomintang is a party of several classes. That is not true. We have always said that the Kuomintang is the party of a bloc of several oppressed classes. That is not one and the same thing, comrades. If the Kuomintang were a party of several classes, that would mean that not one of the classes linked with the Kuomintang would have its own party outside the Kuomintang, and the Kuomintang itself would constitute one single and common party for all these classes. But is that the state of affairs in reality? Has not the Chinese proletariat, which is linked with the Kuomintang, also its own separate party, the Communist Party, which is distinct from the Kuomintang and which has its own special programme and its own special organisation? It is clear that the Kuomintang is not a party of several oppressed classes, but is the party of a bloc of several oppressed classes that have their own party organisations. Consequently, the question is put incorrectly. In point of fact, in present-day China the Kuomintang can be regarded only as the party of a bloc of oppressed classes.

Secondly. It is not true that Marxism does not in principle admit the possibility of a party of a bloc of oppressed, revolutionary classes, and that it is impermissible in principle for Marxists to belong to such a party. That, comrades, is absolutely untrue. In point of fact Marxism has not only recognised (and continues to recognise) the permissibility in principle of Marxists joining such a party, but in definite historical conditions has put this principle into practice. I might refer to the example of Marx himself in 1848, at the time of the German revolution, when he and his supporters joined the bourgeois-democratic league in Germany and collaborated in it with representatives of the revolutionary bourgeoisie. It is known that, in addition to Marxists, this bourgeois-democratic league, this bourgeois-revolutionary party,

included representatives of the-revolutionary bourgeoisie. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, 2 of which Marx was then the editor, was the organ of that bourgeois-democratic league. Only in the spring of 1849, when the tide of revolution in Germany had begun to recede, did Marx and his supporters resign from that bourgeois-democratic league, having decided to set up an absolutely independent organisation of the working class, with an independent class policy.

As you see, Marx went even further than the Chinese Communists of our day, who form part of the Kuomintang precisely as an independent proletarian party with its own special organisation.

One may dispute or not whether it was expedient for Marx and his supporters to join the bourgeois-democratic league in Germany in 1848, when it was a matter of waging, in conjunction with the revolutionary bourgeoisie, a revolutionary struggle against absolutism. That is a question of tactics. But that Marx recognised the permissibility in principle of such joining is something of which there can be no doubt whatever.

Thirdly. It would be fundamentally incorrect to say that the Kuomintang in Wuhan is a petty-bourgeois party, and to leave it at that. The Kuomintang can be characterised in that way only by people who have no understanding either of imperialism in China, or of the character of the Chinese revolution. The Kuomintang is not an "ordinary" petty-bourgeois party. There are different kinds of petty-bourgeois parties. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia were also petty-bourgeois parties; but at the same time they were imperialist parties, because they were in a militant alliance with the French and British imperialists, and together with them engaged in the conquest and oppression of other countries—Turkey, Persia, Mesopotamia, Galicia.

Can it be said that the Kuomintang is an imperialist party? Obviously not. The Kuomintang party is anti-imperialist, just as the revolution in China is anti-imperialist. The difference is fundamental. To fail to see this difference and to confuse the anti-imperialist Kuomintang with the imperialist Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties means to have no understanding of the national revolutionary movement in China.

Of course, if the Kuomintang were an imperialist petty-bourgeois party, the Chinese Communists would not have formed a bloc with it, but would have sent it to all the archangels. The fact of the matter, however, is that the Kuomintang is an anti-imperialist party which is waging a revolutionary struggle against the imperialists and their agents in China. In this respect, the Kuomintang stands head and shoulders above all the various imperialist "Socialists" of the Kerensky and Tsereteli type.

Even Chiang Kai-shek, who is a Right Kuomintangist, Chiang Kaishek, who before he carried out his coup engaged in all sorts of machinations against the Left Kuomintangists and the Communists—even he was then superior to the Kerenskys and Tseretelis; for, whereas the Kerenskys and Tseretelis were warring for the enslavement of Turkey, Persia, Mesopotamia, Galicia, thus helping to strengthen imperialism, Chiang Kai-shek was warring—whether well or badly—against the enslavement of China, and was thus helping to weaken imperialism.

Radek's error, and that of the opposition generally, is that he disregards the semi-colonial status of China, fails to observe the anti-imperialist character of the Chinese revolution, and does not observe that the Kuo-mintang in Wuhan, the Kuomintang without the Right

Kuomintangists, is the centre of the struggle of the Chinese labouring masses against imperialism.

Third Question

"Is there not a contradiction between your appraisal of the Kuomintang (speech at the meeting of students of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, May 18, 1925) as a bloc of two forces—the Communist Party and the petty bourgeoisie—and the appraisal given in the Comintern's resolution on the Kuomintang as a bloc of four classes, including the big bourgeoisie?"

"Would it be possible for the Chinese Communist Party to belong to the Kuomintang if there were a dictatorship of the proletariat in China?"

In the first place, it should be noted that the definition of the actual situation in the Kuomintang given by the Comintern in December 1926 (Seventh Enlarged Plenum) is reproduced in your "question" incorrectly, not quite accurately. The "question" says: "including the big bourgeoisie." But the compradors are also a big bourgeoisie. Does this mean that in December 1926 the Comintern considered the comprador bourgeoisie a member of the bloc within the Kuomintang? It obviously does not, because the comprador bourgeoisie was, and remains, a sworn enemy of the Kuomintang. The Comintern resolution speaks not of the big bourgeoisie in general, but of "part of the capitalist bourgeoisie." Consequently, what is referred to here is not every kind of big bourgeoisie, but the national bourgeoisie of the non-comprador type.

In the second place, I must say that I do not see any contradiction between these two definitions of the Kuomintang. I do not see any, because what we have here is a definition of the Kuomintang from two different standpoints, neither of which can be termed incorrect, for they are both correct.

When, in 1925, I spoke of the Kuomintang as the party of a bloc of the workers and peasants, I by no means intended to describe the actual state of affairs in the Kuomintang, to describe what classes were in fact linked with the Kuomintang in 1925. When I spoke of the Kuomintang then, I was thinking of it only as the type of structure of a distinctive people's revolutionary party in the oppressed countries of the East, especially in such countries as China and India; as the type of structure of such a people's revolutionary party as must be based on a revolutionary bloc of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie of town and country. I plainly stated at that time that "in such countries the Communists must pass from the policy of a united national front to the policy of a revolutionary bloc of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie" (see Stalin, "The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East," *Problems of Leninism*, p. 264-3).

What I had in mind, therefore, was not the present, but the future of people's revolutionary parties in general, and of the Kuomintang in particular. And I was absolutely right in this. For organisations like the Kuomintang can have a future only if they strive to base themselves upon a bloc of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie, and in speaking of the petty bourgeoisie one should have in mind principally the peasantry, which constitutes the basic force of the petty bourgeoisie in the capitalistically backward countries.

The Comintern, however, was interested in a different aspect of the matter. At its Seventh Enlarged Plenum it regarded the Kuomintang not from the standpoint of its future, of what it

should become, but from the standpoint of the present, of the actual situation within the Kuomintang, and of just what classes were in fact linked with it in 1926. And the Comintern was absolutely right when it said that at that moment, when there was not yet a split in the Kuomintang, the latter did in fact comprise a bloc of the workers, the petty bourgeoisie (urban and rural) and the national bourgeoisie. One might add here that not only in 1926, but in 1925 as well the Kuomintang was based upon a bloc of precisely those classes. The Comintern resolution, in the drafting of which I took a very active part, plainly states that "the proletariat forms a bloc with the peasantry, which is actively entering the struggle on its own behalf, with the urban petty bourgeoisie, and with part of the capitalist bourgeoisie," and that "this combination of forces has found its political expression in a corresponding grouping within the Kuomintang party and the Canton government" (see the resolution 4).

But inasmuch as the Comintern did not confine itself to the actual state of affairs in 1926, but also touched upon the future of the Kuomintang, it could not but state that this bloc was only a temporary one, that it was bound in the near future to be superseded by a bloc of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie. It is precisely for this reason that the Comintern resolution goes on to say that "at the present time the movement is on the threshold of a third stage, on the eve of a new regrouping of classes," and that "at that stage of development the basic force of the movement will be a bloc of a still more revolutionary character—a bloc of the proletariat, the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, with the ousting of the greater part of the big capitalist bourgeoisie" (ibid.).

That is precisely the bloc of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie (peasantry) upon which the Kuomin-tang should have relied for support, which is already beginning to take shape in Wuhan after the splitting of the Kuomintang and the desertion of the national bourgeoisie, and about which I spoke in my address to the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in 1925 (see above). Thus we have a description of the Kuomintang from two different aspects:

- a) from the aspect of its present, of the actual state of affairs in the Kuomintang in 1926, and
- b) from the aspect of its future, of what the Kuomin-tang should be, as the type of structure of a people's revolutionary party in the countries of the East.

Both these descriptions are legitimate and correct, because, embracing the Kuomintang from two different aspects, in the final analysis they give an exhaustive picture.

Where then, one asks, is the contradiction?

Let us, for the sake of greater clarity, take the "Workers' Party" in Britain (the "Labour Party"). We know that there is in Britain a special party of the workers that is based on the trade unions of the factory and office workers. No one hesitates to call it a workers' party. It is called that not only in British, but in all other Marxist literature.

But can it be said that this party is a real workers' party, a class party of the workers, standing in opposition to the bourgeoisie? Can it be said that it is actually the party of one class, the working class, and not a party, say, of two classes? No, it cannot. Actually, the Labour Party in Britain is the party of a bloc of the workers and the urban petty bourgeoisie. Actually, it is the party of a bloc of two classes. And if it is asked whose influence is stronger in this party, that of the workers, who stand in opposition to the bourgeoisie, or that of the petty bourgeoisie, it must be said that the influence of the petty bourgeoisie predominates in this

party. That indeed explains why the British Labour Party is actually an appendage of the bourgeois liberal party. Yet it is called in Marxist literature a workers' party. How is this "contradiction" to be explained? The explanation is that when this party is defined as a workers' party, what is usually meant is not the actual state of affairs within the party at present, but the type of structure of a workers' party by virtue of which it should in the future, given certain conditions, become a real class party of the workers, standing in opposition to the bourgeois world. That does not preclude, but on the contrary, presumes the fact that actually this party is, for the time being, the party of a bloc of the workers and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

There is no more contradiction in this than there is in all I have just said about the Kuomintang.

Would it be possible for the Chinese Communist Party to belong to the Kuomintang if there were a dictatorship of the proletariat in China?

I think it would be inexpedient and, therefore, impossible. It would be inexpedient not only if there were a dictatorship of the proletariat, but also if Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies were formed. For what does the formation of Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies in China mean? It means the creation of a dual power. It means a struggle for power between the Kuomintang and the Soviets. The formation of workers' and peasants' Soviets is a preparation for the transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the proletarian revolution, to the socialist revolution. Can such preparation be carried out under the leadership of two parties belonging to one common revolutionary democratic party? No, it cannot. The history of revolution tells us that preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat and transition to the socialist revolution can be effected only under the leadership of one party, the Communist Party, if, of course, it is a genuine proletarian revolution that is in question. The history of revolution tells us that the dictatorship of the proletariat can be achieved and developed only under the leadership of one party, the Communist Party. Failing that, there can be no genuine and complete dictatorship of the proletariat under the conditions of imperialism.

Consequently, not only when there is a dictatorship of the proletariat, but even prior to such a dictatorship, when Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies are being formed, the Communist Party will have to withdraw from the Kuomintang, in order to conduct the preparations for a Chinese October under its own exclusive leadership.

I consider that in the period of the formation of Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies in China, and of preparation for the Chinese October, the Chinese Communist Party will have to replace the present bloc within the Kuomintang by a bloc outside the Kuomintang, on the pattern, say, of the bloc which we had with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in the period of transition to October.

Fourth Question

"Is the Wuhan government a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, and if not, what further ways of struggle are there for the establishment of a democratic dictatorship?"

"Is Martynov right in asserting that the transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat is possible without a 'second' revolution, and if so, where is the border-line between democratic dictatorship and proletarian dictatorship in China?"

The Wuhan government is not yet a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. It may become one. It certainly will become a democratic dictatorship if the agrarian revolution develops to the full; but it is not yet the organ of such a dictatorship.

What is required for the Wuhan government to be converted into the organ of a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry? Two things, at least, are required for that:

Firstly, the Wuhan government must become the government of an agrarian-peasant revolution in China, a government that gives the utmost support to that revolution.

Secondly, the Kuomintang must replenish its top leadership with new leaders of the agrarian movement from the ranks of the peasants and workers and enlarge its lower organisations by including in them the peasant associations the workers' trade-union councils and other revolutionary organisations of town and country.

At present, the Kuomintang has some 500,000 members. That is a small, a terribly small, number for China. The Kuomintang must include millions of revolutionary peasants and workers, and thus become a revolutionary-democratic organisation many millions strong.

Only under those conditions will the Kuomintang be in a position to set up a revolutionary government which will become the organ of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

Whether Comrade Martynov did actually speak of a peaceful transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat, I do not know. I have not read Comrade Martynov's article; I have not read it because it is not possible for me to keep an eye on all our day-to-day literature. But if he really did say that a peaceful transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the proletarian revolution was possible in China—it is a mistake.

Chugunov once asked me: "What do you think, Comrade Stalin, wouldn't it be possible to arrange things so as, through the Kuomintang, without going roundabout, to pass at once to the dictatorship of the proletariat by peaceful means?" I, in my turn, asked him: "And what is it like, Comrade Chugunov, in China? Have you Right Kuomintangists, a capitalist bourgeoisie, imperialists?" He replied in the affirmative. "Well then," I said, "a fight is unavoidable."

That was before Chiang Kai-shek's coup. Theoretically, of course, the possibility of a peaceful development of the revolution in China is conceivable. Lenin, for example, at one time thought that a peaceful development of the revolution in Russia was possible through the Soviets. That was in the period from April to July 1917. But after the July defeat Lenin recognised that a peaceful transition to the proletarian revolution had to be considered out of the question. I think that still more must a peaceful transition to the proletarian revolution be considered out of the question in China.

Why?

Firstly, because the enemies of the Chinese revolution—both internal (Chang Tso-lin, Chiang Kai-shek, the big bourgeoisie, the gentry, the landlords, etc.) and external (the imperialists)—are too numerous and too strong to allow of thinking that the further development of the revolution can proceed without big class battles and without serious splits and desertions.

Secondly, because there is no reason to regard the Kuomintang form of state organisation as an expedient form for the transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the proletarian revolution.

Lastly, because if, for example, in Russia a peaceful transition to the proletarian revolution did not succeed through the Soviets, which are the classic form of the proletarian revolution, what grounds are there for assuming that such a transition can succeed through the Kuomintang?

I therefore think that a peaceful transition to the proletarian revolution must be considered out of the question in China.

Fifth Question

"Why is the Wuhan government not conducting an offensive against Chiang Kai-shek, but is attacking Chang Tso-lin?"

"Does not the simultaneous offensive of the Wuhan government and Chiang Kai-shek against the North blur the front of the struggle against the Chinese bourgeoisie?"

Well, comrades, you are asking too much of the Wuhan government. It would be very fine, of course, to beat simultaneously Chang Tso-lin and Chiang Kai-shek and Li Chi-shen and Yang Sen. But the position of the Wuhan government just now is such as not to permit it to launch an offensive simultaneously on all four fronts. The Wuhan government undertook the offensive against the Mukdenites for at least two reasons.

Firstly, because the Mukdenites are pushing towards Wuhan and want to annihilate it, so that the offensive against the Mukdenites is an absolutely urgent measure of defence.

Secondly, because the Wuhaners want to join forces with Feng Yu-hsiang's troops and to advance further in order to broaden the base of the revolution, which, again, is a matter of the greatest military and political importance for Wuhan at the present moment.

A simultaneous offensive on two such important fronts as against Chiang Kai-shek and Chang Tso-lin is at the present time beyond the strength of the Wuhan government. That is apart from an offensive westwards, against Yang Sen, and southwards, against Li Chi-shen.

We, the Bolsheviks, were stronger at the time of the Civil War, yet we were unable to develop successful offensive operations on all the fronts. What grounds are there for expecting more from the Wuhan government at the present moment?

Furthermore, what would an offensive against Shanghai mean just now, when the Mukdenites and Wu Pei-fu's supporters are moving on Wuhan from the north? It would mean making things easier for the Mukdenites and putting off union with Feng's troops for an indefinite period, without gaining anything in the east. For the time being, let Chiang Kai-shek rather continue to flounder in the Shanghai area and hobnob there with the imperialists.

There will be battles yet for Shanghai, and not of the kind that are now being waged for Chengchow, etc. No, the battles there will be far more serious. Imperialism will not so lightly relinquish Shanghai, which is a world centre where the cardinal interests of the imperialist groups intersect.

Would it not be more expedient first to join forces with Feng, acquire sufficient military strength, develop the agrarian revolution to the full, and carry on intense work to demoralise Chiang Kai-shek's rear and front, and then, after that, to tackle the problem of Shanghai in all its magnitude? I think that would be more expedient.

Consequently, it is not at all a matter here of "blurring" the front of the struggle against the Chinese bourgeoisie, because in any case it cannot be blurred if the agrarian revolution develops—and that the latter is developing and will continue to develop is now scarcely open to doubt. I repeat, it is not a matter of "blurring," but of developing appropriate fighting tactics.

Some comrades think that an offensive on all fronts is now the principal sign of revolutionary spirit. No, comrades, that is not true. An offensive on all fronts at this moment would be stupidity, not a sign of revolutionary spirit. Stupidity should not be confused with revolutionary spirit.

Sixth Question

"Is a Kemalist revolution possible in China?"

I consider it improbable in China, and therefore impossible. A Kemalist revolution is possible only in countries like Turkey, Persia or Afghanistan, where there is no industrial proletariat, or practically none, and where there is no powerful agrarian-peasant revolution. A Kemalist revolution is a revolution of the top stratum, a revolution of the national merchant bourgeoisie, arising in a struggle against the foreign imperialists, and whose subsequent development is essentially directed against the peasants and workers, against the very possibility of an agrarian revolution.

A Kemalist revolution is impossible in China because :

- a) there is in China a certain minimum of militant and active industrial proletariat, which enjoys enormous prestige among the peasants;
- b) there is in that country a developed agrarian revolution which in its advance is sweeping away the survivals of feudalism.

The vast mass of the peasantry, which in a number of provinces has already been seizing the land, and which is led in its struggle by the revolutionary proletariat of China—that is the antidote against the possibility of what is called a Kemalist revolution.

The Kemalist Party cannot be put on a par with the Left Kuomintang party in Wuhan, just as Turkey cannot be put on a par with China. Turkey has no such centres as Shanghai, Wuhan, Nanking, Tientsin, etc. Ankara falls far short of Wuhan, just as the Kemalist Party falls far short of the Left Kuomintang.

One should also bear in mind the difference between China and Turkey as regards their international position. In relation to Turkey, imperialism has already secured a number of its principal demands, having wrested from it Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia and other points of importance to the imperialists. Turkey has now been reduced to the dimensions of a small country with a population of some ten to twelve million. It does not represent for imperialism a market of any importance or a decisive field of investment. One of the reasons why this has

happened is that the old Turkey was an agglomeration of nationalities, with a compact Turkish population only in Anatolia.

Not so with China. China is a nationally compact country with a population of several hundred million, and constitutes one of the most important markets and fields for capital export in the world. Whereas in Turkey imperialism could content itself with severing from it a number of very important regions in the East, exploiting the national antagonisms between the Turks and the Arabs within the old Turkey, in China imperialism has to strike at the living body of national China, cutting it to pieces and severing whole provinces from it, in order to preserve its old positions, or at least to retain some of them.

Consequently, whereas in Turkey the struggle against imperialism could end with a curtailed anti-imperialist revolution on the part of the Kemalists, in China the struggle against imperialism is bound to assume a profoundly popular and distinctly national character and is bound to deepen step by step, developing into desperate clashes with imperialism and shaking the very foundations of imperialism throughout the world.

One of the gravest errors of the opposition (Zinoviev, Radek, Trotsky) is that it fails to perceive this profound difference between Turkey and China, confuses the Kemalist revolution with an agrarian revolution, and lumps everything indiscriminately into one heap.

I know that among the Chinese nationalists there are people who cherish Kemalist ideas. There are pretenders in plenty to the role of a Kemal in China today. The chief among them is Chiang Kai-shek. I know that some Japanese journalists are inclined to regard Chiang Kai-shek as a Chinese Kemal. But that is all a dream, the illusion of frightened bourgeois. In China victory must go either to Chinese Mussolinis like Chang Tso-lin and Chang Tsung-chang, only for them to be overthrown later by the sweep of the agrarian revolution, or to Wuhan.

Chiang Kai-shek and his followers, who are trying to hold a middle position between these two camps, are inevitably bound to fall and share the fate of Chang Tso-lin and Chang Tsung-chang.

Seventh Question

"Should the slogan of immediate seizure of the land by the peasantry be issued in China at this moment, and how should the seizure of land in Hunan be assessed?"

I think that it should. Actually, the slogan of the confiscation of the land is already being carried out in certain areas. In a number of areas, such as Hunan, Hupeh, etc., the peasants are already seizing the land from below, and are setting up their own courts, their own penal organs and their own self-defence bodies. I believe that in the very near future the entire peasantry of China will go over to the slogan of the confiscation of the land. Therein lies the strength of the Chinese revolution.

If Wuhan wants to win, if it wants to create a real force both against Chang Tso-lin and against Chiang Kai-shek, as well as against the imperialists, it must give the utmost support to the agrarian-peasant revolution for the seizure of the landlords' land.

It would be foolish to think that feudalism and imperialism can be overthrown in China by armed strength alone. Without an agrarian revolution and without active support of the

Wuhan troops by the vast masses of the peasants and workers, such forces cannot be overthrown.

Chiang Kai-shek's coup is often appraised by the opposition as the decline of the Chinese revolution. That is a mistake. People who appraise Chiang Kai-shek's coup as the decline of the Chinese revolution are in fact siding with Chiang Kai-shek, are in fact in favour of Chiang Kai-shek's being received back into the Wuhan Kuomintang. They apparently think that if Chiang Kai-shek had not split away, the cause of the revolution would be going better. That is foolish and unrevolutionary. Chiang Kai-shek's coup has in fact led to the Kuo-mintang being cleansed of dross and to the core of the Kuomintang moving to the Left. Of course, Chiang Kai-shek's coup was bound to result in a partial defeat for the workers in a number of areas. But that is merely a partial and temporary defeat. In point of fact, with Chiang Kai-shek's coup, the revolution as a whole has entered a higher phase of development, the phase of an agrarian movement.

Therein lies the strength and might of the Chinese revolution.

The progress of a revolution must not be regarded as progress along an unbroken ascending line. That is a bookish, not a realistic notion of revolution. A revolution always moves in zigzags, advancing and smashing the old order in some areas, and sustaining partial defeats and retreating in others. Chiang Kai-shek's coup is one of those zigzags in the course of the Chinese revolution, one that was needed in order to cleanse the revolution of dross and to impel it forward towards a powerful agrarian movement.

But for this agrarian movement to be able to take shape, it must have its general slogan. That slogan is the confiscation of the landlords' land.

Eighth Question

"Why is it incorrect to issue the slogan of the formation of Soviets at the present moment?"

"Does not the Chinese Communist Party run the danger of lagging behind the movement in view of the formation of workers' Soviets in Honan?"

What kind of Soviets does the question refer to — proletarian Soviets, or non-proletarian Soviets, "peasants'" Soviets, "toilers'" Soviets, "people's" Soviets? In his theses at the Second Congress of the Comintern, Lenin spoke of the formation of "peasants' Soviets," "toilers' Soviets," in the backward countries of the East. He had in mind such countries as Central Asia, where "there is no industrial proletariat, or practically none." He had in mind countries such as Persia, Afghanistan, etc. That, indeed, explains why there is not a single word in Lenin's theses about the organisation of workers' Soviets in such countries.

But it is evident from this that what Lenin's theses were concerned with was not China, of which it cannot be said that it has "no industrial proletariat, or practically none," but other, more backward, countries of the East.

Consequently, what is in question is the immediate formation of Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies in China. Consequently, in deciding this question it is not Lenin's theses that must be borne in mind, but Roy's, which were adopted by the same Second Congress of the Comintern, and which speak of the formation of workers' and peasants' Soviets in countries such as China and India. But it is said there that workers' and peasants' Soviets

should be formed in those countries when passing from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the proletarian revolution.

What are Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies? Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies are, chiefly, organs of an uprising against the existing power, organs of struggle for a new revolutionary power, organs of the new revolutionary power. At the same time, Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies are centres of organisation of the revolution.

But Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies can be centres of organisation of the revolution only if they are organs for the overthrow of the existing power, if they are organs of a new revolutionary power. If they are not organs of a new revolutionary power, they cannot be centres of organisation of the revolutionary movement. This the opposition refuses to understand, combating the Leninist conception of Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies.

What would the formation at the present time of Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies in the area of action, say, of the Wuhan government mean? It would mean the creation of a dual power, the creation of organs of revolt against the Wuhan government. Should the Chinese Communists overthrow the Wuhan government at the present time? It is clear that they should not. On the contrary, they should support it and convert it into an organ of struggle against Chang Tso-lin, against Chiang Kai-shek, against the landlords and gentry, against imperialism.

But if the Communist Party at the present time ought not to overthrow the Wuhan government, what would be the sense of forming Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies now?

One or the other:

either Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies are formed immediately in order to overthrow the Wuhan government, which would be incorrect and inadmissible at the present moment;

or in setting up Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies immediately, the Communists do not work for the overthrow of the Wuhan government, the Soviets do not become organs of a new revolutionary power—and in that case the Soviets will wither and become a travesty of Soviets.

That is what Lenin always warned against when he spoke of the formation of Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies.

Your "question" says that workers' Soviets are being formed in Honan, and that the Communist Party risks lagging behind the movement if it does not go to the masses with the slogan of the formation of Soviets. That is nonsense, comrades. There are no Soviets of workers' deputies in Honan at this moment. That is a canard spread by the British press. What we have there are "Red Spears" ; peasant associations are there, but of Soviets of workers' deputies there is so far not even a hint.

Workers' Soviets could, of course, be formed. That is not a very difficult matter. But the point is not the formation of workers' Soviets; the point is to convert them into organs of a new revolutionary power. Failing that, Soviets become an empty shell, a travesty of Soviets. To

form workers' Soviets prematurely only in order to cause them to collapse and to turn them into an empty shell would indeed mean helping to convert the Chinese Communist Party from the leader of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into an appendage of all kinds of "ultra-Left" experiments with Soviets.

Khrustalyov, the first chairman of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies in St. Petersburg in 1905, likewise urged the restoration, and therefore also the formation, of Soviets of workers' deputies in the summer of 1906, believing that Soviets by themselves were capable of reversing the relationship of class forces, irrespective of the situation. Lenin at the time opposed Khrustalyov and said that Soviets of workers' deputies ought not to be formed then, in the summer of 1906, since the rearguard (the peasantry) had not yet caught up with the vanguard (the proletariat), and to form Soviets under such circumstances, and thereby to issue the slogan of an uprising, would be risky and inexpedient.

But it follows from this, firstly, that the role of Soviets in themselves should not be exaggerated, and, secondly, that when forming Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies the surrounding circumstances must not be ignored.

Is it necessary at all to form Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies in China?

Yes, it is necessary. They will have to be formed when the Wuhan revolutionary government has become consolidated and the agrarian revolution has developed, at the time of the transition from the agrarian revolution, from the bourgeois-democratic revolution, to the proletarian revolution.

The formation of Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies will mean laying the foundations of Soviet power in China. But laying the foundations of Soviet power will mean laying the foundations of dual power and steering a course towards the replacement of the present Wuhan Kuomintang power by Soviet power.

I think that the time for that has not yet come.

Your "question" speaks of the hegemony of the proletariat and the Communist Party in China.

But what is required in order to facilitate the Chinese proletariat's role of leader, of hegemon, in the present bourgeois-democratic revolution?

This requires, in the first place, that the Chinese Communist Party should be a solidly united organisation of the working class, with its own programme, its own platform, its own organisation, its own line.

This requires, secondly, that the Chinese Communists should be in the front ranks of the agrarian-peasant movement, that they should teach the peasants, especially the poor peasants, to organise in revolutionary associations and committees and work for the confiscation of the landlords' land.

This requires, thirdly, that the Chinese Communists should strengthen their position in the army, revolutionise it, transform it and convert it from an instrument of individual adventurers into an instrument of revolution.

This requires, lastly, that the Chinese Communists should participate in the local and central organs of the Wuhan government, in the local and central organs of the Wuhan Kuomintang, and there pursue a resolute policy for the further extension of the revolution both against the landlords and against imperialism.

The opposition thinks that the Communist Party should preserve its independence by breaking with the revolutionary democratic forces and withdrawing from the Kuomintang and the Wuhan government. But that would be the sort of rather dubious "independence" which the Mensheviks in our country spoke about in 1905. We know that at that time the Mensheviks opposed Lenin and said: "What we need is not the hegemony, but the independence of the workers' party." Lenin rightly retorted that that was a negation of independence, for to counterpose independence to hegemony meant converting the proletariat into an appendage of the liberal bourgeoisie.

I think that the opposition, in talking today of the independence of the Chinese Communist Party and at the same time urging or hinting that the Chinese Communist Party should withdraw from the Kuomintang and the Wuhan government, slips into the line of advocating the Menshevik "independence" of the 1905 period. The Communist Party can preserve real independence and real hegemony only if it becomes the leading force both inside the Kuomintang and outside it, among the broad masses of the working people.

Not withdrawal from the Kuomintang, but ensuring the leadership of the Communist Party both inside and outside the Kuomintang—that is what is now required of the Chinese Communist Party, if it wants to be really independent.

Ninth Question

"Is it possible at the present moment to raise the question of the formation of a regular Red Army in China?"

I think that as a perspective this question should certainly be kept in mind. But, considered practically, it is impossible just now, at this moment, to replace the present army by a new army, a Red Army, simply because there is so far nothing to replace it by.

The chief thing now is, while improving and revolutionising the existing army by all available means, to lay at once the foundations for new, revolutionary regiments and divisions, composed of revolutionary peasants who have passed through the school of the agrarian revolution and of revolutionary workers, to create a number of new and really reliable corps with reliable commanders, and to make them the bulwark of the revolutionary government in Wuhan.

These corps will be the nucleus of the new army which will subsequently develop into a Red Army.

That is necessary both for the fight on the battle-fronts and especially for the fight in the rear against all kinds of counter revolutionary upstarts.

Without this, there can be no guarantee against reverses in the rear and at the front, against desertions and betrayals.

I think that this course is the only possible and expedient course for the time being.

Tenth Question

"Is the slogan of seizing the Chinese enterprises possible now, at a time of struggle against the bourgeoisie?"

" Under what conditions will the seizure of the foreign factories in China be possible, and will it involve the simultaneous seizure of the Chinese enterprises?"

I think that, generally speaking, the time is not yet ripe for passing to the seizure of the Chinese enterprises. But the possibility is not excluded that the stubborn sabotage of the Chinese employers, the closing down of a number of such enterprises and the artificial creation of unemployment may compel the Wuhan government to begin to nationalise some of these enterprises even at the present time and to set them going by its own efforts.

It is possible that the Wuhan government may be compelled even at the present time to take such a step in individual cases, as a warning to particularly

malevolent and counter-revolutionary Chinese employers.

As to the foreign enterprises, their nationalisation is a matter for the future. To nationalise them means to declare direct war on the imperialists. But to declare such a war requires somewhat different, more favourable circumstances than exist at present.

I think that at the present stage of the revolution, when it has not yet acquired sufficient strength, such a measure is premature and therefore inexpedient.

One must not shoulder all the tasks at once and risk collapsing under the strain. Particularly so, since the Kuomintang and its government are not adapted to the accomplishment of such cardinal tasks as the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, Chinese and foreign.

For the accomplishment of such tasks a different situation, a different phase of the revolution and different organs of revolutionary power are required.

J. Stalin, *The Revolution in China and the Errors of the Opposition*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1927

Notes

1. This refers to the Cologne Democratic League, which was formed in the period of the German bourgeois revolution of 1848. The League included workers as well as bourgeois-democratic elements. Karl Marx was elected a member of the district co

The task just now consists not in that, but in fanning the flames of the agrarian revolution to the utmost, in ensuring the hegemony of the proletariat in this revolution, in strengthening Wuhan and converting it into a centre of struggle against all the enemies of the Chinese revolution.

Committee of the democratic leagues of the Rhine region and Westphalia and was one of its leaders.

2. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, published in Cologne from June 1, 1848 to May 19, 1849. It was directed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. The editor-in-chief was Karl Marx. On the

Neue Rheinische Zeitung, see K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow 1951, pp. 297-305.

3. See J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. 7, p. 149.

4. This refers to the resolution of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, on the situation in China, adopted on December 16, 1926. For the resolution of the plenum see the book Theses and Resolutions of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, Moscow-Leningrad, 1927.

The Slogan of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Poor Peasantry in the Period of Preparation for October

Reply to S. Pokrovsky

I think that your letter of May 2 of this year provides neither occasion nor grounds for a reply in detail, point by point, so to speak.

As a matter of fact, it offers nothing particularly new as compared with Yan-sky's letter.

If, nevertheless, I am replying to your letter it is because it contains certain elements of a direct revival of Kamenev's ideas of the period of April-May 1917. It is only in order to expose these elements of a revival of Kamenev's ideas that I consider it necessary to reply briefly to your letter.

1) You say in your letter that "in fact, in the period from February to October we had the slogan of alliance with the whole of the peasantry," that "in the period from February to October the Party upheld and defended its old slogan in relation to the peasantry—alliance with the whole peasantry."

It follows, firstly, that in the period of preparation for October (April-October 1917) the Bolsheviks did not set themselves the task of drawing a demarcation line between the poor peasants and the well-to-do peasants, but treated the peasantry as an integral whole.

It follows, secondly, that in the period of preparation for October the Bolsheviks did not replace the old slogan of "dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" by a new slogan, "dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry," but maintained the old position laid down in Lenin's pamphlet *Two Tactics* in 1905.

It follows, thirdly, that the Bolshevik policy of combating the vacillations and compromising policy of the Soviets in the period of preparation for October (March-October 1917), the vacillations of the middle peasantry in the Soviets and at the front, the vacillations between revolution and counter-revolution, the vacillations and compromising policy which assumed a particularly acute character in the July days, when the Soviets, headed by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik compromisers, joined hands with the counter-revolutionary generals in the attempt to isolate the Bolsheviks—it appears that the Bolshevik fight against these vacillations and the compromising policy of certain strata of the peasantry was pointless and absolutely unnecessary.

It follows, finally, that Kamenev was right when, in April-May 1917, he defended the old slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, while Lenin, who regarded this slogan as already out-of-date and who proclaimed the new slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry, was wrong.

One need only raise these issues to realise the utter absurdity of your letter as a whole.

But since you are very fond of isolated quotations from Lenin's works, let us turn to quotations.

It does not require much effort to prove that what Lenin regarded as new in the agrarian relations in Russia after the February Revolution, from the point of view of the further

development of the revolution, was not a community of interests of the proletariat and the peasantry as a whole, but the cleavage between the poor peasantry and the well-to-do peasantry, of whom the former, i.e., the poor peasantry, gravitated towards the proletariat, whereas the latter, i.e., the well-to-do peasantry, followed the Provisional Government.

Here is what Lenin said on this score in April 1917, in his polemic against Kamenev and Kamenev's ideas:

“It would be impermissible for the proletarian party now* to place hopes in a community of interests with the peasantry” (see Lenin's speech at the April Conference, 1917, Vol. XX, p. 245).

Further:

“Already we can discern in the decisions of a number of peasant congresses the idea of postponing the solution of the agrarian question until the Constituent Assembly; this represents a victory for the well-to-do peasantry,* which inclines towards the Cadets” (see Lenin's speech at the Petrograd City Conference, April 1917, Vol. XX, p. 176).

Further:

“It is possible that the peasantry may seize all the land and the entire power. Far from forgetting this possibility, far from limiting my outlook to the present day alone, I definitely and clearly formulate the agrarian programme, taking into account the new phenomenon, i.e., the deeper cleavage* between the agricultural labourers and poor peasants on the one hand, and the prosperous peasants on the other” (see Lenin's article written in April, “Letters on Tactics,” Vol. XX, p. 103).

That is what Lenin regarded as new and important in the new situation in the countryside after the February Revolution.

That was Lenin's starting point in shaping the Party's policy in the period after February 1917. That thesis was Lenin's starting point when, at the Petrograd City Conference in April 1917, he said:

“It was only here, on the spot, that we learned that the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies had surrendered its power to the Provisional Government. The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies represents the realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and soldiers; among the latter, the majority are peasants. This is the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. But this 'dictatorship' has entered into an agreement with the bourgeoisie. And it is here that a revision of the 'old' Bolshevism is needed” * (see Vol. XX, p. 176).

That thesis also was Lenin's starting point when, in April 1917, he wrote:

“Whoever speaks now only of a 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' is behind the times, has consequently in fact gone over to the side of the petty bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle. He deserves to be consigned to the chive of 'Bolshevik' pre-revolutionary antiques (which might be called the archive of 'Old Bolsheviks')” (see Vol. XX, p. 101).

It was on this basis that there arose the slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry in place of the old slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

You may say, as indeed you do in your letter, that this is a Trotskyist skipping over of the still uncompleted peasant revolution; but that would be just as convincing as the similar objection which Kamenev raised against Lenin in April 1917.

Lenin took this objection fully into account when he said:

“Trotskyism says: ‘No tsar, but a workers’ government.’ That is incorrect. The petty bourgeoisie exists, and it cannot be left out of account. But it consists of two sections. The poorer* section follows the working class” (see Vol. XX, p. 182).

Kamenev’s error, and now yours, consists in the inability to discern and emphasise the difference between the two sections of the petty bourgeoisie, in this case the peasantry; in the inability to single out the poor section of the peasantry from the mass of the peasantry as a whole, and on that basis to shape the Party’s policy in the situation of the transition from the first stage of the revolution in 1917 to its second stage; in the inability to deduce from this the new slogan, the Party’s second strategic slogan, concerning the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry.

Let us trace in consecutive order in Lenin’s works the practical history of the slogan “dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry” from April to October 1917.

April 1917:

“The specific feature of the present situation in Russia consists in the transition from the first* stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class consciousness and organisation of the proletariat, placed the power in the hands of the bourgeoisie—to the second stage, which must place the power in the hands of the proletariat and the “poor strata of the peasantry” * (see Lenin’s April Theses, Vol. XX, p. 88).

July 1917:

“Only the revolutionary workers, if they are supported by the poor peasants,* are capable of smashing the resistance of the capitalists and leading the people to win the land without compensation, to complete freedom, to victory over famine, to victory over war, and to a just and lasting peace” (see Vol. XXI, p. 77).

August 1917:

“Only the proletariat, leading the poor peasantry* (the semiproletarians, as our programme says), can end the war by a democratic peace, heal the wounds it, has caused, and begin to take steps towards socialism, which have become absolutely essential and urgent—such is the definition of our class policy now” (see Vol. XXI, p. 111).

September 1917:

“Only a dictatorship of the proletarians and the poor peasants* is capable of smashing the resistance of the capitalists, of displaying really supreme courage and determination in the

exercise of power, and of securing the enthusiastic, selfless and truly heroic support of the masses both in the army and among the peasantry” (see Vol. XXI, p. 147).

September-October 1917, the pamphlet *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*, in which Lenin, in controversy with Novaya Zhizn,¹ says:

“Either* all power to the bourgeoisie—which you have long ceased to advocate, and which the bourgeoisie itself dare not even hint at, for it knows that already on April 20-21 the people overthrew that power with one heave of the shoulder, and would overthrow it now with thrice that determination and ruthlessness. Or* power to the petty bourgeoisie, i.e., a coalition (alliance, agreement) between it and the bourgeoisie, for the petty bourgeoisie does not wish to and cannot take power alone and independently, as has been proved by the experience of all revolutions, and as is proved by economic science, which explains that in a capitalist country it is possible to stand for capital and it is possible to stand for labour, but it is impossible to stand in between. In Russia this coalition has for six months tried scores of ways but, failed. Or,* finally, all power to the proletarians and the poor peasants* against the bourgeoisie in order to break its resistance. This has not yet been tried, and you, gentlemen of Novaya Zhizn, are dissuading the people from this, trying to frighten them with your own fear of the bourgeoisie. No fourth way can be invented” (see Vol, XXI, p. 275).

Such are the facts.

You “successfully” evade all these facts and events in the history of the preparation for October; you “successfully” erase from the history of Bolshevism the struggle waged by the Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for October against the vacillations and the compromising policy of the “prosperous peasants” who were in the Soviets at that time; you “successfully” bury Lenin’s slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry, and at the same time imagine that this is not to do violence to history, to Leninism.

From these quotations, which could be multiplied, you must see that the Bolsheviks took as their starting point after February 1917 not the peasantry as a whole, but the poor section of the peasantry; that they marched towards October not under the old, slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, but under the new slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry.

From this it is evident that the Bolsheviks put this slogan into effect in a fight against the vacillations and compromising policy of the Soviets, against the vacillations and compromising policy of a certain section of the peasantry inside the Soviets, against the vacillations and compromising policy of certain parties representing petty-bourgeois democracy and known as Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks.

From this it is evident that without the new slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry we would have been unable to assemble a sufficiently powerful political army, one capable of overcoming the compromising policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, of neutralising the vacillations of a certain section of the peasantry, of overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie, and of thus making it possible to carry the bourgeois revolution to completion.

From this it is evident that. “we marched towards October and achieved victory in October together with the poor peasantry against the resistance of the kulaks (also peasants) and with the middle peasantry vacillating” (see my reply to Yan-sky**).

Thus, it follows that in April 1917, as also during the whole period of preparation for October, it was Lenin who was right, and not Kamenev; and you, by now reviving Kamenev’s ideas, seem to be getting into not vary good company.

2) As against all that has been said above you quote Lenin’s words to the effect that in October 1917 we took power with the support of the peasantry as a whole. That we took power with a certain amount of support from the peasantry as a whole is quite true. But you forgot to add a “detail,” namely, that the peasantry as a whole supported us in October, and after October, only in so far as we carried the bourgeois revolution to completion. That is a very important “detail,” which in the present instance settles the issue. To “forget” such an important “detail” and thus slur over a most important issue is impermissible for a Bolshevik.

From your letter it is evident that you counterpose what Lenin said about the support of the peasantry as a whole to the Party’s slogan of “dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry,” which was also advanced by Lenin. But in order to counterpose these words of Lenin to the previous quotations from the works of Lenin, in order to have grounds for refuting the previous quotations from Lenin on the slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry by the words you quote from Lenin about the peasantry as a whole, two things, at least, must be proved.

Firstly. It must be proved that the completion of the bourgeois revolution was the main thing in the October Revolution. Lenin considered that the completion of the bourgeois revolution was a “by-product” of the October Revolution, which fulfilled this task “in passing.” You must first of all refute this thesis of Lenin’s and prove that the main thing in the October Revolution was not the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and the transfer of power to the proletariat, but the completion of the bourgeois revolution. Try to prove that, and if you do I shall be ready to admit that from April to October 1917 the Party’s slogan was not the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry, but the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

From your letter it is evident that you do not think it possible to undertake this more than risky task; you try, however, to prove “in passing” that on one of the most important questions of the October Revolution, the question of peace, we were supported by all the peasantry as a whole. That, of course, is untrue. It is quite untrue. On the question of peace you have slipped into the viewpoint of the philistine. As a matter of fact the question of peace was for us at that time a question of power, for only with the transfer of power to the proletariat could we count on extricating ourselves from the imperialist war.

You must have forgotten Lenin’s words, that “the only way to stop the war is by the transfer of power to another class,” and that “‘Down with the war’ does not mean flinging away your bayonets. It means the transfer of power to another class” (see Lenin’s speech at the Petrograd City Conference, April 1917, Vol. XX, pp. 181 and 178).

Thus, one thing or the other: either you must prove that the main thing in the October Revolution was the completion of the bourgeois revolution, or you can not prove it; in the latter case the obvious conclusion is that the peasantry as a whole could support us in October

only in so far as we carried the bourgeois revolution to completion, doing away with the monarchy, and with the property and regime of the landlords.

Secondly. You must prove that the Bolsheviks could have secured the support of the peasantry as a whole in October and after October, in so far as they carried the bourgeois revolution to completion, without systematically putting into effect the slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry during the whole period of preparation for October; without a systematic struggle, arising from this slogan, against the compromising policy of the petty-bourgeois parties; without a systematic exposure, arising from the same slogan, of the vacillations of certain strata of the peasantry and of their representatives in the Soviets.

Try to prove that. In point of fact, why did we succeed in securing the support of the peasantry as a whole in October and after October? Because we had the possibility of carrying the bourgeois revolution to completion.

Why did we have that possibility? Because we succeeded in overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie and replacing it by the power of the proletariat, which alone is able to carry the bourgeois revolution to completion.

Why did we succeed in overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie and establishing the power of the proletariat? Because we prepared for October under the slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry; because, proceeding from this slogan, we waged a systematic struggle against the compromising policy of the petty-bourgeois parties; because, proceeding from this slogan, we waged a systematic struggle against the vacillations of the middle peasantry in the Soviets; because only with such a slogan could we overcome the vacillations of the middle peasant, defeat the compromising policy of the petty-bourgeois parties, and rally a political army capable of waging the struggle for the transfer of power to the proletariat.

It scarcely needs proof that without these preliminary conditions, which determined the fate of the October Revolution, we could not have won the support of the peasantry as a whole for the task of completing the bourgeois revolution, either in October or after October.

That is how the combination of peasant wars with the proletarian revolution should be understood.

That is why to counterpose the support of the peasantry as a whole in October and after October as regards completing the bourgeois revolution to the fact of the preparation for the October Revolution under the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry means to understand nothing of Leninism.

Your principal error is that you have failed to understand either the fact of the interweaving during the October Revolution of socialist tasks with the tasks of completing the bourgeois revolution, or the mechanics of fulfilling the various demands of the October Revolution arising from the Party's second strategic slogan, the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry.

Reading your letter one might think that it was not we who took the peasantry into the service of the proletarian revolution, but, on the contrary, that it was "the peasantry as a whole," including the kulaks, who took the Bolsheviks into their service. Things would go badly with the Bolsheviks if they so easily "entered" the service of non-proletarian classes.

Kamenev's ideas of the period of April 1917—that is what is fettering you.

3) You assert that Stalin does not see any difference between the situation in 1905 and the situation in February 1917. That, of course, is not to be taken seriously. I never said that, and could not have said it. In my letter I said merely that the Party's slogan on the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, issued in 1905, received confirmation in the February Revolution of 1917. That, of course, is true. That is exactly how Lenin described the situation in his article "Peasants and Workers" in August 1917:

"Only the proletariat and the peasantry can overthrow the monarchy—such was the fundamental definition of our class policy for that time (it refers to 1905.—J. St.). And that definition was a correct one. February and March 1917 have confirmed this once again" * (see Vol. XXI, p. 111).

You simply want to find fault.

4) You try, further, to convict Stalin of contradicting himself, by counterposing his thesis on the compromising policy of the middle peasant before October to a quotation from Stalin's pamphlet Problems of Leninism, which speaks of the possibility of building socialism jointly with the middle peasantry after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been consolidated.

It does not require much effort to prove that such an identification of two different phenomena is utterly unscientific. The middle peasant before October, when the bourgeoisie was in power, and the middle peasant after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been consolidated, when the bourgeoisie has already been overthrown and expropriated, when the co-operative movement has developed and the principal means of production are concentrated in the hands of the proletariat, are two different things. To identify these two kinds of middle peasant and to put them on a par means to examine phenomena out of connection with their historical setting and to lose all sense of perspective. It is something like the Zinoviev manner of mixing up all dates and periods when quoting.

If that is what is called "revolutionary dialectics," it must be admitted that Pokrovsky has broken all records for "dialectical" quibbling.

5) I shall not touch on the remaining questions, for I think they have been exhaustively dealt with in the correspondence with Yan-sky.

May 20, 1927

Notes

* My italics.—J. St.

* *My italics.*—J. St.

1. *Novaya Zhizn (New Life)*—a Menshevik newspaper published in Petrograd from April 1917 to July 1918.

* *My italics.*—J. St.

* *My italics.*—J. St.

* *My italics.*—J. St.

* *My italics.*—J. St.

** See this volume, pp. 218-19—Ed.

* *My italics.*—J. St.

Revolution in China and Tasks of the Comintern
Speech Delivered at the Tenth Sitting, Eighth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.,1
May 24, 1927

I

Some Minor Questions

Comrades, I must apologise for having arrived late at today's sitting of the Executive Committee and so could not hear the whole of the speech that Trotsky read here in the Executive Committee.

I think, however, that in the last few days Trotsky has submitted to the Executive Committee such a mass of literature, theses and letters on the Chinese question that we cannot lack material for criticism of the opposition.

I shall therefore base my criticism of Trotsky's errors on these documents, and I have no doubt that it will at the same time be a criticism of the fundamentals of the speech Trotsky delivered today.

I shall try, as far as possible, to keep the personal element out of the controversy. Trotsky's and Zinoviev's personal attacks on individual members of the Political Bureau of the C.C., C.P.S.U. (B.) and of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. are not worth wasting time on.

Trotsky, evidently, would like to pose at the meetings of the Executive Committee of the Comintern as a sort of hero so as to turn its examination of the questions of the war danger, the Chinese revolution, etc., into an examination of the question of Trotsky. I think that Trotsky does not deserve so much consideration. (A voice from the audience: "Quite right!") All the more so as he resembles an actor rather than a hero; and an actor should not be confused with a hero under any circumstances.

I say nothing of the fact that when people like Trotsky and Zinoviev, whom the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee found guilty of a Social-Democratic deviation, abuse the Bolsheviks for all they are worth, there is nothing offensive in this to Bukharin or to Stalin. On the contrary, I should be very deeply offended if semi-Mensheviks of the Trotsky and Zinoviev type did not abuse, but praised me.

Nor shall I dilate on the question of whether the opposition, by its present factional statements, has violated the undertakings it gave on October 16, 1926. Trotsky asserts that the opposition's declaration of October 16, 1926, gives him the right to uphold his views. That, of course, is true. But if Trotsky means to assert that that is all the declaration stipulates, this can only be called sophistry.

The opposition's declaration of October 16 speaks not only of the right of the opposition to uphold its views, but also of the fact that these views may be upheld only within the limits permitted by the Party, that factionalism must be discarded and put an end to, that the opposition is obliged "to submit unreservedly" to the will of the Party and the decisions of the C.C., and that the opposition must not only submit to these decisions, but must conscientiously "carry them out."

In view of all this, is any further proof needed that the opposition has most grossly violated and torn up its declaration of October 16, 1926.

Nor shall I dilate on the unseemly and grossly slanderous distortions of the position of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) and the Comintern on the Chinese question contained in the numerous theses, articles and speeches of the opposition. Trotsky and Zinoviev never cease to allege that the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) and the Comintern have upheld and continue to uphold a policy of “support” for the national bourgeoisie in China.

It scarcely needs proof that this allegation of Trotsky’s and Zinoviev’s is a fabrication, a slander, a deliberate distortion of the facts. As a matter of fact, the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) and the Comintern upheld not the policy of supporting the national bourgeoisie, but a policy of utilising the national bourgeoisie so long as the revolution in China was the revolution of an all-national united front, and they later replaced that policy by a policy of armed struggle against the national bourgeoisie when the revolution in China became an agrarian revolution, and the national bourgeoisie began to desert the revolution.

To convince oneself of this, one has only to examine such documents as the resolution of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum, the appeal of the Executive Committee of the Comintern,² Stalin’s theses for propagandists,* and, lastly, Bukharin’s theses submitted the other day to the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

It is indeed the misfortune of the opposition that it cannot manage without tittle-tattle and distortions.

Let us pass to the matter in hand.

II

The Agrarian-Peasant Revolution as the Basis of the Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution
Trotsky’s fundamental error is that he does not understand the character and meaning of the Chinese revolution. The Comintern holds that survivals of feudalism are the predominating factor in the oppression in China at the present moment, a factor stimulating the agrarian revolution. The Comintern holds that the survivals of feudalism in the Chinese countryside and the entire militarist-bureaucratic superstructure resting on them, with all the tuchuns, governors, generals, Chang Tso-lins and so forth, constitute the basis on which the present agrarian revolution has arisen and is unfolding.

If in a number of provinces 70 per cent of the peasants’ earnings go to the landlords and the gentry, if the landlords, armed and unarmed, are not only the economic but also the administrative and judicial power, if medieval purchase and sale of women and children is still practised in a number of provinces—then it cannot but be admitted that feudal survivals are the principal form of oppression in the Chinese provinces.

And precisely because feudal survivals, with their entire militarist bureaucratic superstructure, are the principal form of oppression in China, China is now passing through an agrarian revolution of gigantic power and scope.

And what is the agrarian revolution? It is, indeed, the basis and content of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

That is precisely why the Comintern says that China is now passing through a bourgeois-democratic revolution. But the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China is directed not only against feudal survivals; it is directed also against imperialism.

Why?

Because imperialism, with all its financial and military might, is the force in China that supports, inspires, fosters and preserves the feudal survivals, together with their entire bureaucratic-militarist superstructure.

Because it is impossible to abolish the feudal survivals in China without at the same time waging a revolutionary struggle against imperialism in China.

Because anyone who wants to abolish the feudal survivals in China must necessarily raise his hand against imperialism and the imperialist groups in China.

Because the feudal survivals in China cannot be smashed and abolished without waging a determined struggle against imperialism.

That is precisely why the Comintern says that the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China is at the same time an anti-imperialist revolution.

Thus, the present revolution in China is a combination of two streams of the revolutionary movement—the movement against feudal survivals and the movement against imperialism. The bourgeois-democratic revolution in China is a combination of the struggle against feudal survivals and the struggle against imperialism.

That is the starting point of the whole line of the Comintern (and hence of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.)) on the questions of the Chinese revolution.

And what is the starting point of Trotsky's attitude on the Chinese question? It is the direct opposite of the Comintern's standpoint, as just expounded. Trotsky either refuses altogether to recognise the existence of feudal survivals in China, or does not attach decisive importance to them. Trotsky (and hence the opposition), underestimating the strength and significance of feudal-bureaucratic oppression in China, supposes that the principal reason for the Chinese national revolution is China's state-customs dependence on the imperialist countries.

Allow me to refer to the theses which Trotsky submitted to the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) and the Executive Committee of the Comintern a few days ago. These theses of Trotsky's are entitled "The Chinese Revolution and Stalin's Theses."

Here is what Trotsky says in these theses:

"Fundamentally untenable is Bukharin's attempt to justify his opportunist compromising line by references to the alleged predominating role of 'feudal survivals' in China's economy. Even if Bukharin's estimate of Chinese economy were based upon an economic analysis, and not upon scholastic definitions, all the same 'feudal survivals' could not justify the policy which so manifestly facilitated the April coup. The Chinese revolution bears a national-bourgeois character for the basic reason that the development of the productive forces of Chinese capitalism is being blocked by China's state-customs** dependence on the imperialist countries" (see Trotsky's "The Chinese Revolution and Stalin's Theses").

A superficial perusal of this passage might lead one to think that it is not the Comintern line on the question of the character of the Chinese revolution that Trotsky is combating, but

Bukharin's "compromising policy." That, of course, is not true. Actually, what we have in this quotation is a denial of the "predominating role" of the feudal survivals in China. Actually, what is asserted here is that the agrarian revolution now developing in China is a revolution of the top stratum, an anti-customs revolution, so to speak.

The talk about Bukharin's "compromising policy" was needed here by Trotsky in order to cover up his departure from the line of the Comintern. It is, I will say bluntly, Trotsky's usual fraudulent device.

It follows therefore, according to Trotsky, that the feudal survivals in China with their entire militarist-bureaucratic superstructure, are not the mainspring of the Chinese revolution at the present moment, but a secondary and insignificant factor, which only deserves to be mentioned in inverted commas.

It follows therefore, according to Trotsky, that the "basic reason" for the national revolution in China is China's customs dependence on the imperialists, and that, owing to this, the revolution in China is primarily, so to speak, an anti-customs revolution.

Such is the starting point of Trotsky's conception. Such is Trotsky's viewpoint on the character of the Chinese revolution.

Permit me to observe that this viewpoint is that of a state counsellor of "His Highness" Chang Tso-lin.

If Trotsky's viewpoint is correct, then it must be admitted that Chang Tso-lin and Chiang Kai-shek are right in not desiring either an agrarian or a workers' revolution, and in striving only for the abolition of the unequal treaties and the establishment of customs autonomy for China.

Trotsky has slid over to the viewpoint of the officials of Chang Tso-lin and Chiang Kai-shek.

If the survivals of feudalism have to be put in inverted commas; if the Comintern is wrong in declaring that the feudal survivals are of predominant importance at the present stage of the revolution; if the basis for the Chinese revolution is customs dependence and not the struggle against feudal survivals and against imperialism, which supports them—what then remains of the agrarian revolution in China?

Where does the agrarian revolution in China, with its demand for the confiscation of the landlords' land, come from? What grounds are there, in that case, for regarding the Chinese revolution as a bourgeois-democratic revolution? Is it not a fact that the agrarian revolution is the basis of the bourgeois-democratic revolution? Surely, the agrarian revolution cannot have dropped from the skies?

Is it not a fact that millions and tens of millions of peasants are involved in a gigantic agrarian revolution in such provinces as Hunan, Hupeh, Honan, etc., where the peasants are establishing their own rule, their own courts, their own self-defence bodies, driving out the landlords and settling accounts with them "in plebeian fashion"?

Where do we get such a powerful agrarian movement from, if feudal-militarist oppression is not the predominant form of oppression in China?

How could this mighty movement of tens of millions of peasants have assumed at the same time an anti-imperialist character, if we are not to admit that imperialism is the main ally of the feudal-militarist oppressors of the Chinese people?

Is it not a fact that the peasant association in Hunan alone has now over two and a half million members? And how many of them are there already in Hupeh and Honan, and how many will there be in the very near future in other Chinese provinces?

And what about the “Red Spears,” the “Tightened Belts’ Associations,” etc.—can they be a figment of the imagination, and not a reality?

Can it be seriously maintained that the agrarian revolution embracing tens of millions of peasants with the slogan of confiscation of the landlords’ land is directed not against real and undeniable feudal survivals, but against imaginary ones, in inverted commas?

Is it not obvious that Trotsky has slid over to the viewpoint of the officials of “His Highness” Chang Tso-lin? Thus we have two basic lines:

a) the line of the Comintern, which takes into account the existence of feudal survivals in China, as the predominant form of oppression, the decisive importance of the powerful agrarian movement, the connection of the feudal survivals with imperialism, and the bourgeois-democratic character of the Chinese revolution, with its struggle spearheaded against imperialism;

b) the line of Trotsky, which denies the predominant importance of feudal-militarist oppression, fails to appreciate the decisive importance of the agrarian revolutionary movement in China, and attributes the anti-imperialist character of the Chinese revolution solely to the interests of Chinese capitalism, which is demanding customs independence for China.

The basic error of Trotsky (and hence of the opposition) is that he underestimates the agrarian revolution in China, does not understand the bourgeois-democratic character of that revolution, denies the existence of the preconditions for an agrarian movement in China, embracing many millions, and underestimates the role of the peasantry in the Chinese revolution.

This error is not a new one with Trotsky. It has been the most characteristic feature of his whole line throughout the period of his struggle against Bolshevism.

Underestimation of the role of the peasantry in the bourgeois-democratic revolution is an error which has pursued Trotsky since 1905, an error which was particularly glaring prior to the February Revolution of 1917, and which clings to him to this day.

Permit me to refer to a few facts relating to Trotsky’s struggle against Leninism, on the eve of the February Revolution in 1917, for example, when we were advancing towards the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia.

Trotsky asserted at that time that, since differentiation among the peasantry had increased, since imperialism was now predominant and the proletariat was pitting itself against the

bourgeois nation, the role of the peasantry would decline and the agrarian revolution would not have the importance which had been ascribed to it in 1905.

What did Lenin say in reply to that? Let me quote a passage from an article written by Lenin in 1915 on the role of the peasantry in the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia;

“This original theory of Trotsky’s (referring to Trotsky’s “permanent revolution.”—J. St.) borrows from the Bolsheviks their call for a resolute revolutionary struggle by the proletariat and for the conquest of political power by the latter, and from the Mensheviks the ‘denial’ of the role of the peasantry. The peasantry, he says, has split up into strata, has become differentiated; its potential revolutionary role has steadily declined; a ‘national’ revolution is impossible in Russia; ‘we are living in the era of imperialism,’ and ‘imperialism pits, not the bourgeois nation against the old regime, but the proletariat against the bourgeois nation.’

“Here we have an amusing example of ‘word juggling’: imperialism! If, in Russia, the proletariat is already pitted against the ‘bourgeois nation,’ then that means that Russia is directly facing a socialist revolution!! Then the slogan ‘confiscation of the landlords’ land’ (which Trotsky, after the Conference of January 1912, put forward again in 1915) is untrue, and we must speak not of a ‘revolutionary workers’ government, but of a ‘workers’ socialist government!! To what lengths Trotsky’s confusion goes may be seen from his phrase that the proletariat would, by its determination, carry along with it the ‘non-proletarian (!) popular masses’ (No. 217)!! Trotsky has not stopped to think that, if the proletariat carries along with it the non-proletarian masses of the countryside for confiscation of the landlords’ land and overthrows the monarchy, that will be the completion of the ‘national bourgeois revolution’ in Russia, that will be the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry **

“The whole decade—the great decade—1905-1915—has demonstrated that there are two, and only two, class lines for the Russian revolution. The differentiation of the peasantry has intensified the class struggle within it, has awakened very many politically dormant elements, has brought the rural proletariat closer to the urban proletariat (the Bolsheviks have been insisting on the separate organisation of the former since 1906, and introduced this demand in the resolution of the Stockholm, Menshevik Congress). But the antagonism between the ‘peasantry’ and the Markovs-Romanovs-Khvostovs has become stronger, more developed, more acute. This truth is so obvious that even thousands of phrases in scores of Trotsky’s Paris articles cannot ‘refute’ it. Trotsky is in fact helping the liberal labour politicians in Russia who understand ‘denial’ of the role of the peasantry to mean refusal to rouse the peasants to revolution! And that just now is the crux of the matter” (see Vol. XVIII, pp. 317-18).

It is this peculiarity of Trotsky’s scheme—the fact that he sees the bourgeoisie and sees the proletariat, but does not notice the peasantry and does not understand its role in the bourgeois-democratic revolution—it is precisely this peculiarity that constitutes the opposition’s principal error on the Chinese question.

It is just this that constitutes the “semi-Menshevism” of Trotsky and of the opposition in the question of the character of the Chinese revolution.

From this principal error stem all the other errors of the opposition, all the confusion in its theses on the Chinese question.

III

The Right Kuomintang in Nanking, which Massacres Communists, and the Left Kuomintang in Wuhan, which Maintains an Alliance with the Communists

Take, for example, the question of Wuhan. The Comintern's position on the revolutionary role of Wuhan is well known and clear. Since China is passing through an agrarian revolution, since the victory of the agrarian revolution will mean the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the victory of a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, and since Nanking is the centre of national counter-revolution and Wuhan the centre of the revolutionary movement in China, the Wuhan Kuomintang must be supported and the Communists must participate in this Kuomintang and in its revolutionary government, provided that the leading role of the proletariat and its party is ensured both inside and outside the Kuomintang.

Is the present Wuhan government the organ of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry? No, it is not such an organ as yet, and will not soon become one. But it has every chance of developing into such an organ, given the further development of the revolution and the success of this revolution.

Such is the position of the Comintern.

Quite different is the way Trotsky sees the matter. He considers that Wuhan is not the centre of the revolutionary movement, but a "fiction." Asked what the Left Kuomintang is at this moment, Trotsky replies: "So far it is nothing, or practically nothing."

Let us assume that Wuhan is a fiction. But if Wuhan is a fiction, why does Trotsky not insist on a determined struggle against this fiction? Since when have Communists been supporting fictions, participating in fictions, standing at the head of fictions, and so on? Is it not a fact that Communists are in duty bound to fight against fictions? Is it not a fact that if Communists refrained from fighting against fictions, it would mean deceiving the proletariat and the peasantry? Why, then, does Trotsky not propose that the Communists should fight this fiction, if only by immediate withdrawal from the Wuhan Kuomintang and the Wuhan government? Why does Trotsky propose that they should remain within this fiction, and not withdraw from it? Where is the logic in this?

Is not this "logical" incongruity to be explained by the fact that Trotsky took up a swaggering attitude towards Wuhan and called it a fiction, and then got cold feet and shrank from drawing the appropriate conclusion from his theses?

Or take Zinoviev, for example. In his theses, distributed at the plenum of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(13.) in April of this year, Zinoviev characterised the Kuomintang in Wuhan as a Kemalist government of the 1920 period. But a Kemalist government is a government which fights the workers and peasants, a government in which there is not, and cannot be, any place for Communists. It would seem that only one conclusion could be drawn from such a characterisation of Wuhan: a determined struggle against Wuhan, the overthrow of the Wuhan government.

But that is what ordinary people, with ordinary human logic, might think. That is not what Zinoviev thinks. Characterising the Wuhan government in Hankow as a Kemalist government, he at the same time proposes that this government should be given the most

energetic support, that the Communists should not resign from it, should not, withdraw from the Kuomintang in Wuhan, and so on. He says outright:

“It is necessary to render the most, energetic and all-round assistance to Hankow and to organise resistance from there against the Cavaignacs. In the immediate future efforts should be concentrated precisely on facilitating organisation and consolidation in Hankow” (see Zinoviev’s theses).

Understand that if you can!

Trotsky says that Wuhan, i.e., Hankow, is a fiction. Zinoviev, on the contrary, asserts that Wuhan is a Kemal government. The conclusion that should be drawn from this is that the fiction must be fought, or a fight undertaken to overthrow the Wuhan government. But both Trotsky and Zinoviev shrink from the conclusion that follows inevitably from their premises, and Zinoviev goes even further and recommends rendering “the most energetic and all-round assistance to Hankow.”

What does all this show? It shows that the opposition has got entangled in contradictions. It has lost the capacity to think logically, it has lost all sense of perspective.

Confusion of mind and loss of all sense of perspective on the Wuhan question—such is the position of Trotsky and the opposition, if confusion can be called a position at all.

IV

Soviets of Workers’ and Peasants’ Deputies in China

Or take, as another example, the question of Soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies in China.

On the question of organising Soviets, we have the three resolutions adopted by the Second Congress of the Comintern: Lenin’s theses on the formation of non-proletarian, peasants’ Soviets in backward countries, Roy’s theses on the formation of workers’ and peasants’ Soviets in such countries as China and India, and the special theses on “When and in What Circumstances Soviets of Workers’ Deputies May Be Formed.”

Lenin’s theses deal with the formation of “peasants’,” “people’s,” non-proletarian Soviets in countries like those of Central Asia, where there is no industrial proletariat, or practically none. Not a word is said in Lenin’s theses about the formation of Soviets of workers’ deputies in such countries. Furthermore, Lenin’s theses hold that one of the essential conditions for the development and formation of “peasants’,” “people’s,” Soviets in backward countries is the rendering of direct support to the revolution in such countries by the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. It is clear that these theses envisage not China or India—where there is a certain minimum of industrial proletariat, and where, under certain conditions, the creation of workers’ Soviets is a pre-condition for the formation of peasants’ Soviets—but other, more backward countries, such as Persia, etc.

Roy’s theses chiefly envisage China and India, where there is an industrial proletariat. These theses propose the formation, in certain circumstances—in the period of transition from the bourgeois to the proletarian revolution—of Soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies. It is clear that these theses have a direct bearing on China.

The special theses of the Second Congress, entitled “When and in What Circumstances Soviets of Workers’ Deputies May Be Formed,” deal with the role of Soviets of workers’ deputies on the basis of the experience of the revolutions in Russia and Germany. These theses affirm that “without a proletarian revolution, Soviets inevitably turn into a travesty of Soviets.” It is clear that when considering the question of immediately forming Soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies in China, we must take these latter theses also into account.

How do matters stand with the question of immediately forming Soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies in China, if we take into account both the present situation in China, with the existence of the Wuhan Kuomintang as the centre of the revolutionary movement, and the directives in the last two theses of the Second Congress of the Comintern.

To form Soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies at the present time in the area of activity, say, of the Wuhan government, would mean establishing a dual power and issuing the slogan of a struggle for the overthrow of the Left Kuomintang and the establishment of a new, Soviet power in China.

Soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies are organs of struggle for the overthrow of the existing power, organs of struggle for a new power. The appearance of Soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies cannot but create a dual power, and, given a dual power, the question whom all power should belong to cannot but become an acute issue.

How did matters stand in Russia in March-April-May-June 1917? There was at that time the Provisional Government, which possessed half the power—but the more real power, very likely, because it still had the support of the army. Side by side with this there were the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, which also possessed something like half the power, although not such a real power as that of the Provisional Government. The slogan of the Bolsheviks at that time was to depose the Provisional Government and to transfer all power to the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies. None of the Bolsheviks thought of entering the Provisional Government, for you cannot enter a government that you are out to overthrow.

Can it be said that the situation in Russia in March-June 1917 was similar to the situation in China today? No, it cannot. It cannot be said, not only because Russia at that time was facing a proletarian revolution while China now is facing a bourgeois-democratic revolution, but also because at that time the Provisional Government in Russia was a counter-revolutionary and imperialist government, while the present Wuhan government is a government that is anti-imperialist and revolutionary, in the bourgeois-democratic meaning of the word.

What does the opposition propose in this connection?

It proposes the immediate creation in China of Soviets of workers’, peasants’ and soldiers’ deputies, as centres of organisation of the revolutionary movement. But Soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies are not only centres of organisation of the revolutionary movement. They are, first and foremost, organs of an uprising against the existing power, organs for the establishment of a new, revolutionary power. The opposition does not understand that only as organs of an uprising, only as organs of a new power, can Soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies become centres of the revolutionary movement. Failing this, Soviets of workers’ deputies become a fiction, an appendage of the existing power, as was the case in Germany in 1918 and in Russia in July 1917.

Does the opposition understand that the formation of Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies in China at the present time would mean the establishment of dual power, shared by the Soviets and the Wuhan government, and would necessarily and inevitably lead to a call for the overthrow of the Wuhan government?

I doubt very much whether Zinoviev understands this simple matter. But Trotsky understands it perfectly well, for he plainly says in his theses: "The slogan of Soviets means a call for the setting up of effective organs of power, through a transitional regime of dual power" (see Trotsky's theses, "The Chinese Revolution and Stalin's Theses").

It follows, therefore, that if we were to set up Soviets in China, we should at the same time be setting up a "regime of dual power," overthrowing the Wuhan government and forming a new, revolutionary power. Trotsky is here obviously taking as a model the events in the history of the Russian revolution in the period prior to October 1917. At that time we really did have a dual power, and we really were working to overthrow the Provisional Government.

But I have already said that none of us at that time thought of entering the Provisional Government. Why, then, does Trotsky not propose now that the Communists should immediately withdraw from the Kuomintang and the Wuhan government? How can you set up Soviets, how can you set up a regime of dual power, and at the same time belong to that selfsame Wuhan government you intend to overthrow? Trotsky's theses provide no answer to this question.

It is clear that Trotsky has got himself hopelessly entangled in the labyrinth of his own contradictions. He has confused a bourgeois-democratic revolution with a proletarian revolution. He has "forgotten" that, far from being completed, far from being victorious as yet, the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China is only in its initial stage of development. Trotsky does not understand that to withdraw support from the Wuhan government, to issue the slogan of a dual power and to proceed to overthrow the Wuhan government at the present time, through the immediate formation of Soviets, would mean rendering direct and indubitable support to Chiang Kai-shek and Chang Tso-lin.

How then, we are asked, is the formation of Soviets of workers' deputies in Russia in 1905 to be understood? Were we not then passing through a bourgeois-democratic revolution?

Firstly, however, there were at that time only two Soviets—in St. Petersburg and in Moscow; and the existence of two Soviets did not yet mean the setting up of a system of Soviet power in Russia.

Secondly, the St. Petersburg and Moscow Soviets of that period were organs of an uprising against the old, tsarist power, which once more confirms that Soviets cannot be regarded solely as centres for organising the revolution, that they can be such centres only if they are organs of an uprising and organs of a new power.

Thirdly, the history of workers' Soviets shows that such Soviets can exist and develop only if favourable conditions exist for a direct transition from bourgeois-democratic revolution to proletarian revolution, if, consequently, favourable conditions exist for a transition from bourgeois rule to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Was it not because these favourable conditions did not exist that the workers' Soviets in St. Petersburg and Moscow perished in 1905, just as did the workers' Soviets in Germany in 1918?

It is possible that there would have been no Soviets in Russia in 1905 if there had been at that time a broad revolutionary organisation in Russia similar to the Left Kuomintang in China today. But no such organisation could have existed in Russia at that time, because there were no elements of national oppression among the Russian workers and peasants; the Russians themselves oppressed other nationalities, and an organisation like the Left Kuomintang can arise only when there is national oppression by foreign imperialists, which draws the revolutionary elements of the country together into one broad organisation.

One must be blind to deny to the Left Kuomintang the role of an organ of revolutionary struggle, an organ of revolt against feudal survivals and imperialism in China.

But what follows from this?

From this it follows that the Left Kuomintang is performing approximately the same role in the present bourgeois-democratic revolution in China as the Soviets performed in the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia in 1905.

It would be a different matter if there was no popular and revolutionary-democratic organisation in China such as the Left Kuomintang. But since there is such a specific revolutionary organisation, one which is adapted to the specific features of Chinese conditions, and which has proved its suitability for the further development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China, it would be foolish and unwise to destroy this organisation, built up in the course of years, now when the bourgeois-democratic revolution has only just begun, is not yet victorious and will not so soon be victorious.

From this consideration, certain comrades draw the conclusion that the Kuomintang may be utilised in the future as well, during the transition to the proletarian revolution, as the form of state organisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat; and they see in this the possibility of a peaceful transition from the bourgeois democratic revolution to the proletarian revolution.

Generally speaking, the possibility of a peaceful development of the revolution is not, of course, out of the question. With us in Russia, too, in the early part of 1917 there was talk of the possibility of a peaceful development of the revolution through the Soviets.

But, firstly, the Kuomintang is not the same thing as Soviets, and while it may be adapted for the work of developing the bourgeois-democratic revolution, that does not necessarily mean that it can be adapted for the work of developing the proletarian revolution; whereas Soviets of workers' deputies are the form best adapted for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Secondly, even with Soviets, a peaceful transition to the proletarian revolution in Russia in 1917 proved in fact to be out of the question.

Thirdly, proletarian centres in China are so few, and the enemies of the Chinese revolution so strong and numerous, that every advance of the revolution and every assault of the imperialists will inevitably be accompanied by fresh secessions from the Kuomintang and a fresh strengthening of the Communist Party at the expense of the prestige of the Kuomintang.

I think that a peaceful development of the Chinese revolution must be regarded as out of the question.

I think that Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies will have to be set up in China during the period of transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the proletarian revolution. For under present-day conditions such a transition is impossible without Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies.

It is necessary first to enable the agrarian movement to develop throughout China, it is necessary to strengthen Wuhan and support it in the struggle against the feudal bureaucratic regime, it is necessary to help Wuhan to achieve victory over the counter-revolution, it is necessary broadly and universally to develop peasant associations, workers' trade unions and other revolutionary organisations as a basis for the setting up of Soviets in the future, it is necessary to enable the Chinese Communist Party to strengthen its influence among the peasantry and in the army—and only after this may Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies be set up as organs of struggle for a new power, as elements of a dual power, as elements in the preparation for the transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the proletarian revolution.

The setting up of workers' Soviets in China is not a matter of empty words, of empty “revolutionary” declamations. This question cannot be regarded so light-mindedly as Trotsky does.

The formation of workers' and peasants' Soviets means, first of all, withdrawing from the Kuomintang, because you cannot set up Soviets and promote a dual power, by calling upon the workers and peasants to establish a new power, and at the same time remain within the Kuomintang and its government.

The setting up of Soviets of workers' deputies means, further, replacing the present bloc within the Kuomintang by a bloc outside the Kuomintang, a bloc similar to the one that the Bolsheviks had with the Left. Socialist-Revolutionaries in October 1917.

Why?

Because, whereas in the case of a bourgeois-democratic revolution it is a matter of establishing a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, and the policy of a bloc within the Kuomintang fully conforms to this, in the case of the formation of Soviets and the transition to the proletarian revolution it will be a matter of setting up the dictatorship of the proletariat, of setting up the power of the Soviets, and such a power can be prepared for and set up only under the leadership of one party, the Communist Party.

Further, Soviets of workers' deputies entail obligations. The Chinese worker today earns 8-15 rubles a month, lives in intolerable conditions, and is heavily overworked. This state of affairs must be, and can be, ended immediately by raising wages, introducing an eight-hour day, improving the housing conditions of the working class, etc. But when there are Soviets of workers' deputies, the workers will not be content with that. They will say to the Communists (and they will be right): Since we have Soviets, and Soviets are organs of power, why not encroach somewhat on the bourgeoisie and expropriate them “just a little”? The Communists would be empty wind-bags if they did not adopt the course of expropriating the bourgeoisie, given the existence of Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies.

But, the question arises, can and should this course be adopted now, in the present phase of the revolution?

No, it should not.

Can and should one refrain from expropriating the bourgeoisie in the future, when there are Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies? No. But whoever thinks that when that is the case the Communists can retain the bloc within the Kuomintang is labouring under a delusion and does not understand the working of the struggle of class forces in the period of transition from the bourgeois revolution to the proletarian revolution.

That is how matters stand with the question of setting up Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies in China.

As you see, it is not so simple as certain excessively light-minded people, like Trotsky and Zinoviev, make out.

In general, is it permissible in principle for Marxists to take part and co-operate with the revolutionary bourgeoisie in one common revolutionary-democratic party, or in one common revolutionary-democratic government?

Some of the oppositionists think that it is not permissible. But the history of Marxism tells us that under certain conditions and for a certain period it is quite permissible.

I might refer to such an example as that of Marx in Germany in 1848, at the time of the revolution against German absolutism, when Marx and his supporters joined the bourgeois-democratic league in the Rhineland, and when the organ of that revolutionary-democratic party, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, was edited by him.

While belonging to that bourgeois-democratic league and spurring on the revolutionary bourgeoisie, Marx and his supporters strenuously criticised the half-heartedness of their allies on the Right, just as the Communist Party in China, while belonging to the Kuomintang, must strenuously criticise the vacillation and half-heartedness of its Left Kuomintang allies.

We know that only in the spring of 1849 did Marx and his supporters quit that bourgeois-democratic league and proceed to form an independent organisation of the working class, with an absolutely independent class policy.

As you see, Marx went even further than the Chinese Communist Party, which belongs to the Kuomintang as the independent class party of the proletariat.

One may argue or not as to whether it was expedient for Marx and his supporters to join that bourgeois-democratic league in 1848. Rosa Luxemburg, for instance, thought that Marx should not have joined it. That is a question of tactics. But that in principle Marx and Engels granted the possibility and expediency of joining a bourgeois-revolutionary party in a period of bourgeois-democratic revolution, under certain conditions and for a definite period, is not open to doubt. As to whether Marxists may, under definite conditions and in a definite situation, take part and co-operate in a revolutionary-democratic government together with the revolutionary bourgeoisie, on this point we have the opinion of such Marxists as Engels and Lenin. We know that Engels, in his pamphlet, *The Bakuninists at Work*,³ pronounced in

favour of such participation. We know that Lenin, in 1905, likewise said that such participation in a bourgeois-democratic revolutionary government was permissible.

V

Two Lines

And so, we have before us two entirely different lines on the Chinese question—the line of the Comintern and the line of Trotsky and Zinoviev.

The line of the Comintern. Feudal survivals, and the bureaucratic-militarist superstructure which rests upon them and which receives every support from the imperialists of all countries, are the basic fact of Chinese life today.

China at the present moment is passing through an agrarian revolution directed both against the feudal survivals and against imperialism.

The agrarian revolution constitutes the basis and content of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China.

The Kuomintang in Wuhan and the Wuhan government are the centre of the bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movement.

Nanking and the Nanking government are the centre of national counter-revolution.

The policy of supporting Wuhan is at the same time a policy of developing the bourgeois-democratic revolution, with all the consequences resulting from that. Hence the participation of the Communists in the Wuhan Kuomintang and in the Wuhan revolutionary government, a participation which does not exclude, but rather presupposes strenuous criticism by the Communists of the half-heartedness and vacillation of their allies in the Kuomintang.

The Communists must utilise this participation to facilitate the proletariat's role of hegemon in the Chinese bourgeois-democratic revolution, and to hasten the moment of transition to the proletarian revolution.

When the moment of the complete victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution approaches, and when in the course of the bourgeois revolution the paths of transition to the proletarian revolution become clear, the time will have arrived when it is necessary to set up Soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies, as elements of a dual power, as organs of struggle for a new power, as organs of a new power, Soviet power.

When that time comes the Communists must replace the bloc within the Kuomintang by a bloc outside the Kuomintang, and the Communist Party must become the sole leader of the new revolution in China.

To propose now, as Trotsky and Zinoviev do, the immediate formation of Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies and the immediate establishment of dual power now, when the bourgeois-democratic revolution is still in the initial phase of its development, and when the Kuomintang represents the form of organisation of the national-democratic revolution best adapted and most closely corresponding to the specific features of China, would be to disorganise the revolutionary movement, weaken Wuhan, facilitate its downfall, and render assistance to Chang Tso-lin and Chiang Kai-shek.

The line of Trotsky and Zinoviev. Feudal survivals in China are a figment of Bukharin's imagination. They either do not exist at all in China, or are so insignificant that they cannot have any serious importance.

There does appear to be an agrarian revolution in China at this moment. But where it comes from, the devil only knows. (Laughter.)

But since there is this agrarian revolution, it must, of course, be supported somehow.

The chief thing just now is not the agrarian revolution, but a revolution for the customs independence of China, an anti-customs revolution, so to speak.

The Wuhan Kuomintang and the Wuhan government are either a "fiction" (Trotsky), or Kemalism (Zinoviev). On the one hand, dual power must be established for overthrowing the Wuhan government through the immediate formation of Soviets (Trotsky). On the other hand, the Wuhan government must be strengthened, it must be given energetic and all-round assistance, also, it appears, through the immediate formation of Soviets (Zinoviev).

By rights, the Communists ought to withdraw immediately from this "fiction"—the Wuhan government and the Wuhan Kuomintang. However, it would be better if they remained in this "fiction," i.e., in the Wuhan government and the Wuhan Kuomintang. But why they should remain in Wuhan if Wuhan is a "fiction"—that, it seems, God alone knows. And whoever does not agree with this is a betrayer and traitor.

Such is the so-called line of Trotsky and Zinoviev. Anything more grotesque and confused than this so-called line it would be hard to imagine.

One gets the impression that one is dealing not with Marxists, but with some sort of bureaucrats who are completely divorced from real life—or, still more, with "revolutionary" tourists, who have been busy touring about Sukhum and Kislovodsk and such-like places, overlooked the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, which defined the basic attitude towards the Chinese revolution, and then, having learned from the newspapers that some sort of a revolution—whether agrarian or anti-customs, they were not quite clear—was really taking place in China, they decided that it was necessary to compile a whole heap of theses—one set in April, another in the early part of May, a third in the latter part of May—and having done so, they bombard the Executive Committee of the Comintern with them, apparently believing that a plethora of confused and contradictory theses is the best means of saving the Chinese revolution.

Such, comrades, are the two lines on the questions of the Chinese revolution.

You will have to choose between them.

I am concluding, comrades.

I should like, in closing, to say a few words on the political meaning and importance of Trotsky's and Zinoviev's factional pronouncements at this moment. They complain that they are not allowed sufficient freedom to indulge in unparalleled abuse and impermissible vilification of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) and the E.C.C.I. They complain of a "regime" within the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.). Essentially, what they want is freedom to disorganise the

Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.). Essentially, what they want is to transplant to the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.) the manners of Maslow & Co.

I must say, comrades, that Trotsky has chosen a very inappropriate moment for his attacks on the Party and the Comintern. I have just received information that the British Conservative government has decided to break off relations with the U.S.S.R. There is no need to prove that this will be followed by a universal campaign against the Communists. This campaign has already begun. Some are threatening the C.P.S.U.(B.) with war and intervention. Others threaten it with a split. Something like a united front from Chamberlain to Trotsky is being formed.

It is possible that they want to frighten us. But it scarcely needs proof that Bolsheviks are not the sort to be frightened. The history of Bolshevism knows plenty of such "fronts." The history of Bolshevism shows that such "fronts" have invariably been smashed by the revolutionary determination and supreme courage of the Bolsheviks.

You need have no doubt that we shall succeed in smashing this new "front" too. (Applause.)

Notes

1 The Eighth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was held in Moscow, May 18-30, 1927. It discussed the tasks of the Comintern in the struggle against war and the war danger, the tasks of the British Communist Party, questions of the Chinese revolution, and other items. J. V. Stalin delivered a speech on "The Revolution in China and the Tasks of the Comintern" at the tenth sitting of the plenum, on May 24. The plenum assessed the international situation, outlined a programme of struggle against the threat of war, and, in connection with Great Britain's severance of diplomatic and trade relations with the U.S.S.R., adopted an appeal "To the Workers and Peasants of the World. To All Oppressed Peoples. To the Soldiers and Sailors." The leaders of the anti-Party Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc took advantage of the sharpened international position of the U.S.S.R. to launch slanderous attacks at the plenum on the leadership of the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.). In a special resolution, the plenum sharply condemned the splitting tactics of the opposition leaders and warned them that if they persisted in their factional struggle they would be expelled from the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

2 This refers to the appeal entitled "To the Proletarians and Peasants of the World. To All Oppressed Peoples," adopted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International on April 14, 1927. The appeal was published in Pravda, No. 85, April 15, 1927.

* See this volume, pp. 224-34.—Ed.

** My italics.—J. St.

** My italics.—J. St.

3 See Friedrich Engels, Die Bakunisten an der Arbeit, in Der Volkstaat, Nr. 105, 106, 107, 1873.

**To the Students of the Communist
University of the Toilers of the East**

Dear Comrades,

Two years ago, when I addressed you on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, I spoke of the tasks of the University both in relation to the Soviet Republics and in relation to the oppressed countries of the East.¹

The University, in performance of its tasks, is now sending into the fire of battle new cadres of fighters, its fourth set of graduates, representatives of 74 nationalities, comrades armed with the mighty weapon of Leninism.

These comrades are starting out, on their militant labours at one of the most crucial moments of history, when world imperialism, and British imperialism in the first place, is trying to seize the Chinese revolution by the throat and is at the same time casting a challenge to the first proletarian state in the world—the Soviet Union—in the hope of annihilating this mighty and unshakeable bulwark of the proletarians of all countries.

Greeting our comrades who have just graduated, I express my firm conviction that they will perform with honour their duty towards the proletariat and will devote all their energies and knowledge to the cause of emancipating the toiling people of the East from imperialist oppression.

J. Stalin
Pravda, No. 121
May 31, 1927

Notes

1. See “The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East.” J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 135-54.

Reply to S. Pokrovsky

When I began this correspondence with you I thought I was dealing with a man who was seeking the truth. Now, after your second letter, I see that I am corresponding with a self-conceited, impudent person, who sets the “interests” of his own ego higher than the interests of truth. Do not be surprised, then, if in this brief (and last) reply I shall speak bluntly and call a spade a spade.

1. I affirmed that in the period following the February Revolution of 1917 the Party replaced the old strategic slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry and “alliance with the whole peasantry” by the new strategic slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry and “alliance with the poor peasantry.”

I affirmed that the Party advanced towards and arrived at October putting this new slogan into effect, and that if it had not done so, the Party could not have welded together the necessary political army capable of overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie and establishing the power of the proletariat.

You have emphatically challenged this assertion of mine and have tried to prove that “in the period from February to October the Party upheld its odd slogan in relation to the peasantry— alliance with the whole peasantry” (see your first letter). And you not only tried to prove this anti-Leninist and purely Kamenevist conception, but regarded it almost as an axiom.

Such was the case, and our dispute was precisely on this point.

Now, seeing into what an impasse your stubbornness and self-assurance have led you, you are compelled to acknowledge under your breath that you were in error and declare that “the Party’s strategic slogan in the April-October period was indeed that of the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry” (see your second letter).

But while acknowledging your error under your breath, you there and then endeavour out loud to reduce it to a trifling “verbal” inaccuracy, by declaring that “the verbal formulation in which I clothed my thought in my last letter when I said that the Party had discarded its old slogan of alliance with the whole peasantry was perhaps liable to lead to unclarity” (see your second letter).

It follows that our dispute was over a “verbal” formulation, and not over two conceptions differing in principle!

That, to put it mildly, is what is called effrontery.

2. I affirmed that the preparations for October proceeded in the midst of a struggle against the compromising policy and vacillations of a certain section of the peasantry in the Soviets, that these vacillations and this compromising policy were creating a supreme danger to the revolution (defeat of the Bolsheviks in July 1917), that only with the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry could a successful struggle be waged against these vacillations and compromising policy, and that only thanks to this slogan were the Bolsheviks able to neutralise the vacillations and compromising policy of the middle peasant.

You emphatically contested this and persisted in your erroneous opinion that in the February-October period the Party carried on its work under the old slogan of “alliance with the whole peasantry.” And, in contesting it, you thereby deleted from the history of Bolshevism some of its finest pages, which treat of the struggle waged by the Bolsheviks to sever the middle strata of the peasantry from the petty-bourgeois parties, to isolate those parties, and to neutralise the vacillations and compromising policy of certain strata of the peasantry.

Such was the case.

Now you are compelled to acknowledge both the fact of the vacillations and compromising policy of a certain section of the peasantry in the February-October period, and the fact that the Bolsheviks did wage a struggle against those vacillations and that compromising policy. But while acknowledging all this, you try to make out that it has no bearing on the question of neutralising the middle peasants, and even contrive to reproach me with “having given no reply” on the question of neutralising the middle peasants.

One thing or the other: either you are excessively naive, or you deliberately put on a mask of naiveté for some purpose that is by no means scientific.

3. I affirmed that the Party was victorious in October because it had successfully put into effect the new strategic slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry; that if it had not replaced the old slogan of alliance with the peasantry as a whole by the new slogan of alliance with the poor peasantry it could not, have secured either victory in October, or the support of the peasantry as a whole in the course of the October Revolution; that the peasantry as a whole supported the Bolsheviks only in so far as the latter were carrying the bourgeois revolution to completion, and that, since the fundamental aim of October was not a bourgeois, but a socialist revolution, this support on the part of the peasantry as a whole was of a conditional and restricted character.

You, in essence, contested this, since in your first letter you denied the fact that in the period following the February Revolution the old slogan was replaced by a new one.

Such was the case.

Now you are compelled to acknowledge in words that the old strategic slogan about the peasantry as a whole, really was replaced by the new strategic slogan about alliance with the poor peasantry.

But having acknowledged this truth, you there and then proceeded, in the Kamenev manner, to cover up your tracks by counterposing the “tactical” task of securing the support of the peasantry as a whole to the “strategic” task of securing an alliance with the poor peasantry; in the Kamenev manner you discredited the truth you had just acknowledged about the second strategic slogan and, in essence, reverted to the old Kamenev position, contriving at the same time falsely to accuse me of not recognising the alleged fact of a certain conditional support rendered to the Bolsheviks in October by the peasantry as a whole.

You evidently do not understand that tactical tasks are part of the strategic task, that the former cannot be identified with the latter, and still less can the one be counterposed to the other.

You evidently do not understand that the support which the peasantry as a whole rendered the proletarian revolution could be only very conditional and restricted, to the extent that the October Revolution was completing the bourgeois revolution, that is, to the extent that it was abolishing landlord proprietorship, landlordism and the political superstructure of landlordism—the monarchy.

You evidently do not know that in October 1917, after the seizure of power by the Soviets, the Petrograd garrison (peasants) refused to go to the front against Kerensky when he was advancing on Petrograd, declaring that they, the garrison, were “for peace and against a new war,” and apparently understanding peace to mean, not the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war, but sticking their bayonets into the ground, that is, they understood it in the way that you and many other political philistines have understood it (see your first letter).

You evidently do not know that Petrograd was at that time saved from the onslaught of Kerensky and Krasnov by the Red Guards and the sailors.

You evidently do not know that we waged the Civil War in its first phase—in the period from October 1917 to the spring of 1918—chiefly by the efforts of the workers and sailors, and that the so-called support of the “peasantry as a whole” was at that time expressed for the most part in the fact that they did not directly prevent us from striking at the enemies of the proletarian revolution.

You evidently do not know that in fact we succeeded in creating the Red Army, as a mass army, only in the latter half of 1918, when the land had already been shared out by the peasants, when the kulak was already sufficiently weakened, when the Soviet power had already succeeded in holding its own, and when the possibility arose of putting into effect the slogan of “a stable alliance with the middle peasant.” . . .

Of course, it is possible to write all kinds of nonsense and fiction—paper will tolerate everything; it is possible, in the Kamenev manner, to twist and dodge and cover up one’s tracks. . . . But, after all, there is a limit.

4. Carried away by the “artistry” of your pen, and having conveniently forgotten your first letter, you assert that I have misunderstood the question of the growing over of the bourgeois revolution into the socialist revolution. That is indeed laying one’s own fault at another’s door!

What is the growing over of the bourgeois revolution into the socialist revolution? Is it conceivable in our country without replacing the old slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry by a new slogan about the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry? Obviously not.

Why was it that Lenin fought Kamenev in April 1917, advocating the replacement of the old slogan by a new one and linking this replacement with the transition from the first stage of the Russian revolution (a bourgeois-democratic revolution) to its second stage (a proletarian revolution)? Was it not in order to make possible and to facilitate the growing over of the bourgeois revolution into the socialist revolution? Obviously, it was.

Who was it that objected at that time to going over from the old slogan to the new? Obviously, it was Kamenev.

Who was it that in the spring of 1927 denied the fact that the Bolsheviks had replaced the old strategic slogan by a new strategic slogan in the period of preparation for October? Obviously, it was you, my dear Pokrovsky.

Who was it that corrected this Kamenevist error of Pokrovsky's? Obviously, it was Comrade Stalin.

Is it not clear from this that you have not understood in the slightest, absolutely not in the slightest, the question of the growing over of the bourgeois revolution into the proletarian revolution?

Conclusion: one must possess the effrontery of an ignoramus and the self-complacency of a narrow-minded equilibrist to turn things upside-down so discourteously as you do, my dear Pokrovsky.

I think the time has come to stop corresponding with you.

J. Stalin

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Notes on Contemporary Themes July 28, 1927

I

The Threat of War

It can scarcely be doubted that the main issue of the present day is that of the threat of a new imperialist war. It is not a matter of some vague and immaterial "danger" of a new war but of the real and actual threat of a new war in general, and of a war against the U.S.S.R. in particular.

The redivision of the world and of spheres of influence that took place as a result of the last imperialist war has already managed to become "obsolete." Certain new countries (America, Japan) have come to the fore. Certain old countries (Britain) are receding into the background. Capitalist Germany, all but buried at Versailles, is reviving and growing and becoming steadily stronger. Bourgeois Italy, with an envious eye on France, is creeping upwards.

A frantic struggle is in progress for markets, for fields of capital export, for the sea and land routes to those markets, for a new redivision of the world. The contradictions between America and Britain, between Japan and America, between Britain and France, between Italy and France, are growing.

The contradictions within the capitalist countries are growing, every now and again breaking out in the form of open revolutionary actions of the proletariat (Britain, Austria).

The contradictions between the imperialist world and the dependent countries are growing, now and again breaking out in the form of open conflicts and revolutionary explosions (China, Indonesia, North Africa, South America).

But the growth of all these contradictions signifies a growth of the crisis of world capitalism, despite the fact of stabilisation, a crisis incomparably deeper than the one before the last imperialist war. The existence and progress of the U.S.S.R., the land of proletarian dictatorship, only deepens and aggravates this crisis.

No wonder that imperialism is preparing for a new war, in which it sees the only way out of the crisis. The unparalleled growth of armaments, the general tendency of the bourgeois governments towards fascist methods of "administration," the crusade against the Communists, the frenzied campaign of slander against the U.S.S.R., the outright intervention in China—all these are different aspects of one and the same phenomenon: the preparation for a new war for a new redivision of the world.

The imperialists would long ago have come to blows among themselves, were it not for the Communist Parties, which are waging a determined struggle against imperialist war, were it not for the U.S.S.R., whose peaceful policy is a heavy fetter on the instigators of a new war, and were it not for their fear of weakening one another and thus facilitating a new breach of the imperialist front.

I think that this last circumstance—that is, the imperialists' fear of weakening one another and thus facilitating a new breach of the imperialist front—is one of the chief factors which have so far restrained the urge for a mutual slaughter.

Hence the "natural" endeavour of certain imperialist circles to relegate the contradictions in their own camp to the background, to gloss them over temporarily, to create a united front of the imperialists and to make war on the U.S.S.R., in order to solve the deepening crisis of capitalism even if only partially, even if only temporarily, at the expense of the U.S.S.R.

The fact that the initiative in this matter of creating a united front of the imperialists against the U.S.S.R. has been assumed by the British bourgeoisie and its general staff, the Conservative Party, should not come as a surprise to us. British capitalism has always been, is, and will be the most malignant strangler of peoples' revolutions. Beginning with the great bourgeois revolution in France at the close of the eighteenth century and down to the revolution now taking place in China, the British bourgeoisie has always been in the front ranks of the suppressors of the movement for the emancipation of mankind. The Soviet people will never forget the violence, robbery and armed invasion to which our country was subjected some years ago thanks to the British capitalists. What, then, is there surprising in the fact that British capitalism and its Conservative Party are again undertaking to lead a war against the centre of the world proletarian revolution, the U.S.S.R.?

But the British bourgeoisie is not fond of doing its own fighting. It has always preferred to make war through the hands of others. And it has indeed succeeded at times in finding fools willing to serve as cat's-paws for it.

Such was the case at the time of the great bourgeois evolution in France, when the British bourgeoisie succeeded in forming an alliance of European states against revolutionary France.

Such was the case after the October Revolution in the U.S.S.R., when the British bourgeoisie, having attacked the U.S.S.R., tried to form an "alliance of fourteen states," and when, in spite of this, they were hurled out of the U.S.S.R.

Such is the case now in China, where the British bourgeoisie is trying to form a united front against the Chinese revolution.

It is quite comprehensible that, in preparing for war against the U.S.S.R., the Conservative Party has for several years now been carrying out preparatory work for the formation of a "holy alliance" of large and small states against the U.S.S.R.

Whereas earlier, until recently, the Conservatives carried out this preparatory work more or less covertly, now, however, they have passed to "direct action," striking open blows at the U.S.S.R. and trying to build their notorious "holy alliance" in sight of all.

The British Conservative government struck its first open blow in Peking, by the raid on the Soviet Embassy. This raid had at least two aims. It was intended to discover "terrible" documentary evidence of "subversive" activity on the part of the U.S.S.R. which would create an atmosphere of general indignation and provide the basis for a united front against the U.S.S.R. It was intended also to provoke an armed conflict with the Peking government and embroil the U.S.S.R. into a war with China.

This blow, as we know, failed.

The second open blow was struck in London, by the raid on ARCOS and the severance of relations with the U.S.S.R. Its aim was to create a united front against the U.S.S.R., to

inaugurate a diplomatic blockade of the U.S.S.R. throughout Europe and to provoke a series of ruptures of treaty relations with the Soviet Union.

This blow, as we know, also failed.

The third open blow was struck in Warsaw, by the instigation of the assassination of Voikov. Voikov's assassination, organised by agents of the Conservative Party, was intended by its authors to play a role similar to that of the Sarajevo assassination by embroiling the U.S.S.R. in an armed conflict with Poland.

This blow also seems to have failed.

How is it to be explained that these blows have so far not produced the results which the Conservatives expected from them?

By the conflicting interests of the various bourgeois states, many of whom are interested in maintaining economic relations with the U.S.S.R.

By the peaceful policy of the U.S.S.R., which the Soviet Government pursues firmly and unwaveringly.

By the reluctance of the states dependent on Britain—whether it be the state of Chang Tso-lin or the state of Pilsudski—to serve as dumb tools of the Conservatives to the detriment of their own interests.

The noble lords apparently refuse to understand that every state, even the smallest, is inclined to regard itself as an entity, tries to live its own independent life, and is unwilling to hazard its existence for the sake of the bright eyes of the Conservatives. The British Conservatives have omitted to take all these circumstances into account.

Does this mean that there will be no more blows of this kind? No, it does not. On the contrary, it only means that the blows will be renewed with fresh strength.

These blows must not be regarded as a matter of chance. They are naturally prompted by the entire international situation, by the position of the British bourgeoisie both in the "metropolitan country" and in the colonies, by the Conservative Party's position as the ruling party.

The entire international situation today, all the facts regarding the "operations" of the British Government against the U.S.S.R.—the fact that it is organising a financial blockade of the U.S.S.R., the fact that it is secretly conferring with the powers on a policy hostile to the U.S.S.R., the fact that it is subsidising the emigre "governments" of the Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, etc., with a view to instigating revolts in these countries of the U.S.S.R., the fact that it is financing bands of spies and terrorists, who blow up bridges, set fire to factories and commit acts of terrorism against U.S.S.R. ambassadors—all this unmistakably goes to show that the British Conservative government has firmly and determinedly adopted the course of organising war against the U.S.S.R. And it must be considered by no means out of the question that, under certain circumstances, the Conservatives may succeed in getting together some military bloc or other against the U.S.S.R.

What are our tasks?

It is our task to sound the alarm in all the countries of Europe over the threat of a new war, to rouse the vigilance of the workers and soldiers of the capitalist countries, and to work, to work indefatigably, to prepare the masses to counter with the full strength of revolutionary struggle every attempt of the bourgeois governments to organise a new war.

It is our task to pillory all those leaders of the labour movement who "consider" the threat of a new war to be a "figment of the imagination," who lull the workers with pacifist lies, who close their eyes to the fact that the bourgeoisie is preparing for a new war—for these people want the war to catch the workers by surprise.

The task is for the Soviet Government firmly and unwaveringly to continue its policy of peace, the policy of peaceful relations, notwithstanding the provocative acts of our enemies, notwithstanding pin-pricks to our prestige.

Provocative elements in the enemy camp taunt us, and will continue to taunt us, with the assertion that our peaceful policy is due to our weakness, to the weakness of our army. Some of our comrades are at times enraged by this, are inclined to succumb to the provocation and to urge the adoption of "vigorous" measures. That is a sign of weak nerves, of lack of stamina. We cannot, and must not, dance to the tune of our enemies. We must go our own way, upholding the cause of peace, demonstrating our desire for peace, exposing the predatory designs of our enemies and showing them up as instigators of war.

For only such a policy can enable us to weld the masses of the working people of the U.S.S.R. into a single fighting camp if, or rather when, the enemy forces war upon us.

As regards our "weakness," or the "weakness" of our army, this is not the first time that our enemies have made such a mistake. Some eight years ago, too, when the British bourgeoisie resorted to intervention against the U.S.S.R. and Churchill threatened a campaign of "fourteen states," the bourgeois press shouted about the "weakness" of our army. But all the world knows that both the British interventionists and their allies were ignominiously thrown out of our country by our victorious army.

Messieurs the instigators of a new war would do well to remember this.

The task is to increase the defensive capacity of our country, to expand our national economy, to improve our industry—both war and non-war—to enhance the vigilance of the workers, peasants and Red Army men of our country, steeling them in the determination to defend the socialist motherland and putting an end to the slackness which, unfortunately, is as yet far from having been eliminated.

The task is to strengthen our rear and cleanse it of dross, not hesitating to mete out punishment to "illustrious" terrorists and incendiaries who set fire to our mills and factories, because it is impossible to defend our country in the absence of a strong revolutionary rear.

Recently a protest was received from the well-known leaders of the British labour movement, Lansbury, Maxton and Brockway, against the shooting of the twenty Russian princes and nobles who were guilty of terrorism and arson. I cannot regard those leaders of the British labour movement as enemies of the U.S.S.R. But they are worse than enemies.

They are worse than enemies because, although they call themselves friends of the U.S.S.R., by their protest they nevertheless make it easier for Russian landlords and British secret agents to go on organising the assassination of representatives of the U.S.S.R.

They are worse than enemies because by their protest they tend to bring about a state of affairs in which the workers of the U.S.S.R. are left unarmed in face of their sworn enemies.

They are worse than enemies because they refuse to realise that the shooting of the twenty "illustrious" ones was a necessary measure of self-defence on the part of the revolution.

It is rightly said: "God save us from such friends; our enemies we can cope with ourselves."

As to the shooting of the twenty "illustrious" ones, let the enemies of the U.S.S.R., both internal and external enemies, know that the proletarian dictatorship in the U.S.S.R. is alive and that its hand is firm.

What, after all this, should be said of our luckless opposition in connection with its latest attacks on our Party in face of the threat of a new war? What should be said of the fact that it, this opposition, has found the war threat an appropriate occasion to intensify its attacks on the Party? What is there creditable in the fact that, instead of rallying around the Party in face of the threat from without, it considers it appropriate to make use of the U.S.S.R.'s difficulties for new attacks on the Party? Can it be that the opposition is against the victory of the U.S.S.R. in the coming battles with imperialism, against increasing the defensive capacity of the Soviet Union, against strengthening our rear? Or, perhaps, it is cowardice in the face of the new difficulties, desertion, a desire to evade responsibility, masked by a blast of Leftist phrases? . . .

II

China

Now that the revolution in China has entered a new phase of development, we can to some extent sum up the path already travelled and proceed to verify the line of the Comintern in China.

There are certain tactical principles of Leninism, without due regard for which there can be neither correct leadership of the revolution, nor verification of the Comintern's line in China. These principles have been forgotten by our oppositionists long ago. But just because the opposition suffers from forgetfulness, it has to be reminded of them again and again.

I have in mind such tactical principles of Leninism as:

- a) the principle that the nationally peculiar and nationally specific features in each separate country must unfailingly be taken into account by the Comintern when drawing up guiding directives for the working-class movement of the country concerned;
- b) the principle that the Communist Party of each country must unfailingly avail itself of even the smallest opportunity of gaining a mass ally for the proletariat, even if a temporary, vacillating, unstable and unreliable ally;

c) the principle that unfailing regard must be paid to the truth that propaganda and agitation alone are not enough for the political education of the vast masses, that what is required for that is the political experience of the masses themselves.

I think that due regard for these tactical principles of Leninism is an essential condition, without which a Marxist verification of the Comintern's line in the Chinese revolution is impossible.

Let us examine the questions of the Chinese revolution in the light of these tactical principles.

Notwithstanding the ideological progress of our Party, there are still, unfortunately, "leaders" of a sort in it who sincerely believe that the revolution in China can be directed, so to speak, by telegraph, on the basis of the universally recognised general principles of the Comintern, disregarding the national peculiarities of China's economy, political system, culture, manners and customs, and traditions. What, in fact, distinguishes these "leaders" from real leaders is that they always have in their pockets two or three ready-made formulas, "suitable" for all countries and "obligatory" under all conditions. The necessity of taking into account the nationally peculiar and nationally specific features of each country does not exist for them. Nor does the necessity exist for them of co-ordinating the general principles of the Comintern with the national peculiarities of the revolutionary movement in each country, the necessity of adapting these general principles to the national peculiarities of the state in each country.

They do not understand that the chief task of leadership now that the Communist Parties have grown and become mass parties, is to discover, to grasp, the nationally peculiar features of the movement in each country and skilfully co-ordinate them with the Comintern's general principles, in order to facilitate and make feasible the basic aims of the Communist movement.

Hence the attempts to stereotype the leadership for all countries. Hence the attempts mechanically to implant certain general formulas, regardless of the concrete conditions of the movement in different countries. Hence the endless conflicts between the formulas and the revolutionary movement in the different countries, as the main outcome of the leadership of these pseudo-leaders.

It is precisely to this category of pseudo-leaders that our oppositionists belong.

The opposition has heard that a bourgeois revolution is taking place in China. It knows, furthermore, that the bourgeois revolution in Russia took place in opposition to the bourgeoisie. Hence the ready-made formula for China: down with all joint action with the bourgeoisie, long live the immediate withdrawal of the Communists from the Kuomintang (April 1926).

But the opposition has forgotten that, unlike the Russia of 1905, China is a semi-colonial country oppressed by imperialism; that, in consequence of this, the revolution in China is not simply a bourgeois revolution, but a bourgeois revolution of an anti-imperialist type; that, in China, imperialism controls the principal threads of industry, trade and transport; that imperialist oppression affects not only the Chinese labouring masses, but also certain sections of the Chinese bourgeoisie; and that, in consequence, the Chinese bourgeoisie may, under certain conditions and for a certain period, support the Chinese revolution.

And that, as we know, is in fact what occurred. If we take the Canton period of the Chinese revolution, the period when the national armies had reached the Yangtse, the period prior to the split in the Kuomintang, it has to be admitted that the Chinese bourgeoisie supported the revolution in China, that the Comintern's line that joint action with this bourgeoisie is permissible for a certain period and under certain conditions proved to be absolutely correct.

The result is the retreat of the opposition from its old formula and its proclamation of a "new" formula, namely, joint action with the Chinese bourgeoisie is essential, the Communists must not withdraw from the Kuomintang (April 1927).

That was the first punishment that befell the opposition for refusing to take into account the national peculiarities of the Chinese revolution.

The opposition has heard that the Peking government is squabbling with the representatives of the imperialist states over the question of customs autonomy for China. The opposition knows that it is primarily the Chinese capitalists that need customs autonomy. Hence the ready-made formula: the Chinese revolution is a national, anti-imperialist revolution, because its chief aim is to win customs autonomy for China.

But the opposition has forgotten that the strength of imperialism in China does not lie mainly in the customs restrictions in China, but in the fact that it owns mills, factories, mines, railways, steamships, banks and trading firms in that country, which suck the blood of the millions of Chinese workers and peasants.

The opposition has forgotten that the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people against imperialism is due first and foremost to the fact that imperialism in China is the force that supports and inspires the immediate exploiters of the Chinese people—the feudal lords, militarists, capitalists, bureaucrats, etc.—and that the Chinese workers and peasants cannot defeat their exploiters without at the same time waging a revolutionary struggle against imperialism.

The opposition forgets that it is precisely this circumstance that is one of the major factors making possible the growing over of the bourgeois revolution in China into a socialist revolution.

The opposition forgets that anyone who declares that the Chinese anti-imperialist revolution is a revolution for customs autonomy denies the possibility of the growing over of the bourgeois revolution in China into a socialist revolution, for he places the revolution under the leadership of the Chinese bourgeoisie.

And, indeed, the facts have since shown that customs autonomy is in essence the platform of the Chinese bourgeoisie, because even such inveterate reactionaries as Chang Tso-lin and Chiang Kai-shek now declare in favour of the abolition of the unequal treaties and the establishment of customs autonomy in China.

Hence the opposition's divided stand, its attempts to wriggle out of its own formula about customs autonomy, its surreptitious attempts to renounce this formula and to hitch on to the Comintern's stand that the growing over of the bourgeois revolution in China into a socialist revolution is possible.

That was the second punishment that befell the opposition for refusing to make a serious study of the national peculiarities of the Chinese revolution.

The opposition has heard that the merchant bourgeoisie has penetrated the Chinese countryside, leasing land to poor peasants. The opposition knows that the merchant is not a feudal lord. Hence the ready-made formula: feudal survivals, hence also the struggle of the peasantry against feudal survivals, are of no serious importance in the Chinese revolution, and that the chief thing in China today is not the agrarian revolution, but the question of China's state-customs dependence on the imperialist countries.

The opposition, however, fails to see that the specific feature of China's economy is not the penetration of merchant capital into the countryside, but a combination of the domination of feudal survivals with the existence of merchant capital in the Chinese countryside, along with the preservation of medieval feudal methods of exploiting and oppressing the peasantry.

The opposition fails to understand that the entire military-bureaucratic machine which today so inhumanly robs and oppresses the Chinese peasantry is essentially a political superstructure on this combination of the domination of feudal survivals and feudal methods of exploitation with the existence of merchant capital in the countryside.

And, indeed, the facts have since shown that a gigantic agrarian revolution has developed in China, directed first and foremost against the Chinese feudal lords, big and small.

The facts have shown that this revolution embraces tens of millions of peasants and is tending to spread over the whole of China.

The facts have shown that feudal lords—real feudal lords of flesh and blood—not only exist in China, but wield power in a number of provinces, dictate their will to the military commanders, subordinate the Kuomin-tang leadership to their influence, and strike blow after blow at the Chinese revolution.

To deny, after this, the existence of feudal survivals and a feudal system of exploitation as the main form of oppression in the Chinese countryside, to refuse to recognise that the agrarian revolution is the main factor in the Chinese revolutionary movement at the present time, would be flying in the face of obvious facts.

Hence the opposition's retreat from its old formula regarding feudal survivals and the agrarian revolution. Hence the opposition's attempt to slink away from its old formula and tacitly to recognise the correctness of the Comintern's position.

That is the third punishment which has befallen the opposition for its unwillingness to take into account the national peculiarities of China's economy.

And so on and so forth.

Disharmony between formulas and reality—such is the lot of the oppositionist pseudo-leaders.

And this disharmony is a direct result of the opposition's repudiation of the well-known tactical principle of Leninism that the nationally peculiar and nationally specific features in the

revolutionary movement of each separate country must unfailingly be taken into account. Here is how Lenin formulates this principle:

"The whole point now is that the Communists of every country should quite consciously take into account both the main fundamental tasks of the struggle against opportunism and 'Left' doctrinairism and the specific features which this struggle assumes and inevitably must assume in each separate country in conformity with the peculiar features of its economics, politics, culture, national composition (Ireland, etc.), its colonies, religious divisions, and so on and so forth. Everywhere it is felt that dissatisfaction with the Second International is spreading and growing, both because of its opportunism and because of its inability, or incapacity, to create a really centralised, really leading, centre capable of directing the international tactics of the revolutionary proletariat in its struggle for a world Soviet republic. We must clearly realise that such a leading centre cannot under any circumstances be built up on stereotyped, mechanically equalised and identical tactical rules of struggle. As long as national and state differences exist among peoples and countries—and these differences will continue to exist for a very long time even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a world scale—the unity of international tactics of the communist working-class movement of all countries demands, not the elimination of variety, not the abolition of national differences (that is a foolish dream at the present moment), but such an application of the fundamental principles of communism (Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat) as would correctly modify these principles in certain particulars, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state differences. Investigate, study, seek, divine, grasp that which is nationally peculiar, nationally specific in the concrete manner in which each country approaches the fulfilment of the single international task, in which it approaches the victory over opportunism and Left doctrinairism within the working class movement, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, and the establishment of a Soviet republic and a proletarian dictatorship—such is the main task of the historical period through which all the advanced countries (and not only the advanced countries) are now passing" (see "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, Vol. XXV, pp. 227-28).

The line of the Comintern is the line of unfailingly taking this tactical principle of Leninism into account.

The line of the opposition, on the contrary, is the line of repudiating this tactical principle.

In that repudiation lies the root of the opposition's misadventures in the questions of the character and prospects of the Chinese revolution.

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Let us pass to the second tactical principle of Leninism.

Out of the character and prospects of the Chinese revolution there arises the question of the allies of the proletariat in its struggle for the victory of the revolution.

The question of the allies of the proletariat is one of the main questions of the Chinese revolution. The Chinese proletariat is confronted by powerful enemies: the big and small feudal lords, the military-bureaucratic machine of the old and the new militarists, the counterrevolutionary national bourgeoisie, and the Eastern and Western imperialists, who

have seized control of the principal threads of China's economic life and who reinforce their right to exploit the Chinese people by their troops and fleets.

To smash these powerful enemies requires, apart from everything else, a flexible and well-considered policy on the part of the proletariat, the ability to take advantage of every rift in the camp of its enemies, and the ability to find allies, even if they are vacillating and unstable allies, provided that they are mass allies, that they do not restrict the revolutionary propaganda and agitation of the party of the proletariat, and do not restrict the party's work of organising the working class and the labouring masses.

This policy is a fundamental requirement of the second tactical principle of Leninism. Without such a policy, the victory of the proletariat is impossible.

The opposition regards such a policy as incorrect, un-Leninist. But that only indicates that it has shed the last remnants of Leninism, that it is as far from Leninism as heaven is from earth.

Did the Chinese proletariat have such allies in the recent past?

Yes, it did.

In the period of the first stage of the revolution, when it was a revolution of an all-national united front (the Canton period), the proletariat's allies were the peasantry, the urban poor, the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, and the national bourgeoisie.

One of the specific features of the Chinese revolutionary movement is that the representatives of those classes worked jointly with the Communists within a single, bourgeois-revolutionary organisation, called the Kuomintang.

Those allies were not, and could not be, all equally reliable. Some of them were more or less reliable allies (the peasantry, the urban poor), others were less reliable and vacillating (the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia), others again were entirely unreliable (the national bourgeoisie).

At that time the Kuomintang was unquestionably more or less a mass organisation. The policy of the Communists within the Kuomintang consisted in isolating the representatives of the national bourgeoisie (the Rights) and utilising them in the interests of the revolution, in impelling the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia (the Lefts) leftwards, and in rallying the peasantry and the urban poor around the proletariat.

Was Canton at that time the centre of the Chinese revolutionary movement? It certainly was. Only lunatics can deny that now.

What were the achievements of the Communists during that period? Extension of the territory of the revolution, inasmuch as the Canton armies reached the Yangtse; the possibility of openly organising the proletariat (trade unions, strike committees); the formation of the communist organisations into a party; the creation of the first nuclei of peasant organisations (the peasant associations); communist penetration into the army.

It follows that the Comintern's leadership during that period was quite correct.

In the period of the second stage of the revolution, when Chiang Kai-shek and the national bourgeoisie deserted to the camp of counter-revolution, and the centre of the revolutionary movement shifted from Canton to Wuhan, the proletariat's allies were the peasantry, the urban poor, and the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia.

How is the desertion of the national bourgeoisie to the camp of counter-revolution to be explained? By fear of the scope assumed by the revolutionary movement of the workers, in the first place, and, secondly, by the pressure exerted on the national bourgeoisie by the imperialists in Shanghai.

Thus the revolution lost the national bourgeoisie. That was a partial loss for the revolution. But, on the other hand, it entered a higher phase of its development, the phase of agrarian revolution, by bringing the broad masses of the peasantry closer to itself. That was a gain for the revolution.

Was the Kuomintang at that time, in the period of the second stage of the revolution, a mass organisation? It certainly was. It was unquestionably more of a mass organisation than was the Kuomintang of the Canton period.

Was Wuhan at that time the centre of the revolutionary movement? It certainly was. Surely only the blind could deny that now. Otherwise Wuhan's territory (Hupeh, Hunan) would not have been the base for the maximum development of the agrarian revolution, which was led by the Communist Party.

The policy of the Communists towards the Kuomin-tang at that time was to impel it leftwards and to transform it into the core of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

Was such a transformation possible at that time? It was. At any rate, there was no reason to believe such a possibility out of the question. We plainly said at the time that to transform the Wuhan Kuomintang into the core of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry at least two conditions were required: a radical democratisation of the Kuomin-tang, and direct assistance by the Kuomintang to the agrarian revolution. It would have been foolish for the Communists to have refrained from attempting such a transformation.

What were the achievements of the Communists during that period?

The Communist Party during that period grew from a small party of 5-6 thousand members into a large mass party of 50-60 thousand members.

The workers' trade unions grew into a huge national federation with about three million members.

The primary peasant organisations expanded into huge associations embracing several tens of millions of members. The agrarian movement of the peasantry grew to gigantic proportions and came to occupy the central place in the Chinese revolutionary movement. The Communist Party gained the possibility of openly organising the revolution. The Communist Party became the leader of the agrarian revolution. The hegemony of the proletariat began to change from a wish into a reality.

It is true that the Chinese Communist Party failed to exploit all the possibilities of that period. It is true that during that period the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party committed a number of grave errors. But it would be ridiculous to think that the Chinese Communist Party can become a real Bolshevik party at one stroke, so to speak, on the basis of the Comintern's directives. One has only to recall the history of our Party, which passed through a series of splits, secessions, betrayals, treacheries and so forth, to realise that real Bolshevik parties do not come into being at one stroke.

It follows, then, that the Comintern's leadership during that period, too, was quite correct.

Does the Chinese proletariat have allies today? It does.

These allies are the peasantry and the urban poor.

The present period is marked by the desertion of the Wuhan leadership of the Kuomintang to the camp of counter-revolution, by the desertion of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia from the revolution.

This desertion is due, firstly, to the fear of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia in face of the spread of the agrarian revolution and to the pressure of the feudal lords on the Wuhan leadership, and, secondly, to the pressure of the imperialists in the Tientsin area, who are demanding that the Kuomintang break with the Communists as the price for permitting its passage northward.

The opposition has doubts about the existence of feudal survivals in China. But it is now clear to all that not only do feudal survivals exist in China, but that they have proved to be even stronger than the onslaught of the revolution at the present time. And it is because the imperialists and the feudal lords in China have for the time being proved to be stronger that the revolution has sustained a temporary defeat.

On this occasion the revolution has lost the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia.

That indeed is a sign that the revolution has sustained a temporary defeat.

But, on the other hand, it has rallied the broad masses of the peasantry and urban poor more closely around the proletariat, and has thereby created the basis for the hegemony of the proletariat. That is a gain for the revolution.

The opposition ascribes the temporary defeat of the revolution to the Comintern's policy. But only people who have broken with Marxism can say that. Only people who have broken with Marxism can demand that a correct policy should always and necessarily lead to immediate victory over the enemy.

Was the policy of the Bolsheviks in the 1905 Revolution a correct one? Yes, it was. Why, then, did the 1905 Revolution suffer defeat, despite the existence of Soviets, despite the correct policy of the Bolsheviks? Because the feudal survivals and the autocracy proved at that time to be stronger than the revolutionary movement of the workers.

Was the policy of the Bolsheviks in July 1917 a correct one? Yes, it was. Why, then, did the Bolsheviks sustain defeat, again despite the existence of Soviets, which at that time betrayed

the Bolsheviks, and despite the correct policy of the Bolsheviks? Because Russian imperialism proved at that time to be stronger than the revolutionary movement of the workers.

A correct policy is by no means bound to lead always and without fail to direct victory over the enemy. Direct victory over the enemy is not determined by correct policy alone; it is determined first and foremost by the correlation of class forces, by a marked preponderance of strength on the side of the revolution, by disintegration in the enemy's camp, by a favourable international situation.

Only given those conditions can a correct policy of the proletariat lead to direct victory.

But there is one obligatory requirement which a correct policy must satisfy always and under all conditions. That requirement is that the Party's policy must enhance the fighting capacity of the proletariat, multiply its ties with the labouring masses, increase its prestige among these masses, and convert the proletariat into the hege-mon of the revolution.

Can it be affirmed that this past period has presented the maximum favourable conditions for the direct victory of the revolution in China? Clearly, it cannot.

Can it be affirmed that communist policy in China has not enhanced the fighting capacity of the proletariat, has not multiplied its ties with the broad masses, and has not increased its prestige among these masses? Clearly, it cannot.

Only the blind could fail to see that the Chinese proletariat has succeeded in this period in severing the broad mass of the peasantry both from the national bourgeoisie and from the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, so as to rally them around its own standard.

The Communist Party went through a bloc with the national bourgeoisie in Canton at the first stage of the revolution in order to extend the area of the revolution, to form itself into a mass party, to secure the possibility of openly organising the proletariat, and to open up a road for itself to the peasantry.

The Communist Party went through a bloc with the Kuomintang petty-bourgeois intelligentsia in Wuhan at the second stage of the revolution in order to multiply its forces, to extend the organisation of the proletariat, to sever the broad masses of the peasantry from the Kuomintang leadership, and to create the conditions for the hegemony of the proletariat.

The national bourgeoisie has gone over to the camp of counter-revolution, having lost contact with the broad masses of the people.

The Kuomintang petty-bourgeois intelligentsia in Wuhan has trailed in the wake of the national bourgeoisie, having taken fright at the agrarian revolution and having utterly discredited itself in the eyes of the peasant millions.

On the other hand, however, the vast masses of the peasantry have rallied more closely around the proletariat, seeing in it their only reliable leader and guide.

Is it not clear that only a correct policy could have led to such results?

Is it not clear that only such a policy could have enhanced the fighting capacity of the proletariat?

Who but the pseudo-leaders belonging to our opposition can deny the correctness and revolutionary character of such a policy?

The opposition asserts that the swing of the Wuhan Kuomintang leadership to the side of the counterrevolution indicates that the policy of a bloc with the-Wuhan Kuomintang at the second stage of the revolution was incorrect.

But only people who have forgotten the history of Bolshevism and who have shed the last remnants of Leninism can say that.

Was the Bolshevik policy of a revolutionary bloc with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in October and after October, down to the spring of 1918, a correct one?

I believe that nobody has yet ventured to deny that this bloc was correct. How did this bloc end? With a revolt of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries against the Soviet government. Can it be affirmed on these grounds that the policy of a bloc with the Socialist-Revolutionaries was incorrect? Obviously, it cannot.

Was the policy of a revolutionary bloc with the Wuhan Kuomintang at the second stage of the Chinese revolution a correct one? I believe that nobody has yet ventured to deny that this bloc was correct during the second stage of the revolution. The opposition itself declared at that time (April 1927) that such a bloc was correct. How, then, can it be asserted now, after the Wuhan Kuomintang leadership has deserted the revolution, and because of this desertion, that the revolutionary bloc with the Wuhan Kuomintang was incorrect?

Is it not clear that only spineless people can employ such "arguments"?

Did anyone assert that the bloc with the Wuhan Kuomintang would be eternal and unending? Do such things as eternal and unending blocs exist at all? Is it not clear that the opposition has no understanding, no understanding whatever, of the second tactical principle of Leninism, concerning a revolutionary bloc of the proletariat with non-proletarian classes and groups?

Here is how Lenin formulates this tactical principle:

"The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and by making, without fail, the most thorough, careful, attentive and skilful use both of every, even the smallest, 'rift' among the enemies, every antagonism of interests among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within individual countries, as well as of every, even the smallest, opportunity of gaining mass ally, even though a temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional ally. He who has not understood this, has not understood even a particle of Marxism, or of scientific, modern socialism in general. He who has not proved by deeds over a fairly considerable period of time, and in fairly varied political situations, his ability to apply this truth in practice has not yet learned to assist the revolutionary class in its struggle to emancipate all toiling humanity from the exploiters. And this applies equally to the period before and after the proletariat has conquered political power" (see "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, Vol. XXV, pp. 210-11).

Is it not clear that the line of the opposition is the line of repudiating this tactical principle of Leninism?

Is it not clear that the line of the Comintern, on the contrary, is the line of unfailingly taking this tactical principle into account?

* * *

Let us pass to the third tactical principle of Leninism.

This tactical principle concerns the question of change of slogans, the order and methods of such change. It concerns the question how to convert a slogan for the party into a slogan for the masses, how and in what way to bring the masses to the revolutionary positions, so that they may convince themselves by their own political experience of the correctness of the Party's slogans.

And the masses cannot be convinced by propaganda and agitation alone. What is required for that is the political experience of the masses themselves. What is required for that is that the broad masses shall come to feel, from painful experience, the inevitability, say, of overthrowing a given system, the inevitability of establishing a new political and social order.

It was a good thing that the advanced group, the Party, had already convinced itself of the inevitability of the overthrow, say, of the Milyukov-Kerensky Provisional Government in April 1917. But that was not yet enough for coming forward and advocating the overthrow of that government, for putting forward the slogan of the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the establishment of Soviet power as a slogan of the day. In order to convert the formula "All Power to the Soviets" from a perspective for the immediate future into a slogan of the day, into a slogan of immediate action, one other decisive factor was required, namely, that the masses themselves should become convinced of the correctness of this slogan, and should help the Party in one way or another to put it into effect.

A strict distinction must be drawn between a formula as a perspective for the immediate future and a formula as a slogan of the day. It was precisely on this point that the group of Petrograd Bolsheviks headed by Bagdatyev came to grief in April 1917, when they prematurely put forward the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government, All Power to the Soviets." Lenin at the time qualified that attempt of the Bagdatyev group as dangerous adventurism and publicly denounced it. 1

Why?

Because the broad masses of the working people in the rear and at the front were not yet ready to accept that slogan. Because that group confused the formula "All Power to the Soviets," as a perspective, with the slogan "All Power to the Soviets," as a slogan of the day. Because that group was running too far ahead, exposing the Party to the threat of being completely isolated from the broad masses, from the Soviets, which at that time still believed that the Provisional Government was revolutionary.

Should the Chinese Communists have put forward the slogan "Down with the Kuomintang leadership in Wuhan" six months ago, say? No, they should not.

They should not, because that would have been dangerously running too far ahead, it would have made it difficult for the Communists to gain access to the broad masses of the working people, who still believed in the Kuomintang leadership; it would have isolated the Communist Party from the broad masses of the peasantry.

They should not, because the Wuhan Kuomintang leadership, the Wuhan Central Committee of the Kuo-mintang, had not yet exhausted its potentialities as a bourgeois-revolutionary government, had not yet disgraced and discredited itself in the eyes of the broad masses of the working people by its fight against the agrarian revolution, by its fight against the working class, and by its swing over to the counter-revolution.

We always said that it would be wrong to adopt the course of discrediting and replacing the Wuhan Kuomintang leadership so long as it had not yet exhausted its potentialities as a bourgeois-revolutionary government; that it should first be allowed to do so before raising in practice the question of replacing it.

Should the Chinese Communists now put forward the slogan "Down with the Kuomintang leadership in Wuhan"? Yes, they certainly should.

Now that the Kuomintang leadership has disgraced itself by its struggle against the revolution and has taken up an attitude of hostility towards the broad masses of the workers and peasants, this slogan will meet with a powerful response among the masses of the people.

Every worker and every peasant will now understand that the Communists acted rightly in withdrawing from the Wuhan government and the Wuhan Central Committee of the Kuomintang, and in putting forward the slogan "Down with the Kuomintang leadership in Wuhan."

For the masses of the peasants and workers are now faced with the choice : either the present Kuomintang leadership—which means refusing to satisfy the vital needs of these masses, repudiating the agrarian revolution; or agrarian revolution and a radical improvement of the position of the working class—which means that replacing the Kuomintang leadership in Wuhan becomes a slogan of the day for the masses.

Such are the demands of the third tactical principle of Leninism, concerning the question of change of slogans, the question of the ways and means of bringing the broad masses to the new revolutionary positions, the question how, by the policy and actions of the Party and the timely replacement of one slogan by another, to help the broad masses of the working people to recognise the correctness of the Party's line on the basis of their own experience.

Here is how Lenin formulates this tactical principle:

"Victory cannot be won with the vanguard alone. To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive battle, before the whole class, before the broad masses have taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least of benevolent neutrality towards it, and one in which they cannot possibly support the enemy, would be not merely folly but a crime. And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of the working people and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not enough. For this the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, now confirmed with astonishing force and vividness

not only in Russia but also in Germany. Not only the uncultured, often illiterate, masses of Russia, but the highly cultured, entirely literate masses of Germany had to realise through their own painful experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility to the bourgeoisie, the utter vileness, of the government of the knights of the Second International, the absolute inevitability of a dictatorship of the extreme reactionaries (Kornilov in Russia, Kapp and Co. in Germany) as the only alternative to a dictatorship of the proletariat, in order to turn resolutely towards communism. The immediate task that confronts the class-conscious vanguard of the international labour movement, i.e., the Communist Parties, groups and trends, is to be able to lead the broad masses (as yet, for the most part, slumbering, apathetic, bound by routine, inert and dormant) to their new position, or, rather, to be able to lead not only their own party, but also these masses, in their approach, their transition to the new position" (see "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, Vol. XXV, p. 228).

The basic error of the opposition is that it does not understand the meaning and importance of this tactical principle of Leninism, that it does not recognise it and systematically violates it.

It (Trotskyists) violated this tactical principle at the beginning of 1917, when it attempted to "skip over" the agrarian movement which had not yet been completed (see Lenin).

It (Trotsky-Zinoviev) violated this principle when it attempted to "skip over" the reactionary character of the trade unions, failing to recognise the expediency of Communists working in reactionary trade unions, and denying the necessity for temporary blocs with them.

It (Trotsky-Zinoviev-Radek) violated this principle when it attempted to "skip over" the national peculiarities of the Chinese revolutionary movement (the Kuo-mintang), the backwardness of the masses of the Chinese people, by demanding, in April 1926, the immediate withdrawal of the Communists from the Kuomintang, and, in April 1927, by putting forward the slogan of immediate organisation of Soviets, at a time when the Kuo-mintang phase of development had not yet been completed and had not yet outlived its day.

The opposition thinks that if it has understood, has recognised, the half-heartedness, vacillation and unreliability of the Kuomintang leadership, if it has recognised the temporary and conditional character of the bloc with the Kuomintang (and that is not difficult for any competent political worker to recognise), that is quite sufficient to warrant starting "determined action" against the Kuo-mintang, against the Kuomintang government, quite sufficient to induce the masses, the broad masses of the workers and peasants "at once" to support "us" and "our" "determined action."

The opposition forgets that "our" understanding all this is still very far from enough to enable the Chinese Communists to get the masses to follow them. The opposition forgets that what this also requires is that the masses themselves should recognise from their own experience the unreliable, reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the Kuomintang leadership.

The opposition forgets that it is not only the advanced group, not only the Party, not only individual, even if "exalted," "personalities," but first and foremost the vast masses of the people, that "make" a revolution.

It is strange that the opposition should forget about the state of the vast masses of the people, about their level of understanding, about their readiness for determined action.

Did we, the Party, Lenin, know in April 1917 that the Milyukov-Kerensky Provisional Government would have to be overthrown, that the existence of the Provisional Government was incompatible with the activity of the Soviets, and that the power would have to pass into the hands of the Soviets? Yes, we did.

Why, then, did Lenin brand as adventurers the group of Petrograd Bolsheviks headed by Bagdatyev in April 1917, when that group put forward the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government, All Power to the Soviets," and attempted to overthrow the Provisional Government?

Because the broad masses of the working people, a certain section of the workers, millions of the peasantry, the broad mass of the army and, lastly, the Soviets themselves, were not yet prepared to accept that slogan as a slogan of the day.

Because the Provisional Government and the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik petty-bourgeois parties had not yet exhausted their potentialities, had not yet sufficiently discredited themselves in the eyes of the vast masses of the working people.

Because Lenin knew that the understanding, the political consciousness, of the advanced group of the proletariat, the Party of the proletariat, was not enough by itself for the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the establishment of Soviet power—that this required also that the masses themselves should become convinced of the correctness of this line through their own experience.

Because it was necessary to go through the whole coalition orgy, through the betrayals and treacheries of the petty-bourgeois parties in June, July and August 1917; it was necessary to go through the shameful offensive at the front in June 1917, through the "honest" coalition of the petty-bourgeois parties with the Kornilovs and Milyukovs, through the Kornilov revolt and so on, in order that the vast masses of the working people should become convinced that the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the establishment of Soviet power were unavoidable.

Because only under those circumstances could the slogan of Soviet power be transformed from a slogan that was a perspective into a slogan of the day.

The trouble with the opposition is that it continually commits the same error as the Bagdatyev group committed in their day, that it abandons Lenin's road and prefers to "march" along the road of Bagdatyev.

Did we, the Party, Lenin, know that the Constituent Assembly was incompatible with the system of Soviet power when we took part in the elections to the Constituent Assembly and when we convened it in Petrograd? Yes, we did.

Why, then, did we convene it? How could it happen that the Bolsheviks, who were enemies of bourgeois parliamentarism and who established Soviet power, not only took part in the elections but even themselves convened the Constituent Assembly? Was this not "khvostism," lagging behind events, "holding the masses in check," violating "long-range" tactics? Of course not.

The Bolsheviks took this step in order to make it easier for the backward masses of the people to convince themselves with their own eyes that the Constituent Assembly was unsuitable, reactionary and counter-revolutionary. Only in that way was it possible to draw to our side the vast masses of the peasantry and make it easier for us to disperse the Constituent Assembly.

Here is what Lenin writes about it:

"We took part in the elections to the Russian bourgeois parliament, the Constituent Assembly, in September-November 1917. Were our tactics correct or not? . . . Did not we, the Russian Bolsheviks, have more right in September-November 1917 than any Western Communists to consider that parliamentarism was politically obsolete in Russia? Of course we did, for the point is not whether bourgeois parliaments have existed for a long time or a short time, but how far the broad masses of the working people are prepared (ideologically, politically and practically) to accept the Soviet system and to disperse the bourgeois-democratic parliament (or allow it to be dispersed). That in Russia in September-November 1917, owing to a number of special conditions, the urban working class and the soldiers and peasants were exceptionally well prepared to accept the Soviet system and to disperse the most democratic of bourgeois parliaments, is an absolutely incontestable and fully established historical fact. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks did not boycott the Constituent Assembly, but took part in the elections both before the proletariat conquered political power and after. . . .

"The conclusion which follows from this is absolutely incontrovertible: it has been proved that participation in a bourgeois-democratic parliament even a few weeks before the victory of a Soviet republic, and even after such a victory, not only does not harm the revolutionary proletariat, but actually helps it to prove to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be dispersed; it helps their successful dispersal, and helps to make bourgeois parliamentarism 'politically obsolete'" (see "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, Vol. XXV, pp. 201-02).

That is how the Bolsheviks applied the third tactical principle of Leninism in practice.

That is how Bolshevik tactics must be applied in China, whether in relation to the agrarian revolution, or to the Kuomintang, or to the slogan of Soviets.

The opposition is apparently inclined to think that the revolution in China has suffered a complete fiasco. That, of course, is wrong. That the revolution in China has sustained a temporary defeat, of that there can be no doubt. But what sort of defeat, and how profound it is—that is the question now.

It is possible that it will be approximately as prolonged a defeat as was the case in Russia in 1905, when the revolution was interrupted for a full twelve years, only to break out later, in February 1917, with fresh force, sweep away the autocracy, and clear the way for a new, Soviet revolution.

That prospect cannot be considered excluded. It is still not a complete defeat of the revolution, just as the defeat of 1905 could not be considered a final defeat. It is not a complete defeat, since the basic tasks of the Chinese revolution at the present stage of its development—agrarian revolution, revolutionary unification of China, emancipation from the imperialist yoke—still await their accomplishment. And if this prospect should become a reality, then, of course, there can be no question of the immediate formation of Soviets of workers' and

peasants' deputies in China, because Soviets are formed and flourish only in circumstances of revolutionary upsurge.

But that prospect can scarcely be considered a likely one. At all events, there are no grounds so far for considering it likely. There are none, because the counterrevolution is not yet united, and will not be soon, if indeed it is ever destined to be united.

For the war of the old and the new militarists among themselves is flaring up with fresh force and cannot but weaken the counter-revolution, at the same time as it ruins and infuriates the peasantry. For there is still no group or government in China capable of undertaking something in the nature of a Stolypin reform which might serve the ruling groups as a lightning conductor.

For the millions of the peasantry, who have already begun to lay hands on the landlords' land, cannot be so easily curbed and crushed to the ground.

For the prestige of the proletariat in the eyes of the labouring masses is growing from day to day, and its forces are still very far from having been demolished.

It is possible that the defeat of the Chinese revolution is analogous in degree to that suffered by the Bolsheviks in July 1917, when the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Soviets betrayed them, when they were forced to go underground, and when, a few months later, the revolution again came out into the streets in order to sweep away the imperialist government of Russia.

The analogy, of course, is a qualified one. I make it with all the necessary reservations, bearing in mind the difference between the situation of China in our day and that of Russia in 1917. I resort to such an analogy only in order to indicate the approximate degree of defeat of the Chinese revolution.

I think that this prospect is the more likely one. And if it should become a reality, if in the near future—not necessarily in a couple of months, but in six months or a year from now—a new upsurge of the revolution should become a fact, the question of forming Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies may become a live issue, as a slogan of the day, and as a counterpoise to the bourgeois government.

Why?

Because, if there is a new upsurge of the revolution in its present phase of development, the formation of Soviets will be an issue that has become fully mature.

Recently, a few months ago, it would have been wrong for the Chinese Communists to issue the slogan of forming Soviets, for that would have been adventurism, which is characteristic of our opposition, for the Kuomintang leadership had not yet discredited itself as an enemy of the revolution. Now, on the contrary, the slogan of forming Soviets may become a really revolutionary slogan, if (if!) a new and powerful revolutionary upsurge takes place in the near future.

Consequently, alongside the fight to replace the present Kuomintang leadership by a revolutionary leadership, it is necessary at once, even before the upsurge begins, to conduct

the widest propaganda for the idea of Soviets among the broad masses of the working people, without running too far ahead and forming Soviets immediately, remembering that Soviets can flourish only at a time of powerful revolutionary upsurge.

The opposition may say that it said this "first," that this is precisely what it calls "long-range" tactics.

You are wrong, my dear sirs, absolutely wrong! That is not "long-range" tactics; it is haphazard tactics, the tactics of perpetually overshooting and undershooting the mark.

When, in April 1926, the opposition demanded that the Communists should immediately withdraw from the Kuomintang, that was overshooting tactics, because the opposition itself was subsequently compelled to admit that the Communists ought to remain in the Kuomintang.

When the opposition declared that the Chinese revolution was a revolution for customs autonomy, that was undershooting tactics, because the opposition itself was subsequently compelled to slink away from its own formula.

When, in April 1927, the opposition declared that to talk of feudal survivals in China was an exaggeration, forgetting the existence of the mass agrarian movement, that was undershooting tactics, because the opposition itself was subsequently compelled tacitly to admit its error.

When, in April 1927, the opposition issued the slogan of immediate formation of Soviets, that was overshooting tactics, because the oppositionists themselves were compelled at the time to admit the contradictions in their own camp, one of them (Trotsky) demanding adoption of the course of overthrowing the Wuhan government, and another (Zinoviev), on the contrary, demanding the "utmost assistance" for this same Wuhan government.

But since when have haphazard tactics, the tactics of perpetually overshooting and undershooting the mark, been called "long-range" tactics?

As to Soviets, it should be said that, long before the opposition, the Comintern in its documents spoke of Soviets in China as a perspective. As to Soviets as a slogan of the day—put forward by the opposition in the spring of this year as a counterblast to the revolutionary Kuomintang (the Kuomintang was then revolutionary, otherwise there was no point in Zinoviev clamouring for the "utmost assistance" for the Kuomintang)—that was adventurism, vociferous running too far ahead, the same adventurism and the same running too far ahead that Bagdatyev was guilty of in April 1917.

From the fact that the slogan of Soviets may become a slogan of the day in China in the near future, it does not by any means follow that it was not dangerous and harmful adventurism on the part of the opposition to put forward the slogan of Soviets in the spring of this year.

Just as it by no means follows from the fact that Lenin recognised the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" to be necessary and timely in September 1917 (the Central Committee's decision on the uprising),² that it was not harmful and dangerous adventurism on the part of Bagdatyev to put forward this slogan in April 1917.

Bagdatyev, in September 1917, might also have said that he had been the "first" to call for Soviet power, having done so in April 1917. Does this mean that Bagdatyev was right, and that Lenin was wrong in qualifying his action in April 1917 as adventurism?

Apparently, our opposition is envious of Bagdatyev's "laurels."

The opposition does not understand that the point is not at all to be "first" in saying a thing, running too far ahead and disorganising the cause of the revolution, but to say it at the right time, and to say it in such a way that it will be taken up by the masses and put into practice.

Such are the facts.

The opposition has departed from Leninist tactics, its policy is one of "ultra-Left" adventurism—such is the conclusion.

Pravda, No. 169, July 28, 1927

Notes

1. See V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 24, pp. 181-82.

2. In his articles and letters to the Central Committee and the Bolshevik organisations written while in hiding in September 1917, V. I. Lenin issued the slogan "All power to the Soviets" as the immediate task of organisation of an armed uprising (see Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 25, pp. 288-94, 340-47 and Vol. 26, pp. 1-9). When V. I. Lenin's letters were discussed in the Central Committee on September 15, J. V. Stalin gave an emphatic rebuff to the capitulator Kamenev, who demanded that the documents should be destroyed. J. V. Stalin proposed that the letters be circulated to the largest Party organisations for consideration. On October 10, 1917, the historic meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party took place, with the participation of V. I. Lenin, J. V. Stalin, Y. M. Sverdlov, F. E. Dzerzhinsky and M. S. Uritsky, at which the resolution on an armed uprising, drafted by Lenin, was adopted (see V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 26, p. 162).

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1926

November 22-December 16

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (E.C.C.I.).

December 2

The Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. elects J. V. Stalin a member of its German commission.

December 4

J. V. Stalin has a talk with a representative of the Indian Communist Party.

December 7

J. V. Stalin delivers a report at the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. on internal questions of the C.P.S.U.(B.).

December 13

At the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I., J. V. Stalin replies to the discussion on his report on inner-Party questions of the C.P.S.U.(B.).

December 17

J. V. Stalin has a talk with Dimitrov, Kolarov and other representatives of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

December 18

The Executive Committee of the Comintern elects J. V. Stalin a member of its Presidium.

December 22

J. V. Stalin participates in the discussion of the question of the fight against the "ultra-Lefts" in Germany at a joint meeting of the delegations of the C.P.S.U.(B.) and the German Communist Party taking part in the work of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

December 23

The Seventh Party Conference of the Krasnaya Presnya District, Moscow, elects J. V. Stalin its first delegate to the Fifteenth Moscow Gubernia Party Conference.

December 24

At a joint meeting of representatives of the delegations of the C.P.S.U.(B.) and the American Communist Party to the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. J. V. Stalin speaks on the situation in the American Communist Party.

Once More on the Social-Democratic Deviation in Our Party — J. V. Stalin's report and reply to the discussion at the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.—is published in pamphlet form.

December 29

J. V. Stalin has a talk with a delegation from the Armaturny Factory, Moscow.

December 30

J. V. Stalin writes a letter to Ksenofontov.

1927

January 7

J. V. Stalin has a talk on the land question with a peasant delegate from the village of Yuryevka, Semirechye Region.

January 8

J. V. Stalin has a talk with a delegation of workers of Sokolniki District, Moscow.

January 14

J. V. Stalin addresses the Fifteenth Moscow Gubernia Party Conference.

J. V. Stalin has a talk with representatives of the Polish Communist Party.

January 21

J. V. Stalin attends a memorial meeting in the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, on the occasion of the third anniversary of the death of V. I. Lenin.

January 28

J. V. Stalin writes a letter to Comrade Zaitsev.

January 29

The Twenty-fourth Leningrad Gubernia Party Conference elects J. V. Stalin a member of the Leningrad Gubernia Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.).

February 7-12

J. V. Stalin directs the work of a plenum of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.).

February 22

J. V. Stalin writes a letter to the workers of the Lena gold-fields on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Lena shooting.

J. V. Stalin sends greetings to the Stalingrad newspaper Borba on the occasion of its tenth anniversary.

February 23

At a meeting of the French commission of the E.C.C.I. Presidium, J. V. Stalin speaks on the tactics of the French Communist Party.

J. V. Stalin attends a meeting in the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, in celebration of the Red Army's ninth anniversary.

February 25

At a conference of representatives of the textile industry; convened by the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.), J. V. Stalin speaks on Bolshevik methods of leadership and on ways and means for the further development of the textile industry of the Soviet Union.

February 28

J. V. Stalin has a talk with a delegation of workers of the Stalin Railway Workshops, October Railway.

March 1

J. V. Stalin addresses a meeting of workers of the Stalin Railway Workshops, October Railway.

At the meeting he is elected a deputy to the Moscow Soviet.

March 7

J. V. Stalin writes a letter to Comrades Tsvetkov and Alypov.

March 9

J. V. Stalin speaks in the French commission of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I.

March 15

J. V. Stalin's article, "Concerning the Question of a Workers' and Peasants' Government. Reply to Dmitriev," is published in the magazine Bolshevik, No. 6, 1927.

March 20

J. V. Stalin writes a letter to Shinkevich.

March 29

J. V. Stalin addresses the Fifth All-Union Conference of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League in Moscow.

April 2

The Eighth Congress of Soviets of the Moscow Gubernia elects J. V. Stalin a delegate to the Thirteenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

April 5

J. V. Stalin addresses a meeting of the active of the Moscow Party organisation on the character and prospects of the Chinese revolution.

April 8

The Sixteenth Congress of Soviets of the Leningrad Gubernia elects J. V. Stalin a delegate to the Thirteenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

April 9

J. V. Stalin writes a letter to Chugunov.

April 10-16

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the Thirteenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

April 13-16

J. V. Stalin directs the work of a plenum of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.).

April 13

At the plenum of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.), J. V. Stalin speaks on the question of the plenum's agenda and in the discussion on M. I. Kalinin's report on "Questions of the Congresses of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. and R.S.F.S.R."

April 15

J. V. Stalin's article, "The Party's Three Fundamental Slogans on the Peasant Question. Reply to Yan—sky," is published in the magazine Bolshevik, No. 7-8, 1927.

April 16

The Thirteenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets elects J. V. Stalin a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

April 18-26

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the Fourth Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R.

April 19-20

J. V. Stalin writes the theses for propagandists "Questions of the Chinese Revolution." The theses, approved by the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.), were published in Pravda, No. 90, April 21, 1927.

April 26

The Fourth Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. elects J. V. Stalin a member of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R.

May 1

J. V. Stalin attends the May Day parade of troops of the Moscow garrison and the demonstration of the working people of the capital on the Red Square.

May 5

J. V. Stalin's greetings to Pravda on its fifteenth anniversary is published in Pravda, No. 99.

May 9

J. V. Stalin writes the article "Concerning Questions of the Chinese Revolution. Reply to Comrade Marchulin." The article was published in the magazine Derevensky Kommunist, No. 10, May 15, 1927.

May 13

J. V. Stalin has a talk with students of the Sun Yat-sen University on questions of the Chinese Revolution.

May 20

J. V. Stalin writes the article "The Slogan of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Poor Peasantry in the Period of Preparation for October. Reply to S. Pokrovsky." The article was first published in 1928, in the book: J. Stalin, Problems of Leninism.

May 24

J. V. Stalin speaks on "The Revolution in China and the Tasks of the Comintern" at a sitting of the Eighth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

May 30

J. V. Stalin writes greetings to the students of the fourth graduation from the Communist University of the Toilers of the East.

June 23

J. V. Stalin writes a reply to S. Pokrovsky.

July 24-27

J. V. Stalin writes an article "Notes on Contemporary Themes." The article was published in Pravda, No. 169, July 28, 1927.