

The Errors of Trotskyism

A SYMPOSIUM

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The Errors of Trotskyism

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INTRODUCTION

OUR PARTY'S VIEW

It is undoubtedly true that it came as a great surprise to the British working class when they saw the Communist International in the throes of a great controversy with Comrade Trotsky. Comrade Trotsky's name had always been associated in our minds with Comrade Lenin. "Lenin and Trotsky!" These were the names with which we conjured in all our thoughts and feelings about the Russian Revolution and the Communist International. As the news of the Russian Revolution spread westward, these two figures loomed giganticly above our horizon and we never thought of the possibility of differences. We knew nothing of the history of the Russian Communist Party, and indeed, thought little, if anything at all of the Party. Party conceptions were not our strong points. We saw only leaders, Soviets and masses, and over all the great historical giants, Lenin and Trotsky.

This was quite natural to us. In those days we had had no revolutionary experiences. We understood nothing of the role of a revolutionary party. Theoretical training in revolutionary politics was in its extreme infancy. We were strong industrialists, steeped in the traditions of trade unionism. At the best our conceptions of revolution were limited to mass uprisings producing spontaneously the "right men to lead the masses to victory." We commemorated the Paris Commune as the first example of the working class becoming the ruling class. But we never analysed this experience to dis-

cover the fundamental reasons of its defeat. We explained it historically in relation to the development of class war in general, and held up for mass condemnation the terror of Thiers and the bourgeoisie, but never thought of the significance of the absence of a revolutionary party of the proletariat—the Communist Party.

It was the same with the Irish revolt of 1916. We saw the magnificence of Connolly's deed in marching his small battalions to the forefront of that event. We held up to ignomy the silent figure of British Labour, Mr. Arthur Henderson, the present secretary of the British Labour Party—in the Cabinet responsible for the shooting of the crippled Connolly propped in a chair in the courtyard of Dublin Castle. But we did not understand that Connolly was revealing in deeds the real role of the proletariat in a nation battling for its liberation from an Imperial power.

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These things we had yet to learn, when first the inspiring names of Lenin and Trotsky symbolised for us the generalship of the workers' revolution. True, Lenin impressed us differently from Trotsky—although it was difficult to think in those days of one apart from the other. Lenin certainly stood supreme, like a giant rock upon which all the storms of abuse, all the lies, all the gathering forces of international capitalism beat themselves in vain, while Trotsky seemed the embodiment of the drama of revolution, storming the heights, plunging to the depths, expressing all its moods. But we did not think of the Party which to-day is seen by its friends to be the most important instrument of the revolution, and by its enemies as the

hated power which they scheme to discredit and destroy.

We heard of differences such as that concerning the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, but treated it as an incident and without appreciating its full significance. We read of the differences on the trade union question, but they seemed very far away from the workers here. Even the great controversy in the Russian C.P. in 1923 only reached a small minority and fewer still understood all that was happening. Our own Party was too young and politically immature to grasp the controversy, while the masses in the main were unaware of the burning questions agitating the Russian Communist Party. Here and there the capitalist press seized on reports to propagate the story of leaders quarrelling and of the Party going to pieces. The Labour movement treated their campaign as part of the game of calumny and did not give much attention to the question. It was not until our Party began to win a decided influence in the Labour movement, challenging the middle class leadership, that disputes began to sharpen concerning the Russian Revolution. Then the disputes took the form of challenges to fundamental questions such as the dictatorship of the proletariat, Soviets versus parliamentary democracy, the role of force, and not the differences in the Russian C.P. These issues have not even yet come up for discussion here.

Hence it is, when, towards the end of 1924, Comrade Trotsky published a new preface to his book "1917," which transfers the issues raised in the controversies in the R.C.P. to the Communist International, that we get to grips with the fact that our heroes had profound differences.

Publishing houses in this country suddenly became interested in the defence of Comrade Trotsky against his critics. Messrs. Harrops published a "book for which Trotsky has been banished," unmindful of the fact that Comrade Trotsky is still a member of the Political Bureau of the R.C.P., a not unimportant leading organ of the C.P.

The Labour Publishing Co. catch on to a bourgeois dilletante suffering from hysterical hero worship to expose the ramifications of a great conspiracy to destroy the power, prestige and position of Comrade Trotsky. Nothing is too mean and contemptible for this individual to say of the leaders who differ from Comrade Trotsky. In "Since Lenin Died," this writer, Eastman, claims that every speech and every act of the present acknowledged leaders of the R.C.P. and the Communist International has been determined by personal ambition for power—unmindful of the fact that Comrade Trotsky predicted economic ruin and disaster if the policy of his opponents was pursued, while the reverse has been the case. The whole capitalist and Labour press has taken up the cry in defence of Trotsky against the R.C.P. and the Comintern.

It is through this kind of introduction that the workers' here learn that Trotsky had great differences with Lenin reaching back to the earliest days of the Russian Social-Democratic Party. It is with such an historical background as I have described that these differences are approached and we are called upon to study the "Lessons of October."

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Certainly our Party has some advantage in this matter. Young as it is, it has had five years of

willing effort to approach the problems and tasks of a Communist Party. To that extent it is more able to approach critically the issues that are raised, and deal with them politically, without any subversive desire to either reduce Leninism to a gramophone record or to deal some personal blow at Comrade Trotsky. Here let us remind friend and foe alike that Comrade Trotsky belongs to our Party and not theirs. We know his services on behalf of the revolution, and we know his abilities and his worth. Comrade Trotsky can easily dispense with the services of those who have so vigorously taken up his defence. We are confident that he much prefers the criticism, fierce as it may be, of his comrades in the Communist International, than the hysterical heroics of Eastman or the "personal" views of Postgate and Brailsford and others who lavish their sympathies upon him. Comrade Trotsky deserves a better fate. He at least discusses the problems of the proletarian revolution, a fact which his admirers outside our Party ignore. They are so absorbed in romanticism, in "his athletic figure," and "splendid head," his "charming voice," and "magnetic personality," his "wonderful language," and "thrilling exploits," his "marvellous talent," and "commanding presence," that the significance of the political issues he raises are twisted or obscured. Opposition to him becomes a personal vendetta. The Russian Communist Party becomes a glorified Tammany fracas, and the leaders of the Communist International a bunch of mediocrities riding roughshod over millions of ignoramuses. We can dismiss this rubbish exemplified in Brailsford and Postgate, and the other hacks of

bourgeois politics, as the worthless criterion of their political evaluations. Their concern is not to understand the realities of the struggle with Comrade Trotsky or to find the best ways and means to secure a victory for the working class. Their only concern is to discredit the Communist International by adding confusion to lies.

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The following pages will show that the fight between Comrade Trotsky and the other leaders of the R.C.P. and the C.I. is not a personal vendetta or a conspiracy, but a conflict on political issues of fundamental importance to the fate of the proletarian revolution. They will also show that the controversy is not a new one, but goes back to the earliest days of the Russian Social-Democratic Party, of which we and the rest of the working class movement of this country knew next to nothing when first we became familiar with the name of Comrade Trotsky.

One fact should be kept well in mind in approaching all these struggles, and in our attempts to understand them. Whatever the differences, they are differences in a party, and between comrades who had one goal before them—the social revolution. The issues are not the issues of reformism versus revolution. The fight is not a fight between reformists and revolutionaries. The issues are issues vital to the revolution. The fight is between revolutionaries as to the ways and means and the pathway of the revolution. If these features of the controversy are remembered, then the critics outside our Party in this country are placed at a discount. For no party outside our Party has set before it the aim of revolution, or is interested in the tasks of revolution, except to make them more

difficult. Their support and sympathy for Comrade Trotsky is not a response to his demand for a study of the "Lessons of October," in the interests of *our* "October," but the old bourgeois game of obscuring the real issues from the proletariat, attempting to divide the Communist International against itself in order that there shall be no "October."

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To frustrate these counter revolutionary attacks we reprint the famous preface of Comrade Trotsky to the first volume of his book "1917," which has been the means of launching the discussion into the ranks of the Communist International. We add the replies of Comrades Zinoviev, Stalin, Kamenev, Bucharin, Kuusinen, Sokolnikov and Krupskaya, along with the letter of Comrade Trotsky to the C.C. of the R.C.P. and the latter's reply thereto. We are confident that when the workers have read this book they will dismiss the rubbishy criticisms levelled at the Communist International and be amazed at the degree of self-criticism to which its sections submit their experiences. Imagine the Labour Party or the I.L.P. submitting their experiences and the actions of their leaders to such a scrutiny! Why, they have not yet reached the stage when they dare be frank with themselves. But here is a party which fearlessly submits its experience to self-scrutiny, and unhesitatingly acts on the basis of its conclusions, and becomes stronger in the process. It is a fact which mocks all the petty bourgeois critics that the sequel to each discussion and crisis has been in direct contradiction to their prophecies. Always the Party is "going to pieces," or going

“conservative,” etc. But always the Party comes out of the crisis stronger, more united and more Bolshevik than before. So at the moment when Trotsky is being “banished” has “fallen” etc., the R.C.P. having rejected his deviations and administered its reproof, gives him new leading tasks as a disciplined member of the greatest working class revolutionary party that history has known. The workers of this country will observe this contrast and not forget it.

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It is not our purpose in this introduction to take up the general discussion of Trotskyism. The chapters following Comrade Trotsky's “1917” Preface do this most effectively. It is our purpose to show that the issues are not peculiarly Russian issues, but have a direct bearing upon the working class struggle in Britain and in every other country.

We have no quarrel with Comrade Trotsky for asking us to study “October.” Our “October” is before us and not behind us. But we do take issue with him in his manner of introducing “October” to us. His appreciation of the events in Bulgaria and Germany are belated; there is sufficient printed matter in this country in the pages of the “International Press Correspondence,” and the English edition of the “Communist International” to show that the leadership of the Executive of the C.I. was right *in these crises*, and not a year or two late, in discovering what ought to have been done. Nor do we agree with his singling out of “October” as the supreme test of a party and its leadership. The struggle for Communism is not concentrated in some one crisis in the war of the classes, but in many crises *be-*

fore and *after* "October." The test of a Party and its leaders turns not only upon "October" but upon its capacity to keep the track towards Communism and surmount the repeated crises which inevitably beset a Party in a many years' war. Had we Comrade Trotsky's criterion, we should have to praise him for his action in October, 1917, and sack him for his failure in the German "October" of 1923. Let us study "October" by all means, but let us not forget that there is much to be done and many crises to face *before we reach our "October."* These crises, every one of which test the Party from top to bottom, are as much a part of the war for Communism as "October" itself. It is this fact which compels us to view this controversy with Comrade Trotsky not only in its immediate incidence, but historically also.

Comrade Trotsky in his "Lessons of October" concentrates attention on the problems of leadership in the crisis of "October," and deals with it in a personal sense more than a party sense, singles out leaders in order to condemn them, and completely ignores the Party which *he* claims, as well as we, is of fundamental importance to the success of the Revolution. He selects Comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev for special attention, and re-directs attention to their mistakes concerning the "October" insurrection, not in any analytical manner to show that these mistakes must not be repeated by other parties and other leaders of the International, but only to shake the confidence of the Communist International in its present leaders. This will not do for us. These errors have been admitted by Comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev. Only so recently as the Fourth Congress of the Com

munist International Comrade Zinoviev expounded what he described as the "greatest error of his life." (The Report of the Fourth Congress is printed in English and can be immediately read to confirm this.) Brailsford by the way, describes this degree of publicity, "a half-forgotten secret." Surely a novel method of keeping a secret. The one thing which Comrade Trotsky does not refer to is the fact, that the Communist Party proved itself to be greater than these comrades, just as it has proved throughout its existence greater than Comrade Trotsky, and even greater than Comrade Lenin. The Party corrected these comrades exactly as it corrected and continues to correct Comrade Trotsky—by its collective thinking and the operation of its collective will.

No one of us will under-estimate or seek to minimise the giant's part played by Comrade Lenin, but the distinguishing feature of Comrade Lenin's life and work is the fact that he recognised that without the Party he was a voice in the wilderness. It was the recognition of this fact which urged him to ever concentrate his efforts upon the Party, and act through the Party. Had Comrade Trotsky pursued a similar course instead of setting himself against the Party, his contribution to the study of October, would have been written with some regard for the history of the Party as a whole, would have had a real value for the International, and his own errors in relation thereto would have proved as valuable a cause of reflection as the errors of Comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev. His discussions would not have provoked on almost every occasion a Party crisis, because of his violation of the first principles of our Party, or played into the hand of the enemies of

the revolution by giving them opportunities to sling mud and lies at the Party. And here let us dispose of some of the lies put out by Eastman and the "Labour Magazine," and other periodicals. It is a lie to say that "Lenin's testament" was not read to the Russian Party Congress. It was read. It is a lie to say that the articles of Lenin were suppressed. They were not suppressed, even as Trotsky's writings have not been suppressed, but published in cheap editions. And it is sheer rubbish to talk of "Lenin offering Trotsky his job." Lenin had not the power to offer anybody his job. What is more to the point is the fact that no jobs held by Communists are their individual possession to offer to anybody, and Lenin would be the last man to ever suggest such an absurdity. All positions held by Communists belong to the Party and are determined by the Party. The attempt to treat the Communist Party from the same angle as the Labour Party, *i.e.*, as a happy hunting ground for careerists reveals at once ignorance as to the nature of the Communist Party. Disillusionment on this score has been the fate of more than one careerist who could not stand the pace, even of the British Party, young as it is.

But not for a moment do we subscribe to the idea that Trotsky is a careerist raising objections and criticisms for the sake of a job, although it is a fact that careerists in this country have seized hold of the same objections as he to discredit the Bolshevik policy.

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The very first struggle of the Leninists led by Lenin against Comrade Trotsky occurred on an organisational question in 1903, when the Bolshevik fraction was formed in the Russian Social-

Democratic Party. What then was the issue? It was the question—shall membership of our Party be governed by *subscribing* to the Communist programme, or by actively *working* in some organ of the Party to achieve the programme? This may appear to be only a difference in words. It is, but in words which convey a world of difference in actual life. If one only subscribes to a programme any old form of organisation will do—even such a loose form as that of the Labour Party, which at present leaves the doors open wide to every middle class careerist, who may even be an enemy of the working class. But if one must *work* for the programme, then organisational forms and principles must be related to the tasks set forth in the programme. Comrade Trotsky did not see at that time, just as the ex-Party critics who sneer at “nuclei” work and even some of our Party members do not see to-day, that this question is not simply a “mere organisational question,” but a vital political issue involving the proletarian revolution—deciding whether the Party shall be a purely propaganda body or a fighting and leading body.

It was not merely that the Menshevik formula permitted inactive elements to remain in the Party, but that these elements were bound to be in the main middle class elements: and indeed the Mensheviks made no secret of this being their purpose. Still more, if there were no obligation to work upon the membership at large, the onus fell upon a small group in the centre—the “leaders,” as opposed to the “led.” At once the masses were relegated to the position of blind sheep, the leaders exalted to the position of superior beings above the masses instead of with them, and the revolu-

tion made an affair of "historical development" instead of the business of our own time.

Imagine for a moment an army in a war, with its leading officers merely subscribing to the aims of the war, talking about the aims, inextricably mixed up with the rank and file of the army, dependent upon spontaneous movements and general good luck. Yet such is the only comparison one can make of a party of "subscribers" to revolution. And just as there could be no victory for an army run on the principle of "subscribers" so there can be no victory in the class war run on this principle. The class war is longer, more difficult, and more complex, demanding *organised work in every direction of proletarian activity*. And this brings us to the particular form which the organisation question has assumed in Britain to-day.

The basic, most widespread activity of the masses of the proletariat is in the factories, mills and mines, etc. of industry. It is from this that all mass actions arise. A Party claiming to be a party of the proletariat cannot hope to make good its claim, or win the majority behind it, or lead them to battle if it is not a part of this life of the masses in the process of exploitation and struggle. How can it be part of this struggle in any real sense at all if not organised in the midst of it? And if organised, what other possible form of organised action presents itself other than that of the factory group as the unit? There is none. All other directions but touch the fringe of the proletariat; and without the *majority* of the proletariat see in the Communist Party their leader, and find in it the organised leader of their struggles, there can be no proletarian revolution. Revolts? Yes, but

revolution, no. The alternative is parliamentarism, compromise, the continuation of capitalism.

The organisational question, which is a "mere" organisational question to pedantic intellectuals, an irritant to "left-wing" editors and a hard revolutionary task for the workers is thus seen to be a first class political question vital to the revolution. Comrade Trotsky discovered this and admitted he had been wrong and Lenin right. Our Party comrades and other sincere revolutionary workers will make this discovery too, and long before we reach the problems of *our* "October."

This first conflict on organisational issues finds its latest expression in the 1923 discussions in the Russian Communist Party. These discussions and the points raised by Trotsky are being made much of by the anti-Communist critics, Brailsford, Postgate, Eastman, and Co. They would make believe that the present leaders were and are opposed to Party democracy, when such was not and is not the case. Trotsky appears to them as the valiant I.L.P'er. and in some respects he certainly came very close to them—but it must be remembered, when this affinity is seen, that it was not only on the question of party democracy that Comrade Trotsky went off the rails. He slipped on two important questions tacked on to the problem of re-introducing measures of Party democracy.

It must be fairly obvious to anyone giving a moment's thought to the problems of civil war that in its military phases the ordinary methods of Party democracy are bound to be minimised and bureaucracy to grow. The R.C.P. had become bureaucratic in many respects. There is not a leader in the R.C.P. but what has been as outspoken as Comrade Trotsky about this develop-

ment, and it was clear that with the passing of the period of civil war and the introduction of the NEP there would naturally follow corresponding adjustments in the life of the Party. Everybody agreed, but it must also be clear that the relaxation of the Party cannot be permitted to weaken the Party by making it less homogeneous. Comrade Trotsky came forward with two amazing propositions—the youth as the “political barometer of the Party,” and the demand for what amounted to the right to organise fractions within the Party. In what consists Bolshevik Party democracy? In free and full discussion throughout the Party for the formulation of policy and the united action of every member of the Party from bottom to top in the carrying out of decisions. In general the election of higher district organs by the lower local organs of the Party. In the election of the C.C. by the Party Congress, composed of the representatives from the local organisations. To propose in an organisation based upon the proletariat, that the youth are the political barometers of the Party, is farcical. A much more important question, a much more important barometer for a proletarian party, especially after a period of civil war, is the question of the social composition of the Party. The NEP was letting loose the petty bourgeois elements again, and encouraging their development. Naturally many of them, realising the importance of membership in a ruling party, would welcome any modification in the Party which would facilitate their own advance. To single out the youth as the barometer, when the whole question is how to re-invigorate the Party with its primary forces—the proletariat—is to simply express a

feeling that there ought to be a change, and measure its requirements in terms of persons and not social classes, to regard the problem as a biological problem instead of a political problem—a typical I.L.P. defect. No wonder the petty bourgeoisie seized on it and saw in it the weakening of the Party. Youth—so appealing to the petty bourgeois romantics who think of “noble heads,” “broad shoulders,” “magnificent figures.” Of course, let youth come forward; how much better they are than 200,000 manual workers of the factories. The latter are “so lacking” in the “critical element,” (says Eastman).

But what becomes of the Party of the proletariat steeled in class warfare? This is not democratising the Party, or re-vitalising it. It is decomposing it to the advantage of other social classes. Comrade Trotsky's line in this, like that of the I.L.P. once again, is the line of the petty bourgeois. Can such face “October?”

Again on the question of fractions. Comrade Trotsky pleaded that whenever two or three or more are gathered together with common views diverging from the Party's view as a whole, they shall be permitted to organise as a group. What does this mean, or what can it mean, but the forming of a party within the Party, hampering the Party in the prosecution of its work? What need can there be for such a development when the Party discusses its line before action, and submits its experiences to self analysis? Such a development could only split the Party into fragments, and make it cease to be a Party of battle. This is quite possible in a party of talk, a Party which is a debating society, waiting for the revolution to come along—but certainly fatal to

a party of struggle. It proves also that Comrade Trotsky had reverted to his old line of "subscribers" to revolution as against workers for revolution. It is a policy to which our Party cannot subscribe, or it will never be fit to face *our* October. A party of fragments can never face "October."

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Again, the complaint is made that the proposals for democratising the R.C.P. found Comrade Trotsky in conflict with the Central Committee.

It is said Comrade Trotsky wanted democracy to come from below, and the Central Committee wanted to introduce it from above. For Comrade Trotsky or anyone else to speak of introducing the Resolutions of the Party Conference from "below," that is to begin with the locals spreading upwards, is to again forget the first principles of Bolshevik Party organisation, and thereby strengthen the political position of the opponents of the Party. Of what use is it to elect an Executive Committee if the decisions of the Party Congress can be effectively carried through without the election of such a committee? And this is what the proposals amounts to. It finds its echo amongst many industrialists in this country and also amongst reformist Labour leaders. The industrialists plead for more ballots, more referendums, impervious to the fact that they are simply transferring the Parliamentarism of the Labour Party to the industrial arena. The union leaders respond, and the "coming from below" turns out to be more often than not the means for preventing action than securing it.

The industrialists grasp at forms of procedure when the real issue is the organisation of the

struggle against reformism due to the fact that the trade unions have yet to be won to the class war line of working class interests. It is this control of working class organisation by leaders who are opposed to the class interests of the workers and refuse to lead the workers in the fight for those interests, that makes it necessary to organise the struggle "from below" in the unions and the Labour Party. But this cannot apply to a revolutionary party based upon the interests of the working class. To apply it to such a party is to utterly demoralise it by the introduction of the reformist forces it exists to destroy. To propose such a course at an important stage in the history of the revolution, when the Party was called upon to make a tremendous strategic move, to adjust itself to an entirely new milieu, as must be the case in the change from war Communism to the NEP, was to endanger the united action of the Party by separating the C.C. from the body of the Party. Obviously if the Party is to undertake an internal transformation at the moment it has to conduct a political manœuvre it must retain unity. Such unity could only be secured under the central direction of the Executive. The high-sounding phrase of "action from below" proves to be nothing more nor less than Menshevik phrase-mongering. It reminds us of the would-be English revolutionary leaders who hide their own weakness in accusing the masses of never being ready and declaim, "They who would be free must themselves strike the blow." Again—petty bourgeois deviation. How shall we face *our* October if these things take root in our Party?

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It is difficult to avoid the impression that Comrade Trotsky's divergencies from Leninism on these inner Party questions have a common foundation in his political theories. Throughout his line of argument indicated and his political career and in his "Lessons of October," there is a concentration on leaders and a lack of appreciation of the necessary nature of a Communist Party. All the time he seems to have before him a loose propaganda body, whose internal quarrels don't matter much to the course of events, and in which leaders are, therefore, free to slam leaders, and fractions the leadership or one another. Even when he speaks of discipline, it is the discipline imposed by a few leaders. He has not Lenin's idea of a Party which is a voluntary association of active leaders of the working class, maintaining contact with the workers at a thousand different points, and, therefore, bound together in the strictest voluntary and self-imposed discipline, in order to obtain the maximum co-ordination and effectiveness from this action on so many fronts at once.

The same impression is inescapable in the book published by Harrops—"Lenin, by Trotsky," which one reviewer most appropriately read as "Me and Lenin." Trotsky essentially shines as an individual and not as a collective worker. This individualism, revealed in his organisational deviation, is reinforced by a theory of revolution which victimises him, and makes him more often than not the weather-cock of the revolution. This theory has been named the Theory of Permanent Revolution.

Briefly it can be summed up as follows. In the revolutionary crises that arise in the

course of the revolutionary war of the classes, especially in the "Octobers" of the proletariat, the latter has no real allies. It is forced to forge its own weapons of warfare, to seize power, and to make temporary alliances with the peasants and petty bourgeoisie. But after the seizure of power, they have to face the enmity of the peasants and petty bourgeoisie, and fight them in order to bring in Socialism. The Russian workers are, therefore, dependent upon an alliance with the workers of the West in a world revolution. "The Proletarian Revolution of Russia must be supported with the State power of the workers of the West or perish."

With this as a guiding theory, it is easy to understand his opposition to Lenin on the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and his despair of the workers holding power in Russia without a revolution in Germany. He had no faith in the durability of the alliance with the peasantry, and had not worked out the means to be employed along the pathway to Socialism, especially in its class relations. Of course, he was not alone in this, and the precariousness of the first few months of the Soviet power, as well as the quickening revolutionary tempo in Europe affected most people. But the C.P. under the leadership of Lenin held to the alliance of workers and peasants as the foundation of the revolution.

It is easy to see with this theory of "Permanent Revolution" as the guide why Comrade Trotsky went to extremes with war Communism, and in the discussion on the role of the trade unions proposed to supplement the syndicalist demand for control of production by the unions with the military organ of the state, thus turning the

unions into productive organs of the State. This was a concentration on the proletariat against the peasantry who were chafing at war Communism. Lenin and the R.C.P. answered with the NEP, and the development of the unions not as State organs, but as "schools for Communism."

Again it provides the key to his theory of the "dictatorship of industry" in the economic crisis of 1923. Then he was in opposition to the policy of lowering industrial prices proposed to overcome the "scissors" crisis. He or his supporters (his group had divided their functions very laboriously) was opposed to the currency reform, or at least very critical towards it, on the grounds that inflation taxed the peasant in favour of industry.

The great flaw in the whole theory lies in its unrealistic approach to the problem of class relations, a problem of the utmost importance both before and after October in every country. It approaches the problem from the doctrinaire intellectual angle, and not in relation to the actual social relations developed in the process of struggle. Abstractly, the interests of the proletariat contrast with the interests of the petty bourgeoisie, and the peasantry who are essentially petty bourgeois in outlook. But obviously the role of these intermediary classes between the two primary classes, forces which fight out the battle of power, can only be supplementary to either side. In the era of imperialism they can play no independent role. They can neither introduce the new social foundation which must triumph over capitalism, or turn back the wheels of history to the stage of petty production. Considered politically, the task of the proletariat is to win the petty bourgeoisie from the influence of the bourgeoisie. Economically its

task is by the aid of its state power to direct the development of its economy into higher forms leading to Socialism. Before our "October" the British proletariat must at least "neutralise" the middle classes, and win over the colonial peasantry, while it directs its main attack upon the big bourgeoisie. After October, the task will be, not to direct a frontal attack upon the petty bourgeoisie, but to liquidate them through the development of Socialist economy. This is the Leninist policy in contradistinction to Trotskyism, which clearly leads by accentuating the differences between the proletariat and its allies to the driving of those allies into the hands of the bourgeoisie. This is the foundation of the undesired support which Comrade Trotsky has gathered around him, the reason why the NEP men look to him as their saviour. Not that Trotsky wants these supporters. He hates them with an intense hatred. This is a case of "good intentions paving the way to hell." At least they pave the way to the isolation of the proletariat, and the inevitable collapse of the revolution.

The political line of Comrade Trotsky in practice represents the influence of the petty bourgeoisie, just as it does in his conceptions of inner party relations. If pursued by our Party, it would be fatal to the possibility of our ever facing the tasks of "October." Instead of a united, centralised, democratic party, with its roots deep in the economic and social life of the proletariat, we would develop along the lines of the I.L.P.—and who would suggest that the I.L.P. with its loose organisation and confusing political currents can ever do more than talk about Socialism? To lead the struggle, the Party must

be in and of the struggle. To be a living fighting party, it must freely discuss its policy, but unitedly carry out its decisions under the leadership of its Central Committee. This kind of party has no room for factions, no need for factions, or for the cry "from below." It is only this kind of Party that can face "October."

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The class political line of Comrade Trotsky, if applied by our Party as the leader of the proletariat of Britain, would mean and could mean nothing else but the minimising of the role of the middle classes and the farmers, the neglect of the colossal role of the colonial peasantry as reserves for exploitation by British imperialism—or as allies for the British revolutionary workers—and the creation of dangerous illusions about their own strength amongst the proletariat. This would be fatal to the revolution by letting loose a big middle class upon the proletariat. The task of the proletariat to feed the population of this country demands not an antagonising of the remaining agricultural forces, but essentially a durable working alliance "before" and "after" October, while the large middle class elements in a so highly industrialised country are great reserves for the bourgeoisie which only a policy of "neutralisation" can hope to minimise. In general, Comrade Trotsky would agree, but in the specific and concrete application of his policy, with his predilection for frontal attacks upon the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry which appear revolutionary, but may according to the incidence of the historical situation, be just the reverse, he would repeatedly create crises through running off the track of Com-

munism, not only in our October, but before and after.

We cannot subscribe to Trotskyism on behalf of our Party. We want not a "subscribers" Party, but a "working" Party. We want not a loose federation of conflicting "fractions," but a democratically centralised and united Party of the proletariat. We want no policy "of leading from below," which sets the rank and file against its leaders, but a living homogeneous Party with its leaders closely united with the whole membership of our Party and the masses. We want no isolation of the proletariat, but a proletariat led by a Communist Party, marshalling around it with their support, the sum total of the social forces that can be directed against the main powers of capitalist imperialism. Without the continued active support of the peasantry and the colonial workers and peasants, and the neutralising of petty bourgeois forces, our October and the proletarian revolution is out of the question. The tactics and strategy for such a policy are not contained in the theory of "Permanent Revolution," but in the Leninism of the Communist International, as is proven in the following pages, and to which our Party subscribes.

J. T. MURPHY.





THE NEED TO STUDY "OCTOBER."

BY L. TROTSKY

Although the October Revolution has proved a success, it has still not obtained that consideration in our press which is its due. Not a single book has yet appeared which gives a general view of the October upheaval, which presents those points of policy and organisation that are of greatest moment. Furthermore, not even the rough materials—documents of utmost importance—which characterise in a direct way the particular aspects of preparation for that upheaval, or the upheaval as such—have yet been published. A good many many historico-revolutionary and party-historical documents and materials, bearing upon the pre-October period are being issued and a good deal of material which refers to the October period is being published, but "October" itself is getting very much less attention. The change having been accomplished, we decided, as it were, that we should not have to go through it again. It seemed to us that no direct and immediate advantage could accrue for the work of further construction that cannot possibly be deferred, from an attempt to study "October," the conditions of the immediate preparations for it; the accomplishment of it; and the consolidation of it during the first few weeks. Such an estimate, while semi-consciously made, is, however, profoundly erroneous; and, moreover, is limited by the element of nationalism. While it is true that we shall not have to repeat the October experience, it does not at all follow that there is

nothing to learn from that experience. We are a part of the International, and the proletariat in other lands has still yet to solve its "October" problem, and last year we have had quite enough evidence to convince us that even so far as the most advanced Communist parties of the West are concerned, our "October" experience has not only not assumed a bodily form, but that these parties are indeed not really acquainted with the actual facts of the case.

It can, of course, be said that old party differences are bound to be stirred up by the study of "October" and even by the publication of material relating to "October." Such a view of the matter is, however, not worth considering. The conflict of opinions in 1917 was no doubt of a very profound nature and not by any means accidental. But to turn them now, after the lapse of several years, into weapons of attack against those who were at that time mistaken would be a miserable affair. Still less permissible would it be to keep silence, on personal grounds, concerning matters of the October revolution which are of the greatest importance and which are international in character.

We met with two severe defeats in Bulgaria last year. In the first place, the party allowed a moment most propitious for revolutionary activity to escape for reasons of a doctrinaire-fatalistic nature. That moment was the rising of the peasants after the June upheaval of Tsankov. In the second place, when the party tried to make good the mistake by throwing itself in the September rising, it did so without any preparatory political activity and without the requisite organisation. The

Bulgarian revolution ought to have been an introduction to the German revolution. Unfortunately the ill-starred Bulgarian introduction led to still worse issues in Germany itself. There we have it demonstrated, in a classical manner, during the second part of last year, how possible it is to let a perfectly exceptional revolutionary situation of a universally historical character escape. Once more, however, neither last year's Bulgarian nor German experience has received a sufficiently full and concrete estimation. Last year the present author traced out a scheme in which the events in Germany would develop (see *East and West*, chapters *At the Turning Point* and *The Stage through which We are Passing*). All that took place since that day has wholly and entirely substantiated that scheme. No one else has attempted any other explanation. But schemes are not enough. What we need is a concrete presentation, packed full of real material, of last year's events in Germany which would show forth in all its concreteness the causes of the severest historical defeat.

It is difficult, however, to talk of analysing Bulgarian or German events, when we have not, up to the present, given a politically and tactically elaborated picture of the October revolution. We have not made clear to ourselves what we have accomplished, or in what way we have accomplished things. When October was over, it seemed, in the heat of things, that in Europe events would develop of their own accord and, at the same time, in so brief a period as to have no time for any theoretical mastering of the lessons of October. But it appears that the absence of a party which is able to direct a proletarian revolution, renders such a revolution

itself impossible. By an elemental rising the proletariat cannot seize power. All that an elemental rising of the workers could do in a so highly industrialised and highly civilised a country like Germany (in November, 1918), it seems, was to transfer power into the hands of the bourgeoisie. The propertied class is able to take up the power which has been knocked out of the hands of another propertied class by relying on its wealth, its culture, and all the many connections it has with the old state machine. But the proletariat has nothing to put in place of its party. It is only with the middle of 1921 that the period of giving the proper form to the construction of Communist parties really begins (the struggle for the masses, the united front, etc.). The tasks of "October" had moved away, and along with this the study of October also moved away. Last year has brought us again face to face with the problems of the proletarian revolution. The time has really arrived when all the documents should be collected, the materials published, and the study of them begun.

We are well aware, of course, that every nation, every class and even that every party learns, as a rule, from its own experience. That does not mean, however, that the experience of other countries, classes and parties is of very little importance. Had we not studied the great French Revolution, the revolution of '48, and the Paris Commune, we should never have brought about the October revolution, even if the experience of 1905 was ours. And that "national" experience of ours we have managed to get through in dependence on the results of previous revolutions and continuing their

historical course. After that the whole period of counter-revolution was taken up with the study of the lessons and results of 1905. Meanwhile, in regard to the triumphant revolution of 1917, we have done no such work—no, not a tenth part of it. We are not living, forsooth, in times of reaction, or in emigration. On the other hand no comparison is in any way possible between the powers and resources which we wield at the present time and those years of hardship. All that is needful is to place clearly and accurately the task of studying the October revolution both on a party scale as well as on the scale of the International as a whole. All that is needful is that the whole party, and particularly its rising generations, should work through step by step the experience of October which gave the supreme, the incontestable and the irrevocable justification of the past and opened wide the gates of the future. Last year's German lesson is not a serious reminder only, it is also a warning full of menace.

It can, of course, be argued that even the most earnest acquaintance with the march of the October revolution would not have been a guarantee that our German party would prove victorious. But so trite and essentially philistine an argumentation as this cannot carry us a single step forward. No one argues that the study of the October revolution is in itself sufficient for victory in other countries, but it is quite possible that circumstances might occur when everything that is necessary for a revolution is in existence, with the exception of a far-seeing and resolute party leadership based on a grasp of the laws and methods of revolution. Such, indeed, was the situation in Germany a year

ago. That may be repeated in other countries. But for the study of the laws and methods of a proletarian revolution there is, up to the present time, no more important and profound source than our October experience. Leaders of Communist parties in Europe who had not critically, and in all its concreteness, wormed through the history of the October overthrow, would be like a commander-in-chief who, preparing in the present circumstances for new wars, had not acquainted himself with the strategical, tactical and technical experience of the latest imperialist war. Such a commander-in-chief would inevitably doom his army to future defeat.

The fundamental instrument of a proletarian revolution is the party. On the grounds of our experience, even if for the length of one year—February, 1917 to February, 1918—and on the ground of the further experience in Finland, Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria, and Germany, the inevitability of a party crisis, while passing from preparatory revolutionary activity to a direct struggle for power, can be established almost in the character of an unalterable law. Speaking generally, crises within the Party arise either as an approach to a revolutionary change or as an outcome of it, whenever there is a serious turn in the party's direction. Obviously, this must be so, for every period of a party's development has special features of its own, and makes a demand for definite ways and methods of action. A change of tactics means, to a greater or lesser degree, a break with such ways and methods. Here then is found the direct and proximate root of friction and crises which occur within the party.

“It fairly frequently happens,” wrote Lenin, in July, 1917, “that when a sharp turn occurs in the course of history, even the most advanced parties find it difficult, for some time at least, to adapt themselves to the new situation. They repeat those watchwords which were true yesterday, but which are quite void of meaning to-day, which have ‘suddenly’ lost their meaning to the degree in which the sharp turn taken by history was itself ‘sudden.’ ”*

Here then it is where danger is likely to arise. Should the turning taken be too sharp or too sudden, and should the preceding period have gathered in too many elements of inertia and conservatism in the bodies which direct the party, then the party will show itself unable to fulfil its leadership at the moment of greatest responsibility for which it was preparing itself during a stretch of years or of decades. The crisis consumes the party, and the movement as such passes on—to defeat.

Then there is the pressure of other political forces upon the revolutionary party. In every particular period of its development the party works out those methods which are necessary to counteract and resist them. When a change of tactics takes place and when the consequent regrouping and friction within the party follow, there occurs an attendant decline in the party’s power of resistance. Thus there is always the possibility that the internal groupings of the party, which have grown up on account of the necessity of a change

* Vide Works, vol. xiv., section 2, page 12.

of tactics, may pass far beyond their original basis and serve as a support of various class tendencies. In plainer words—the party which does not keep step with the historical tasks of its own class, becomes, or runs the risk of becoming, an indirect tool in the hands of other classes.

If what was said is true in relation to every serious change of tactics, then it is all the more true in respect of great strategical changes. By tactics of policy we undersand, using the analogy of military acts, the art of conducting particular operations. By strategy, we understand the art of conquest, *i.e.*, the seizing of power. As a rule we drew no such distinction prior to the war in the period of the Second International, confining ourselves only to the conception of social-democratic tactics. This was by no means an haphazard procedure. Social-democracy held to parliamentary, trade union, municipal, co-operative and such like tactics. But the question of uniting every power and resource—every kind of force—in order to sustain a victory over the enemy was really not raised in the period of the Second International since the struggle for power was not raised as a practical problem. It was the 1905 revolution which, after a long interval, raised, for the first time, the fundamental or the strategical questions of a proletarian struggle. And in doing so it procured immense advantages for the Russian revolutionary Social-Democrats, *i.e.*, the Bolsheviks. The great period of revolutionary strategy began in 1917, first in Russia, and later on throughout the whole of Europe. Strategy does not, however, abolish tactics : problems of trade unionism, of parliamen-

tary action, etc., do not disappear from our field of vision, but now receive a new significance, as the subsidiary methods of a combined struggle for power. Tactics are subordinated to strategy.

If tactical changes usually lead to friction within the party, how much more severe and profound must be the friction produced by a change of strategy. And the acutest change occurs when the proletarian party moves away from the stage of preparation, of propaganda, of organisation, and of agitation to the direct struggle for power, to an armed rising against the bourgeoisie. Everything in the party which is indecisive, sceptical, conciliatory, capitulatory, menshevist, objects to the rising, and seeks theoretical formulas for its opposition and finds them at hand among yesterday's opponent—opportunists. This fact we shall have to face more than once.

The final examination and selection of the party's weapon prior to the decisive struggle, took place during the period of February to October, on the basis of the widest possible agitational and organisational work among the masses. In and after October, that weapon was tested in a gigantic historical act. To commence now, several years after October, to estimate various points of view in regard to revolution in general and the Russian revolution in particular, and at the same time to evade the experience of 1917, would signify a pursuit of barren scholasticism, and in no sense a Marxian analysis of policy. This would be like carrying on a discussion on the advantages of

various systems of swimming, while stubbornly refusing to look at the river where these systems are followed by the bathers. No better verification of ideas on revolution exists than the application of them at the very time of the revolution, just as a system of swimming is best of all verified when the swimmer jumps into the water.

THE DEMOCRATIC DICTATORSHIP OF THE
PROLETARIAT AND PEASANTRY : FEBRUARY
AND OCTOBER

The occurrence and issues of the October revolution struck a relentless blow at the scholastic parody of Marxism, very widespread in Russian Social-Democratic quarters, which began, to a certain extent with the "Emancipation of Labour" group, and which found its most finished expression among the Mensheviks. The substance of this pseudo-Marxism lay in this. It changed Marx's conditional and limited conception, namely, that "the foremost countries show to those which are less advanced the form their future development is to take," into an absolute super-historical law, as Marx would say, and sought to establish upon the basis of that law the tactics of the party of the working class. Under such circumstances, no mention could, of course, be made of any struggle of the Russian proletariat for power so long as the most economically developed countries had not created the necessary "precedent." That every less advanced country finds *certain* lines of its future in the history of the most advanced countries,

is, of course, no longer a matter of debate, but to speak of any repetition in its entirety is to talk at random. On the contrary, the more capitalist economy acquired a world character, the more unique became the position of the less advanced countries in which the less advanced elements were associated with the latest achievements of capitalist development. In his preface to "The Peasants' War," Engels wrote, "at a certain point *which does not necessarily arrive simultaneously everywhere, nor to the same degree of development*, the bourgeoisie begins to observe, that its proletarian companion becomes of stature taller than itself." By the march of historical development, the Russian bourgeoisie had to make that observation earlier and more completely than all the others. It was even before 1905 that Lenin characterised the uniqueness of the Russian revolution by the formula of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. That formula, as later events showed, can only be regarded as meaning a stage in the direction of the Socialist dictatorship of the proletariat in reliance upon the peasantry. Lenin's presentation of the problem, revolutionary and dynamic through and through, was wholly and entirely opposed to the Menshevist scheme, according to which Russia could only pretend to a repetition of the history of the leading nations, having the bourgeoisie in power and social democracy in opposition. In some circles of our party, however, that formula of Lenin was accented not on the *dictatorship* of the proletariat and peasants, but on its *democratic*, as opposed to its Socialist, character. So once more, this meant that in Russia, a country which was not so advanced as

other countries, only a democratic revolution was conceivable. The Socialist revolution was to begin in the West. We could only take the path of Socialism after England, France and Germany. But such a way of dealing with the question inevitably led to Menshevism. This became perfectly clear in 1917 when the problems of the revolution were not a matter of prognosis, but of action.

To take up, amidst the actual conditions of the revolution, the position of democracy, pushed to its logical conclusion, in opposition to Socialism, as "being premature" would have meant, politically speaking, to move away from the proletarian to the petty bourgeois position, to pass over to the left flank of a national revolution.

The February Revolution taken by itself was a bourgeois revolution. But as a bourgeois revolution it was rather belated and void of any permanence. Torn asunder by contradictions, which straightaway found their expression in a dualist power, it had either to pass into an immediate step to a proletarian revolution—that is what happened—or, under some sort of a bourgeois-oligarchic regime throw Russia back into a semi-colonial existence. Consequently, the period which succeeded the February revolution can be regarded in a double sense, either as a period of consolidatory development, or consummation of the "democratic" revolution, or, as a period of preparation for the proletarian revolution. The first view was taken not only by the Mensheviks and S.R.'s, but by a certain section of the leading members of our own

party. With this difference, that the latter really tried to push the democratic revolution as far as possible left-ward. But the method was essentially one and the same—"pressure" on the bourgeoisie in power, yet seeing to it that such a pressure should not go beyond the bounds of a bourgeois democratic regime. If that policy had prevailed, the development of the revolution would have moved away from our party and all that we should in the long run have secured would have been a rising of the masses of workers and peasants without any party guidance. In other words, there would have been a repetition of the July days on a colossal scale, *i.e.*, not as an episode but as a catastrophe.

It is perfectly obvious, that the immediate result of such a catastrophe would have been the destruction of the party. That shows how deep the differences of opinion were.

The influence of the Mensheviks and S.R.'s during the first period of the revolution was not, of course, a matter of chance. It reflected an abundance of petty bourgeois masses—peasants in the main—among the people, and the immaturity of the revolution itself. And it was this very immaturity of the revolution, amid the quite peculiar conditions which the war brought about, which placed into the hands of the petty bourgeois revolutionaries the leadership, or at least, the semblance of leadership which came to this, that they defended the historical rights of the bourgeoisie to power. That, however, in no sense implies that the Russian revolution could have taken no other course than that it took from February to October, 1917.

The course which was taken was due not only to class relations, but to the temporary circumstances caused by the war. In virtue of the war, the peasants were organised and armed in the form of a many-millioned army. Before the proletariat succeeded to organise itself under its own banner so as to carry the village masses along with it, the petty bourgeois revolutionaries found a natural mainstay in the masses of the peasants whom the war had made rebellious. By the weight of this many-millioned army, upon which, indeed, everything was in direct dependence, the petty bourgeois revolutionaries exerted pressure on the proletariat and carried them along in the first instance. That on the very same class principles the march of the revolution could have been other than it was, is best of all demonstrated by the events which preceded the war. In July, 1914, Petrograd was shaken by revolutionary strikes. Things had gone so far as to cause open street conflicts. The absolute leadership of that movement belonged to the underground organisation, and to the legal press of our party. Bolshevism increased its influence in a direct struggle against adjustments and the petty bourgeois parties in general. The further advance of the movement would have meant first of all an increase of the Bolshevik party. The Soviets of the workers' deputies in 1914—if things had gone so far as Soviets—would probably have been Bolshevik in the first days. The arousing of the village would have gone on under the direct and indirect leadership of the town Soviets which were guided by the Bolsheviks. That does not mean certainly that the S.R.'s would have straight-away disappeared from the village. No. In all probability the first stage of the peasant revolution

would have proceeded under the nationalist banner. But the development of events, to which we have referred, would have forced the nationalists themselves to push forward their left-wing and to seek a point of contact with the Bolshevik Soviets of the towns. The immediate issue of the rising would in such a case also have depended, of course, in the first instance, on the attitude and conduct of the army which was bound up with the peasants. It is impossible, and there is no need to guess from an anecdote, whether the movement of 1914-1915 would have proved victorious if the war had not broken out and introduced a new gigantic link into the chain of development. There is, however, a good deal which goes to prove that had a triumphant revolution unfolded along the path which began with the events of July, 1914, then the overthrow of Tsarism would probably have meant that the revolutionary worker Soviets would have had immediate access to power and that by the agency of the left nationalists they would have drawn (in the first days!) the masses of the peasants within their own orbit.

The revolutionary movement which had been developing was interrupted by the war—first retarding and afterwards giving extraordinary acceleration to it. A perfectly exceptional basis—not only social, but also organisational—was created by the war, for the petty bourgeois parties, by means of the many-millioned army. For in regard to the peasantry, the peculiarity is just this, that with all their multitudinousness, it is difficult to form them into an organised base. The petty bourgeois parties who had taken their stand on the shoulders of a prepared organisation, that is the

army, overawed the proletariat and beclouded them with the idea of "defencism." That is why Lenin at once made a fierce pronouncement against the old rallying cry of "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants," which under the new circumstances, had come to mean the conversion of the Bolshevik party into a left flank of the defencist bloc. The chief concern which Lenin had before him was how to bring the proletarian vanguard from the quagmire of "defencism" into a clear place. For it was only on that condition that the proletariat could become—in the next stage—the nucleus around which the rural working masses were to group. But in that case what was to become of the democratic revolution, or, more correctly, of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants? Lenin showed no mercy in rebutting those "old Bolsheviks," "who," he said, "on more than one occasion played a sad part in the history of our party, repeatedly babbling the formula they *learned*, instead of *studying* the unique character of new and living reality." "The need is to keep in step not with old formulas, but with new reality." "Will Comrade Kamenev's old Bolshevik formula that 'the bourgeois democratic revolution is not over' take hold of this reality?" "No," he answers, "the formula has grown old. It is of no use whatever. It is dead. The effort to resurrect it will be futile."*

True, Lenin occasionally remarked that the Soviets of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies during the first period of the February

* Vide N. Lenin's Collected Works, vol. xiv., part 1, pp. 28 to 33.

revolution *to a certain degree* did embody the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants. That is true in so far as the Soviets generally embodied power. But as Lenin on more than one occasion explained, the Soviets of the February days possessed only semi-power. They supported the power of the bourgeoisie bringing only a semi-oppositional "pressure" to bear upon it. And it was just this indeterminate state which did not allow them to get out of the democratic coalition of workers, peasants and soldiers. As far as forms of government are concerned, that coalition tended to dictatorship, to the measure in which it did not rely on proper governmental relatives, but upon armed force and direct revolutionary judgment. However, it fell short of dictatorship by several heads. It was precisely in this democratic amorphism of a semi-power coalition of workers, peasants and soldiers, that the instability of the assenting Soviets consisted. They had either entirely to cease to be, or they had to take real power into their hands. But they could only take power not in the capacity of a democratic coalition of workers and peasants, representative of various parties, but in the capacity of a dictatorship of the proletariat directed by a single party, a proletarian dictatorship which, beginning with the semi-proletarian sections of the peasants, would carry along with it the masses of the peasants. In other words, the democratic worker-peasants could only be designated as an immature form of power which had not advanced to real power, as a tendency rather than as a fact. Any further advance to power could only have been made by breaking the democratic covering, by confronting the majority of the peasants with the necessity of following the

workers by giving to the proletariat the opportunity to realise class dictatorship, and thereby laying down as an immediate task—along with a full and ruthlessly radical democratisation of social relationship—a purely Socialist invasion of the workers' government into the sphere of capitalist property rights. Those who, under such circumstances, continued to stand by the formula of "democratic dictatorship," as a matter of fact refused power and led the revolution into a blind alley.

The main point of contention around which all else turned was the question whether to fight or not to fight for power; to take power or not to take power. This in itself shows that we were faced not with an episodic divergence of opinions, but with the tendencies which had to do exclusively with a matter of principle. One of these tendencies, the principal one, was proletarian, and led to the path of world revolution, the other was "democratic," *i.e.*, petty bourgeois and led in the final sequence to the subordination of proletarian policy to the requirements of reformist bourgeois society. These two tendencies came into hostile collision throughout the whole of 1917, whenever any essential question was dealt with. It is the revolutionary period, indeed—*i.e.*, the time when the party's accumulated capital is put into immediate circulation—which could not avoid opening and really disclosing divergence of such a character. These two tendencies will more than once manifest themselves to a greater or lesser degree, with this or that kind of modification, in the revolutionary period of all countries. If by Bolshevism—when we look at its salient and essential part—is to be understood, such a training, such a tempering, such

an organising of the proletarian vanguard so as to become able with weapon in hand to seize power; and, if by social democracy is to be understood reformist opposition activity within the limits of bourgeois society, and an adaptation to its lawfulness, *i.e.*, the actual training of the masses to recognise in their mind and heart the inviolability of the bourgeois state, then it is perfectly clear that even within the Communist party, which does not come out of the oven of history fully baked at once, the struggle between Social-Democratic tendencies and Bolshevism is bound to become most glaringly, openly and unmaskedly revealed at a time of immediate revolution when the question of power becomes the point at issue.

* * * *

The task of the conquest of power was put before the party only after the arrival of Lenin in Petrograd, *i.e.*, on the fourth day of April. But even from that moment the line which the party took was no mean one, and undivided which no one could oppose. In spite of the decision of the conference in April, 1917, the opposition to the revolutionary course—hidden or open—pervades the entire period of preparation.

The study of the process of divergent views between February and the consolidation of the October revolution, is not only of extraordinary interest as regards theory, but it has an immeasurably practical significance.

The discord which showed itself at the Second Congress in 1903, Lenin described in 1910 as an

“anticipation” *i.e.*, a delight to come. It is very important to search through these divergences of view, beginning with the sources of their origin, *i.e.*, in 1903, or even earlier than that, for example with “economism.” But such a study acquires a meaning only when it is carried on to finality, and when it covers that period in which the differences were put to the test, *i.e.*, the October period.

Within the limits of the space at our disposal, we cannot, of course, undertake an exhaustive investigation of every stage of the struggle. But we feel that it is necessary, even in part, to fill in that deplorable blank which exists in our literature in respect of the most important period in the development of our party.

The question of power, as we said, lies at the heart of the differences. This is as a rule, the touchstone whereby the character of revolutionary parties (and not only of revolutionary) is determined. In close dependence on the question of power there is the question of the war which arises and is decided at this period. We shall consider both problems according to the main chronological landmarks: the position of the party and of the party's press in the first period subsequent to the overthrow of Tsarism, before the arrival of Lenin; the struggle around the theses of Lenin; the April conference; the results of the July days; Kornilovism; the Democratic conference and the pre-Parliaments; the problem of an armed rising and the seizure of power (September-October), the question of a “homogenous” Socialist Government.

Such a study of the differences will, we hope, enable us to arrive at conclusions which might be of importance even to other parties of the Communist International.

THE FIGHT WITH THE WAR AND DEFENCISM

The overthrow of Tsardom in February, 1917, undoubtedly meant a stupendous leap forward. But to take February within the limits of February—*i.e.*, to take it not as a step to October—it would merely mean that Russia was approximating to the type, shall we say, of bourgeois republican France. The petty bourgeois revolutionary parties, as is their wont accepted the revolution of February neither as a bourgeois one, nor as a step towards a Socialist revolution, but as something which in itself had some “democratic” value. On this notion they built up an ideology of revolutionary defencism. They did not defend the domination of any class as such, but “revolution” and “democracy.” But even in our own party the revolutionary thrust of February led to an extraordinary confusion of political perspective. As a matter of fact, in March *Pravda* stood a great deal nearer to the position of revolutionary defencism, than to the position which Lenin took.

“When one army faces another army”—we read in one of the editorial articles—“the most absurd policy would be for one of them to lay down arms and go home.” Such a policy would not be a policy of peace, but a policy of enslavement, a policy

which a free people would repudiate with indignation. No, it will hold firmly to its position, meeting bullet with bullet, and shell with shell. That is inevitable. We must not allow any disorganisation of the fighting forces of the revolution.”* What is here dealt with is not a class, dominating or oppressed, but a “free people”; not classes fighting for power, but a free people “holding to its post.” Ideas and formula are throughout defencist. Further on in the same article we read, “our motto is not the disorganisation of the revolutionary army and of the army which is becoming revolutionary, nor it is the empty cry ‘down with the war!’ Our motto is the bringing of pressure (!) to bear on the Provisional Government for the purpose of forcing it openly, in the face of the world’s democracy (!) to make, without fail, an attempt (!) to incline (!) all the countries at war to commence immediate negotiations for the cessation of hostilities. Until then everyone (!) remains at his fighting post (!)” The programme of pressure on the imperialist government so as to “incline” it to a pious course of action was the Kautsky-Ledebour programme of Germany, the Jean Longuet programme of France, and the MacDonald programme of England, but in no way the programme of Bolshevism. The article concludes not only with a “warm welcome” of the celebrated manifesto of the Petrograd Soviet, “To all the nations of the world” (a manifesto which is pervaded through and through with the spirit of revolutionary defencism) but it refers to the solidarity of the editorial board with the obviously defencist resolutions of two

* *Pravda*, No. 10, March 18th, 1917. “No Secret Diplomacy.”

Petrograd meetings. Suffice it to say that one of these resolutions states: "If the democracies of Germany and Austria will not hear our voice (*i.e.*, the voice of the Provisional Government and of the conciliationist Soviet—L.T.) then we shall defend our country to the last drop of blood."

The article which we have quoted is not an exception. On the contrary, it quite accurately expresses the position of *Pravda* prior to Lenin's return to Russia. Thus, in the next number of the paper, in the article "concerning the war" although "the manifesto to all peoples," is to some extent criticised, yet these words occur: "It is impossible not to welcome yesterday's proclamation of the Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of Petrograd to the nations of the whole world, summoning them to force their governments to bring the slaughter to an end.* To the question, 'Where should a way out of the war be sought?' The following answer is given: "The way out, is the path of pressure on the Provisional Government with the demand that it should announce its willingness to begin immediate negotiations for peace."†

It is quite easy to give not a few of such like quotations of a hiddenly—defencist, of a masked-conciliatory nature. But at that very time, nay, a week earlier Lenin himself, who had not yet managed to tear himself out from his cage in Zurich, smashed in his "Letters from Afar" (the majority of which never reached *Pravda*) suggestions of any concession to defencism and coalition. Catching a

* *Pravda*, No. 9, March 5th, 1917.

† *Pravda*, No. 10, March 16th, 1917.

glimpse of revolutionary events from the distorted mirror of the capitalist press, he wrote on March 8th (21): "Under no circumstances must the fact be hidden from oneself or from the people that this government desires to continue the imperialist war, that it is an agent of British capitalism, that it wants to restore the monarchy and strengthen the dominion of landowners and capitalists." And on March 12th (25) he wrote: "To address a proposal for the conclusion of a democratic peace to this government is just the same as to preach a sermon on virtue to people who maintain houses of ill-fame."* At the time when *Pravda* was calling for "pressure" on the Provisional Government in order to compel it to make a stand for peace "in the face of the democracy of the world," Lenin was writing: "An appeal to the Guchkov-Miliukov Government with a proposal quickly to conclude an honourable, democratic, neighbourly peace is just the same as an appeal made by a kindly village "batzushka"† to landowners and dealers to live "godly" lives, to love one's neighbours, and to offer the right cheek when one smites on the left cheek."‡

On April 4th, the day after his arrival at Petrograd, Lenin took a definite stand against the position of *Pravda* on the question of war and peace. He wrote: "No support whatever to the Provisional Government, an exposure of the entire deception of all its promises, particularly in regard to its renunciation of annexations. Disclosure in place of

* "Protelarskaya Revolutsia," No. 7 (30), p. 299 and p. 243.

† Batzushka—dear little holy father; that is, a parson.

‡ Proletarskaya Revolutsia, pp. 224-45.

an inadmissible, illusion-sowing "demand," in order that *this* government, the government of capitalists *should cease* to be imperialist."* It is needless to point out that the proclamation of the conciliators of March 14th, which evaded such congratulatory expressions on the part of *Pravda*, Lenin characterised as nothing else than "splendid" and "confused." It is the height of hypocrisy to appeal to other nations to break with their banners and at the same moment to form a coalition government with the banners of one's own country. "The Centre," says Lenin, in a scheme for a platform, "is all the time vowing and swearing, that they are Marxists, Internationalists, that they are for peace, for every kind of "pressure" on the government, for every kind of "demand" to their government that it should "declare the people's will for peace.†

But it may be replied, on a first glance, does a revolutionary party refuse "pressure" on the bourgeoisie and on its government? Certainly not. Pressure on a bourgeois government is the path of reform. A Marxist revolutionary party does not reject reforms. But the path of reform is of use in regard to secondary and not to essential matters. You cannot by reforms obtain power. You cannot by bringing "pressure" to bear force the bourgeoisie to alter its policy on a matter with which its entire fate is intertwined. The war created a revolutionary situation by the very fact that it left no room for any reformist "pressure." All that could be done was to go the whole way with the bourgeoisie,

* Lenin's Works, vol. xiv., part 1, page 18.

† Lenin's Works, vol. xiv., part 1, page 52.

or to raise the masses against it so as to tear the power from out of its hands. In the first case the bourgeoisie would have given some kind of sop in regard to home policy, on condition that the foreign policy of imperialism obtained unqualified support. It was on this very account that Socialist reformism transformed itself into Socialist imperialism with the commencement of the war. It was on this very account that the really revolutionary elements were forced to begin to create a new International.

The point of view of *Pravda* is not proletarian revolutionary, but democratic defencist, although it is defencist by a half. We have brought Tsarism down. We shall bring pressure to bear on the democratic power. The latter must propose peace to the peoples of the world. If the democracy of Germany is not able to bring due pressure to bear on its government, then we shall defend our "homeland" to the last drop of blood. The bringing about of peace was not made an independent task of the working class, which was called upon to accomplish it over the head of the bourgeois Provisional Government. This was not done because the conquest of power by the proletariat was not made a practical revolutionary task. For the simple reason that the one cannot be separated from the other.

THE APRIL CONFERENCE

The speech which Lenin made at the railway station in Finland, about the Socialist character of the Russian revolution fell like a bomb on many party leaders. A polemic contest between Lenin and the adherents of "accomplishing a democratic revolution" began from the very first day.

The armed April demonstration which had as its cry, "Down with the Provisional Government," became the object of an acute conflict. That episode gave ground to some representatives of the right wing to charge Lenin with Blanquism: the overthrow of the Provisional Government which was at the time upheld by the Soviet majority, could only be brought about by having the majority of the workers on our side. From a formal point of view, the accusation might not have lacked conclusiveness, but as a matter of fact, there was not a shadow of Blanquism in Lenin's April policy. The whole question as far as he was concerned lay just in this, how far did the Soviets continue to reflect the real feeling of the masses, and was not the party deceiving itself by taking up a position in accordance with the Soviet majority. The April demonstration which went "more left" than was expected, was a reconnoitring sally for proving the feeling of the masses and the relation between them and the Soviet majority. The reconnoitre led to the conclusion that a long work of preparation was necessary. We see how roughly Lenin handled the Kronstaders who took the risk and declared against recognition of the Provisional Government. Those who opposed a struggle for power took a totally different course of action. At the party conference in April, Comrade Kamenev complained thus: "In *Pravda*, No. 19, a resolution was first proposed by comrades (evidently Lenin is meant—L.T.) for the overthrow of the Provisional Government, and it was printed before the last crisis, but later on this watchword was set aside as tending to disorganisation, as being adventurous. That means that our comrades have learnt a lesson in the course of the crisis. The resolution which

is now proposed (*i.e.*, the resolution proposed by Lenin—L.T.) repeats the mistake." That way of putting the case is host highly significant. Lenin having made the reconnoitre, put down the cry of an immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government, but he put it aside only for a week or a month in dependence of the rapidity with which the revolt of the masses against the conciliationists would grow. The opposing side, however, looked upon the cry itself as a blunder. In Lenin's temporary retreat there was not a hint as to a change of line. He proceeded not on the idea that the democratic revolution was still unfinished, but exclusively on the idea that the masses for the present were still unable to overthrow the Provisional Government, and that, therefore, everything had to be done to make the working class capable to overthrow the Provisional Government on the following day.

The whole of the party's April conference was devoted to the fundamental question whether we were moving forward to the seizure of power in the name of a Socialist revolution or whether we were helping (somebody) to finish the democratic revolution. It is a regrettable fact that we are still without a printed report of the April Conference, and scarcely any congress in our party's history can compare with the April, 1917, Conference, in regard to its exceptional and immediate bearing on the destiny of the revolution.

Lenin took up the following position, an irreconcilable struggle against defencism and defencists; the getting hold of the majority in the Soviets; the overthrow of the Provisional Government; the

seizure of power through the Soviets; a revolutionary peace policy, and a programme of a Socialist revolution within the country and an international revolution outside the country. In counterpoise to this, as we know, the opposition took the standpoint of finishing the democratic revolution by bringing pressure to bear on the Provisional Government, while the Soviets remained the organs of "control" over the bourgeois power. From this proceeds quite another, an incomparably more conciliatory, attitude to defencism.

One who was opposed to Lenin's position expressed himself in this way at the April Conference: "We speak of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies as the organising centres of our strength and power. That designation itself shows that they constitute a bloc of petty bourgeois and proletarian forces, before whom the unfinished tasks of bourgeois democracy still stand. Had the bourgeois democratic revolution been accomplished, such a bloc could not have existed, the proletariat would have waged a revolutionary war against the bloc. We, however, look upon these Soviets as centres for the organisation of power. That means that the bourgeois revolution is still uncompleted, is not yet outlived, and I believe that we ought all to recognise the fact that if this revolution had been fully accomplished, the power would really have passed into the hands of the proletariat." (Comrade Kamenev's speech.)

The hopeless schematism of this argument is perfectly clear. Why, the very point of the case is that there can never be a "full accomplishment of this revolution" without a change of the bearers

of power. What the speech just quoted ignores is the cardinal class element of the revolution. The tasks of the party are not inferred from the real grouping of class forces, but from a formal definition of the revolution as bourgeois or as bourgeois democratic. We must form a bloc with the petty bourgeoisie and exercise control over the bourgeois power up to the time when the bourgeois revolution will have been brought to an end. Obviously this is a Menshevik scheme. Limiting, in a doctrinaire fashion, the tasks of the revolution by its designation (a "bourgeois" revolution) it was impossible to do ought else but to arrive at a policy of control over the Provisional Government, and to make a demand that the Provisional Government should put forth a peace programme without any annexations, etc. By finishing the democratic revolution was understood a number of reforms by means of the Constituent Assembly, while the Bolshevik party has assigned to it the role of the left wing in the Constituent Assembly. The cry, "All Power to the Soviets" was quite lost in such a conception of the real subject. The best, most consecutive, most reflective exponent of the case at the April Conference was the late lamented Nogin, who also belonged to the opposition. "The most important functions of the Soviets will fall away in the process of development. A whole host of administrative functions will be transferred to urban, rural and other institutions. If we examine the further development of the structure of the State we cannot deny that the Constituent Assembly will be convoked, and Parliament after that . . . The issue, therefore, is this, that the most important functions of the Soviet will by degrees die off. That, however, does not mean that the Soviets will

ignominiously end their existence. It only means that they will hand over their functions. While these Soviets exist, the Republic-Commune will not come into being amongst us."

Finally, a third opponent approached the subject from the point of view that Russia was not ready for Socialism. "If we put forth the cry of a proletarian revolution, can we reckon on the support of the masses? Russia is the most petty bourgeois country of Europe. It is impossible to count upon the sympathy of the masses in a Socialist revolution. Hence, in so far as the party will take up the standpoint of a Socialist revolution, so far will it become a propagandist circle. The push to a Socialist revolution must be given from the West." Further, "Where will the sun of the Socialist revolution rise? Looking at all the circumstances, at the common level of life, I think that it is not we who will initiate the Socialist revolution. Neither the forces nor the objective conditions for such a task exist amongst us. To the West, however, the problem means almost nothing more than the overthrow of the Tsardom meant to us."

Not all the opponents of Lenin's point of view came to the conclusion of Nogin at the April Conference. But the logic of events forced them all to accept these conclusions a few months later, just before October. The question within our party stood ultimately thus: Either to assume the leadership of the proletarian revolution, or to become the opposition in a bourgeois parliament. It is perfectly obvious that the second position was essentially the Menshevist position, or to speak more correctly, the position which the Mensheviks were

obliged to discharge after the February revolution. As a matter of fact, in the course of many years, the Menshevist woodpeckers pecked out the following, that the coming revolution must be bourgeois in character, that the government of the bourgeois revolution must only perform bourgeois tasks, that social-democracy cannot take upon itself the tasks of bourgeois democracy, and while "pushing the bourgeoisie to the left" must remain in the character of an opposition. Martynov developed the theme with a particularly tedious profoundness of thought. When the bourgeois revolution of 1917 arrived, the Mensheviks soon became the government. Of all their "principles" all that remained was the political deduction that the proletariat would not dare to seize power. Yet it is perfectly evident, that those Bolsheviks which exposed Menshevist ministerialism, and at the same time stood out against the seizure of power by the proletariat actually shifted to the pre-revolutionary position of the Mensheviks.

The revolution made political thrusts in a two-fold direction: those of the right became Kadets, the Kadets became republicans against their will. That constitutes a formal thrust leftward. The S.R.'s and the Mensheviks become the bourgeois ruling party. That is a thrust to the right. By such means does bourgeois society try to create for itself a new column of power, stability and order. While the Mensheviks pass from a formal Socialist position to a vulgar democratic position, the right wing of the Bolsheviks moves to a formal Socialist position, *i.e.*, to the position which the Mensheviks occupied on the previous day.

The same re-grouping of forces occurred as regards the question of the war. The bourgeoisie, on the deduction of certain doctrinaires, dejectedly drawled the refrain—no annexations, and no indemnities—all the more so because there was very little hope of any annexations. The Mensheviks and the Zimmerwaldian S.R.'s who had criticised the French Socialists because they defended their bourgeois republican fatherland, themselves straightaway became defencists so soon as they felt themselves to be in a bourgeois republic. From a passive internationalist position, they moved to an active patriotic position. Simultaneously with this, the Bolshevik right-wing took the passive internationalist position—"the pressure" on the Provisional Government for the purpose of a democratic peace "without annexation and without indemnities." In that way, therefore, the formula of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants fell to pieces, both theoretically and politically, at the April Conference, and two antagonistic points of view stood out—namely, a democratic point of view, under the cover of formal Socialist reservations, and a social revolutionary point of view, or the truly Bolshevik, the Lenin point of view.

JULY DAYS AND AFTER

The principles of the party were put right by the decisions of the April Conference, but the disagreements between the heads of the party were not removed. With the march of events, those discordances could not fail to assume a more and more concrete shape, and to become most acute

when a more decisive moment of the revolution arrived, that is in October. The attempt to organise a demonstration on June 10th, which Lenin initiated, was denounced as an adventure by the very same comrades who were dissatisfied with the character of the April demonstration. The June 10th demonstration was prohibited by the Congress of Soviets and so did not take place. But the party had its revenge on June 18th. The general demonstration at Petrograd which the conciliationists rather imprudently initiated, passed almost wholly under the watchwords of Bolshevism. Then further, the Government, too, wanted to have its way. At the front, an idiotically light-headed attack commenced. The moment was decisive. Lenin warned the party against imprudent action. In *Pravda* of June 21st, he writes: "Comrades, a demonstration at this juncture would be inexpedient. We have now to live through a whole new stage in our revolution."*

However, the July days arrived. Those days form an important landmark both on the path of the revolution, as well as on the path of discordances within the party.

The decisive moment in the movement of July was the moment when the Petrograd masses, of their own will, made an attack. Lenin, no doubt, put to himself questions such as these: has not the time arrived? has not the feeling of the masses grown beyond their Soviet enclosure? Are not we, who are hypnotised by Soviet legalism, running the risk of lagging behind the attitude which the

* Lenin's Works, vol. xiv., part 1, page 276.

masses have taken, and indeed of being severed from them.

There is every probability that some comrades, who sincerely believed that they did not differ from Lenin in their estimate of the situation, did initiate certain purely military occurrences during the month of July. Lenin afterwards remarked: "We have committed a good many follies during July." But all that happened really meant, that a new and more extensive reconnaissance at a new and higher stage of the movement had been carried through. We had to retreat and that badly. To the party, in so far as it was preparing to rise and seize power, the events of July appeared, as they did to Lenin, merely as an occurrence in which we paid dearly for our earnest efforts to find out what forces we possessed and what forces the enemy had, but it was not an occurrence which should make us deviate from our course of action. To those comrades, on the other hand, who were opposed to the policy of seizing power, the July episode was bound to appear as a harmful adventure. The right elements of the party increased their mobilisation. Their criticism became more decisive. There was, of course, a corresponding change in the tone of resistance. Lenin wrote: "All these whinings, all these arguments, that 'there was no need' to take part (in the attempt to give a 'peaceful and organised' character to the more than lawful discontent and revolt of the masses!) either amount to recreancy as far as Bolsheviki are concerned, or they are the usual manifestations of customary apprehension and confusion as far as the petty bourgeois is concerned."*

* Lenin's Works, vol. xiv., part 2, page 28.

The use of the word "recreancy" at a time like that lit up the divergence of views with a tragic light. As time goes on that ominous word becomes more and more frequent.

The opportunist attitude to the problem of power and to the war naturally produced a corresponding attitude to the International. The members of the right tried to get the party to take part at the Stockholm conference of Socialist patriots. On August 16th, Lenin wrote: "The speech which Comrade Kamenev made at the central executive committee on August 6th, cannot fail to escape the opposition of those Bolsheviki who who are loyal to their party and to their principles."* And further on, referring to the phase that over the Stockholm Conference, the banner of revolution, as it were, was beginning to float; he wrote: "This is the emptiest rhetoric in the spirit of Chernov and Tseretelli. This is a crying untruth. No, not the banner of revolution, but the banner of bargains, of agreements, of amnesties of Socialist-imperialists, of bankers' negotiations for the division of annexations—such indeed is the banner which is beginning to float over Stockholm."†

The way to Stockholm was really the way to the Second International, as taking part in the Pre-parliament was the path to a bourgeois republic. Lenin was for boycotting the Stockholm Conference as later on he was for boycotting the Pre-Parliament. In the very heat and fire of the struggle he did not for a single moment forget the task of creating a new Communist International.

* † Lenin's Works, vol. xiv., part 2, page 56 and page 57.

It was by April 10th that Lenin began to speak on behalf of changing the party's name. All expressions to the contrary, he swept aside: "That is the argument of routine, the argument of lethargy, the argument of inertia." He insisted: "It is time to throw off the dirty garment. It is time to put on clean linen." Yet so strong was the opposition of the heads of the party that a whole year had to pass by—in the course of which all Russia threw off the dirty garments of bourgeois dominion—before the party could make up its mind to change its name—having returned to the tradition of Marx and Engels. This history of renaming the party is really a symbolic expression of the part which Lenin played throughout the whole year of 1917. At the moment when history was taking the sharpest turn, he was all the while carrying on a tense warfare against the day that is gone and on behalf of the day that is to come. But "yesterday" bearing the banner of tradition put up a resistance which at times showed extraordinary strength.

The Kornilov occurrences, which pushed things forward in our favour, for a time, mitigated the discordances—mitigated, but did not abolish them. During those days, the right wing showed tendencies to get into touch with the Soviet majority on the basis of defending the revolution, and partly the homeland. The attitude of Lenin to such a step is shown in his letter to the executive committee at the beginning of September. He wrote: "My conviction is that all those who slide down as far as defencism* or (like other Bolsheviks) a *blot*

* Apparently a reference to names has been omitted here as the following case of the sentence shows.—L.T. C

with the S.R.'s; or a supporting of the Provisional Government, fall into a state which is void of principle. This is more than incorrect action. It is a lack of principle. We shall become defenders only after the passage of power to the proletariat." And further on, "We should not *even at this time* support the Government of Kerensky. To do so is to act without principle. They ask, 'shall we not fight against Kornilov?' Why, certainly! But that is not one and the same thing. Here there is a boundary line which certain other Bolsheviks cross, who fall into 'conciliationism,' who allow themselves to be *carried away* by the stream of events."*

The next stage in the evolution of divergent views was the Democratic Conference (September 14th-22nd) and the Pre-parliament (October 7th) which sprung from it. The object which the Mensheviks and S.R.'s had in view was to bind the Bolsheviks with the lawfulness of the Soviets, and afterwards, in a painless manner change that lawfulness into a bourgeois-parliamentary lawfulness. This was welcomed by the right. We have already listened to their description of the next development of the revolution. The Soviets will hand over their functions by degrees to the proper institutions—to the dumas; the zemstvos; the trade unions, and lastly, to the Constituent Assembly, and having done so they will disappear. The Pre-parliament was to have directed the political mind of the masses away from the Soviets, as "temporary" institutions which had outlived their time, to the Constituent Assembly as the crowning work of the

* Lenin's Works, vol. xiv., part 2, page 95.

democratic revolution. In the meantime, in the Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow, the Bolsheviks were already in the majority. Our influence in the army grew not day by day, but hour by hour. It was no longer a question of prognosis and forecasts. It was a question of selecting a course of action, literally, for the next day.

The conduct of the wholly worn-out conciliationist parties at the democratic conference assumed the form of pitiable abjectness. The proposal which we brought in to abandon the Democratic Conference demonstratively as something doomed to destruction, met with the decisive opposition of the right elements of the fraction who at that time still held the high places of influence. The encounters on this question were introductory to the struggle which arose upon the question of boycotting the Pre-parliament. On September 24th, *i.e.*, after the Democratic Conference, Lenin wrote: "The Bolsheviks should have left as a protest and so as not to submit to the trap of drawing away the mind of the people from serious questions, by means of the Conference."* The discussions in the Bolshevik fraction of the Democratic Conference in regard to the question of boycotting the Pre-parliament had an exceptional importance, although the theme was of a comparatively limited nature. In reality it was the most extensive and outwardly successful attempt of the right-wing to turn the party into the path of "finishing the democratic revolution." It seems that no stenograms of the discussions were made, anyhow they have not been preserved. As far as I am aware, even secretarial

* Lenin's Works, vol. xiv., part 2, page 144.

notes have so far not been brought to light. Some materials, which are extremely meagre, have been found among my papers by the editors of this volume. Comrade Kamenev unfolded an argument which later on, and in a more sharply defined and precise form constituted the subject matter of a certain letter by Kamenev and Zinoviev to the party organisations (October 11th). But it was Nogin who dealt with the question as most of all a matter of principle: the boycott of the Pre-parliament is a call to a rising, *i.e.*, to a repetition of the July days. Certain comrades proceeded to act on the general basis of the parliamentary tactics of social-democracy. As nearly as possible this is an expression of their views: "No one would dare to suggest a boycott of parliament. But here is a proposal that we should boycott an institution which is very much like it simply because it bears the name of *Pre-parliament*."

The essential opinion which the right wing held, was that the revolution inevitably led from the Soviets to bourgeois parliamentarism, and that the Pre-parliament was a natural prelude to the latter, and that, therefore, there was no good reason for refusing to take part in the Pre-parliament if once we were preparing to occupy the left benches in parliament. It was necessary to finish the democratic revolution and "to get ready" for the Socialist revolution. But how to get ready? Why through the school of bourgeois parliamentarism? Surely the most advanced countries show to the less advanced what future is to be theirs. The overthrow of the Tsardom is thought of in a revolutionary way, just as it really happened, but the conquest of power by the proletariat is conceived in

a parliamentary way, on the principles of a finished democracy. Long years of a democratic regime must form the interval between a bourgeois revolution and a proletarian revolution. The struggle for participation in the Pre-parliament was a struggle for the "Europeanisation" of the workers' movement, for bringing it most quietly into the channel of a democratic "struggle for power," *i.e.*, into the channel of social democracy. The fraction of the Democratic Conference which numbered above a hundred individuals, was in no way different—especially in those days—from a party congress. The bigger part of that fraction was in favour of participation in the Pre-parliament. That very fact ought to have produced an alarm. And from that moment Lenin actually began to sound an alarm without any break.

During the days of the Democratic Conference, Lenin wrote: "To take up an attitude to the Democratic Conference as to a parliament would be on our part a supreme blunder, the greatest parliamentary cretinism, for even *if it did* proclaim itself a parliament and the sovereign parliament of the revolution, all the same it cannot *decide* anything. Decision lies *outside of it* in the workers' quarters of Petrograd and Moscow."*

How Lenin estimated the importance of participation or non-participation in the Pre-parliament can be seen in many of his declarations, and specially in his letter to the Central Committee of September 29th, in which he speaks of "such crying blunders of the Bolsheviks, as the scandalous

* Lenin's Works, vol. xiv., part 2, page 138.

decision to participate in the Pre-parliament." That decision manifested to him those very democratic illusions and petty bourgeois vacillations in the contest with which he formed and defined his own conception of a proletarian revolution. It is not at all true that many years must intervene between the bourgeois and the proletarian revolutions. It is not at all true that the only, or the main, or the compulsory school of preparation for the conquest of power is the school of parliamentarism. It is not at all true that the way to power runs unavoidably through bourgeois democracy. All this is bare abstraction, doctrinaire schemes, the political role of which is only one object—to bind the proletarian vanguard hand and foot, to make of it, by means of the "democratic state mechanism, a shadow of the bourgeoisie in political opposition." That is all that Social-Democracy is.

The policy of the proletariat must be directed not according to academic schemes, but in accordance with the real current of the class struggle. Not to go into the Pre-parliament, but to organise a rising and to tear out the power. All else will follow. Lenin having set forth the boycott of the Pre-parliament as a platform, proposed to call together a special congress of the party. From this time forward all his letters and articles strike one note only: not to be in the Pre-parliament, the "revolutionary" tail of conciliationists, but to get out in the streets and fight for power!

CONCERNING OCTOBER EVENTS

An extraordinary Congress appeared to be unnecessary. The pressure which Lenin brought to

bear secured the necessary transfer of forces to the left, both in the Central Committee and in the Pre-parliament fraction. The Bolsheviks withdrew from it on the 10th of October. A conflict arose in Petrograd between the Soviet and the Government about the dispatch of garrison troops, which were Bolshevik-inclined, to the front. The Army Revolutionary Committee, the lawful Soviet organ of revolt was formed on October 16th. The right-wing of the party sought to delay the development of events. The struggle of tendencies within the party, like the struggle of classes within the country, entered on its decisive phase. The position of the right-wing found its best illustration as regards principle, in the letter bearing the title "On the Present Moment," signed by Zinoviev and Kamenev. The letter, written on October 11th, *i.e.*, two weeks before the great change, and circulated among the important organisations of the party, takes a definite stand against the resolution for an armed rising which the Central Committee had passed. With a caution against under-estimating the enemy, and at the same time amazingly under-estimating the forces of revolution, and even denying the existence of a fighting disposition on the part of the masses (two weeks before October 25th! the letter goes on to say: "It is our profound conviction that to declare an armed rising at this time means not simply to stake the fate of our party, but the fate of the Russian and International revolution." But if a rising and a seizure of power are out of the question, then what? The letter answers this question with quite sufficient clearness and care: "By means of the army, by means of the workers, we hold a revolver at the head of the bourgeoisie," and with a revolver at its

head, it cannot break up the Constituent Assembly. "The chances of our party at the elections to the Constituent Assembly are excellent. . . . The influence of Bolshevism is on the increase . . . With right tactics we can manage to get a third and more of the seats in the Constituent Assembly." Thus, the letter openly takes the line of an "influential" opposition in the bourgeois Constituent Assembly. This purely Social-Democratic procedure expresses itself under the following guise: "The Soviets which have got into the very heart of things cannot be destroyed. It is only on the Soviets that the Constituent Assembly can base its revolutionary work. The constituent Assembly and the Soviets, this is the compound form of state institutions to which we are moving." It is extraordinarily interesting in characterising the whole course taken by the right, that the theory of a "compound" state, consisting of a Constituent Assembly and Soviets was about one and a half or two years later on repeated in Germany by Rudolph Hilferding, who was also fighting against the seizure of power by the proletariat. The Austro-German opportunist did not realise that he was plagiarising. The letter, "On the Present Moment" contests the assertion that the majority of the Russian people are with us. It regards the majority in a purely parliamentary sense. "Most of the workers of Russia are for us," says the letter, "and a considerable number of soldiers, but as for the rest the case is questionable. We are quite sure that if an election to the Constituent Assembly were, for instance, now to take place, the majority of the peasants would vote for the S.R.'s. Well, is this an accident?" Here we see the main, root mistake, due to a failure to grasp the fact that the peasants can have mighty

revolutionary interests of their own, and that they might strain every nerve to solve them, but that they cannot take an independent political position. They might vote either for the bourgeoisie, by means of its S.R. agency, or they might actively join the proletariat. And it was just on our policy that the question depended as to which one of these two possibilities would materialise. If we went to the Pre-parliament, to be the influential opposition (having a third, or more seats) of the Constituent Assembly, we would in doing so place the peasantry, almost mechanically, in such a position in which it would be bound to seek the satisfaction of its interests by means of the Constituent Assembly, that is not through the opposition, but through its majority. On the other hand, the seizure of power by the proletariat immediately created the revolutionary lines for a peasant struggle against the landlord and official.

To use words which come most readily in this connection, the letter shows both an *under-estimate* and an *over-estimate* of the peasants: an under-estimate of its revolutionary possibilities (under a proletarian direction), and an over-estimation of its political independence. This two-fold error, under-estimating and over-estimating the peasants at one and the same time, is, in turn, due to an under-estimate of one's own class and its party, *i.e.*, to the Social-Democratic approach to the proletariat. Here, there is nothing surprising. All shades of opportunism, in the last account, amount to an incorrect estimate of revolutionary forces and the possibilities of the proletariat.

In speaking against the seizure of power, the letter frightens the party with the prospects of a

revolutionary war. "The soldiers support us not on the cry of war, but on the cry of peace. If we, after securing power at this time, are the only ones, in view of the position throughout the world, who shall find it necessary to wage a revolutionary war, the bulk of the soldiers will run away from us. We shall, of course, have the best part of the young soldiers, but the mass of the soldiers will depart." This argument is highly instructive. We see here, the kind of reasoning which was carried on in favour of signing the peace of Brest-Litovsk. In the present case, however, the reasoning is against the seizure of power. It is quite evident that the position which found expression in the letter, "On the Present Moment," made it very much easier for the upholders of the views expressed in the letter, to accept the peace of Brest-Litovsk. All that we need say here is what we said elsewhere. Not the temporary capitulation at Brest-Litovsk taken as such, in isolation, marks the political genius of Lenin, but only if October is taken in conjunction with Brest-Litovsk.

That should never be forgotten.

The working class struggles and becomes continually more and more aware that the enemy has the pull over it. This is seen at every step. The enemy possesses wealth, power, all the means of intellectual pressure, all the instruments of repression. This habit of thought that the foe has an excess of power is a part of the daily life and work of the revolutionary party in the preparative period. The results of any carelessness or premature action are a severe reminder of the superior power of the enemy. However, a moment comes when the habit

of regarding the enemy as stronger becomes the greatest hindrance to conquest. To-day's weakness of the bourgeoisie hides itself so to say, under the shadow of its yesterday's strength. "You underestimate the power of the enemy!" On this line all those elements which are opposed to an armed rising group themselves together." Everyone who wishes to do more than speak of a rising—our opponents to a rising wrote a fortnight before the victory—"is bound to weigh up soberly the chances it has. Here we feel it our duty to say that at the present moment the most harmful step to take would be to under-estimate the forces of the enemy and to over-estimate one's own forces. The enemy has greater forces than appears. Petrograd decides. But the enemy of the proletarian party has accumulated at Petrograd considerable forces—five thousand junkers, splendidly equipped, and organised, who desire, and who, in virtue of their class position, are able to fight; then a staff; shock troops; cossacks; a good portion of the garrison; a very great deal of artillery placed fan-wise round about Petrograd. Then the enemy with the help of the Central Executive Committee is almost sure to try to bring troops from the front." ("On the Present Moment.")

Obviously in the case of civil war, it is not a question of merely the counting up of battalions, but of a preliminary calculation of their consciousness. That being the case, such a calculation can never prove to be complete and precise. Even Lenin reckoned that the enemy possessed serious forces at Petrograd and proposed that the rising should begin in Moscow, where, in his view, it ought to have passed without bloodshed. Such

peculiar mistakes of foresight are quite unavoidable in the best of circumstances, and it is wiser to count on less favourable conditions. The point that interests us just now, however, is the amazing over-estimate of the enemy's strength, a complete distortion of every calculation at a time when the enemy as a matter of fact, was already without any armed force.

That matter, as the German experience proved, is of immense importance. So long as the cry of a rising had for the leaders of the German Communist Party chiefly, if not wholly, an agitational meaning, they, as a matter of course, ignored the question of the enemy's armed forces (Reichswehr, Fascist divisions, police). It seemed to them that the tide of revolutionary feeling which was rising without a break would in itself decide the question of war. But when the matter came close up, these very comrades who thought that the enemy's armed force was a myth, fell at once into another extreme, they took on faith all the figures of the armed forces of this bourgeoisie, they carefully added them together with the Reichswehr and police forces, then they rounded the amount off to a half a million or more, and so obtained a compact mass armed to the very teeth, which was quite sufficient to paralyse their own forces. There is no doubt at all, that the forces of the German counter-revolution were considerable, and in every sense better organised and prepared than our own Kornilovites and semi-Kornilovites. But then the active forces of the German revolution were also different. The proletariat forms the preponderating majority of the population in Germany. In our own case the matter in the first instance, at least, was decided

by Petrograd, and Moscow. A rising in Germany would at once have had dozens of mighty proletarian centres. Under such circumstances, the armed strength of the enemy would not have seemed so terrible as in the statistical round figures. Anyhow, those tendencious calculations which were made and are made after the German defeat in order to justify the policy which led to the defeat, must be categorically repudiated. Our Russian example has in this connection a unique signification: two weeks before our bloodless triumph in Petrograd—and we could have gained it two weeks earlier—experienced politicians of the party saw arrayed against us junkers desirous and able to fight; shock troops, cossacks, a large part of the garrison, artillery set out like a fan, and troops coming from the front. But in actuality what did it all come to? Why it all meant nothing, just nil. Imagine for a moment that those who opposed a rising had carried the day, both in the party and in its Central Committee. The place of the Chief Command in a civil war is perfectly obvious. In such a case the revolution would beforehand have been doomed to destruction—had not Lenin appealed to the party against the Central Committee, saying that he was preparing to act, and no doubt he would have succeeded. But it is not every party that has a Lenin in similar circumstances. It is not hard to imagine how history would have been written if the Central Committee had triumphed in refusing to fight. The official historians would no doubt have put the matter in this way, the rising in October, 1917, was the purest madness; and they would have furnished the reader with upsetting statistics of junkers, cossacks, shock troops, artillery distributed like a

fan, and bodies moving from the front. Such forces, not verified in the fire of a rising, would have appeared incomparably more dreadful than the case actually proved to be. That is the lesson which every revolutionary should engrave on his mind.

The persistent, tireless, uninterrupted pressure which Lenin exerted on the Central Committee during September-October, was due to his constant anxiety lest the moment should be allowed to slip away. Nonsense, said the right-wing, our influence will grow and grow. Who was right? And what does it mean to let the moment slip away? Here we come to the point of the question where the Bolshevik estimate of the ways and methods of the revolution, active, strategic, practicable through and through, comes in greatest conflict with the Social-Democratic Menshevik estimate pervaded throughout by fatalism. What does it mean to let slip the moment? The most favourable condition for a rising was presented, it seems, then when the relation of forces showed a maximum movement in our favour. What is meant here by this relation of forces, is, of course, in the realm of consciousness, *i.e.*, concerning the political superstructure, and not concerning the base which can be taken more or less as unchanging through all the epochs of the revolution. On one and the same economic basis, in one and the same class division of society, the relation of forces change in dependence on the attitude of the proletarian masses, the shattering of their illusions, the accumulation of their political experience, the weakening of the confidence of the intermediate classes and groups in the powers of the State, and finally the

decline of the latter's confidence in itself. During revolution all these processes work at a rapid rate. The whole art of tactics consisted in this, to seize the moment when conditions were most propitious for us. The Kornilov revolt at last led to such a state of things. The masses having lost faith in the parties of the Soviet majority, saw plainly the danger of counter-revolution. They thought that the moment had now come when it was the Bolsheviks' turn to find a way out of the difficulties. Neither the elemental break up of the governmental power, nor the elemental flow of impatient and demanding faith of the masses in the Bolsheviks could be a prolonged state of things. The crisis had to be decided one way or another. Now or never! said Lenin.

To this the right wing replied :

“To put the question of the passage of power into the hands of the proletariat, as *Now or Never*, would be a profound historical injustice. No. The party of the proletariat will grow, its programme will become more and more clear to the wide masses. It is only one way that can destroy its success that is if in the present circumstances it initiates a resistance. . . . Against such a ruinous policy we raise the voice of warning.” —(“On the Present Moment.”)

This fatalistic optimism needs most careful study. You will find nothing either national or individual in it. It was only a year ago that we witnessed the same tendency in Germany. Under such a fatalism of expectancy what is really hidden is an indecisiveness and even an incapacity for action,

but it disguises itself with a comforting forecast of the future. We shall, so to say, become more and more influential. The further we go the more will our power grow. What an utter delusion! The power of a revolutionary party grows only up to a certain moment, after that the process can pass in the opposite direction. The hopes of the masses as a result of the passivity of the party are changed into disillusion, while the foe recovers from panic and makes use of the disillusionment of the masses. A decisive turn of such a kind all observed in Germany in October, 1923. And we in Russia were not far from a similar turn of events in the Autumn of 1917. All that was necessary was possibly to let a few more weeks pass by. Lenin was right. It was a case of now, or never.

But the final and strongest reasoning of the opponents to a rising was as follows: "But the point which decides everything is this. Is there really among the workers and soldiers of the city such a feeling that they see their salvation only by fighting in the streets, that they long to get out into the streets? No. There is no such disposition on their part. The pressure of a fighting disposition, wanting to get out into the streets, on the part of the great masses of the poor of the city could serve as a guarantee that the attempt it initiated would draw even the larger and more important organisations (the railwaymen, the postmen's union, etc.), among whom our influence is weak. But since there is no such disposition even in the workshops and barracks, it would be self-deception to try and draw any conclusion."—"On the Present Moment.")

These words were written on October 11th, and they acquire quite an unusual and ominous importance when we remember that the German comrade who directed the party in explaining last year's withdrawal from the fight, referred to the fact that the masses did not desire to engage in combat. Just so. A victorious rising will, generally speaking, be most guaranteed then when the masses have succeeded to get sufficient experience not to throw themselves headlong into a fight, but will wait and demand a leadership which is decisive and able to fight. In October, 1917, the working masses at least, the leading sections of them came to the strong conviction, on the ground of the experience of the rising in April, of the July days, and of the Kornilov affair, that it was no longer a case of particular elemental protestation, no longer a case of reconnoissance, but of a determined stand for the seizure of power. The attitude of the masses becomes correspondingly more concentrated, more critical, more deep. The transition from a happy, illusory, elemental state of feeling, to a more critical frame of mind, meant, of course, that a revolutionary marking of time became inevitable. Such a progressive crisis in the disposition of the masses can be overcome in one way only, that is by a party having a proper policy, in other words, it has above all to be actually ready and able to guide the uprising of the proletariat. On the contrary, a party which for a long time carried on a revolutionary agitation, having plucked the masses out of the power of the conciliationists, and then when it was raised to the top by the faith of these masses, begins to waver, argue, use subtleties and wait—such a party would paralyse the activity of the masses, would disillusion them, and be their

ruin. It would destroy the revolution, and when it accomplished the havoc, it could turn round and say that there had not been sufficient activity on the part of the masses. That, to be sure, was the issue to which the letter ("At the Present Moment") led. Happily, under the leadership of Lenin, our party managed to get rid of such an attitude on the part of those who stood at the head of its affairs. It was because of that fact alone that it succeeded to accomplish a victorious transformation.

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All that remains now to be done—after we have characterised the nature of the political problems connected with the preparation of the October Revolution, and after we have tried to explain the root idea of the discordances that arose on that ground—is to give, though only in a summary fashion, the most important conflicts within the party during the last decisive weeks.

The decision for an armed rising was passed by the Central Committee on October 10th. The letter "At the Present Moment," which is analysed above, was dispatched to the most important organisations of the party on the 11th of October. A week before the great change, *i.e.*, on October 18th, Kamenev had a letter in *Novaya Zhign* in which he says: "Not only I and Comrade Zinoviev, but a number of comrades, practical men, feel that to initiate an armed rising just now, while the present relative state of forces prevails, independently of the Congress and a few days before it is called together, would prove to be an inadmissible step which would ruin both the proletariat and the

revolution,"—(*Novaya Zhign*, No. 156, 18th October, 1917.) On October 25th, power was seized at Petrograd, and the Soviet Government was set up. A number of responsible members left the Central Committee of the party and the Council of People's Commissars on November 4th, and they put forth an ultimatum demanding the creation of a coalition government consisting of Soviet parties. "Apart from this," they wrote, "only one course is left open—the preservation of the purely Bolshevik government by the aid of political terror." But in another document of the same moment, "We cannot be responsible for the ruinous policy of the Central Committee which has been introduced in spite of the will of an immense part of the workers and soldiers who long for the quickest possible cessation of the bloodshed between the separate sections of democracy. For this reason we put off from ourselves the title of members of the Central Committee, in order to have the right openly to state our opinion to the masses of workers and soldiers and call upon them to support our cry, "All hail to the Government of Soviet Parties! Immediate agreement on this condition!"* We see, therefore, that those who were against an armed rising and the seizure of power, as being an adventure, stood up, after the rising was successfully carried through, for the returning of the power to those parties, in the fight against which, the proletariat conquered power. For what reason was the victorious Bolshevik party to return the power—and the question was, the return of power—to the Mensheviks and the S.R.'s? To

* *Oktyabrsky Perevorot*. "Arkiv Revolutsii," 1917, pp. 407-410.

this the opponents replied : " We think that the setting up of such a government is necessary for the prevention of further bloodshed ; an imminent famine, the break-up of the revolution by Kaledinites, the securing of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly within the period specified, and the actual carrying through of the programme of peace passed by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies."* In other words, it was a case of finding a way through Soviet gates to bourgeois parliamentarism. If the revolution refused to go through the Pre-parliament and made a channel for itself through "October." then its business was, according to the formula of the opposition, to save the revolution from dictatorship, by the help of Mensheviks and S.R.'s and guide it into the channel of a bourgeois regime. It was really nothing more nor less than the liquidation of October. An agreement on such conditions was, of course, out of the question. On the day following—November 5th—still another letter, on the same lines, was published. "In the name of party discipline, I cannot remain silent when Marxists, in spite of reason and in defiance of the course of things, are not disposed to pay attention to objective conditions, which imperatively dictate to us, under the threat of a crash, to come to an agreement with all Socialist parties. . . I cannot, in the name of party discipline, give myself to the worship of personality and make political agreement with all Socialist parties which support our essential demands, dependent on the presence of this or that person in the ministry, and for that reason prolong

* *Oklyabrsky Perevorot*, " Arkhiv Revolutsii," 1917, pp. 407-410.

bloodshed even for a single minute.”—(*Rabotchaya Gazeta*, No. 204, 5th November, 1917). In conclusion, the writer of the letter—Losovsky—urges the necessity of fighting for the party congress in order to decide whether “the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party of Bolsheviks will remain the Marxist party of the working class, or whether it will finally take a course which has nothing in common with revolutionary Marxism.”—(*Rabotchaya Gazeta*, No. 204, 5th November, 1917.)

The situation really looked hopeless. Not only the bourgeoisie and landlords, not only this so-called “revolutionary democracy” which still was in the possession of a great number of leading organisations (the Railway Union’s Executive, the Army Committees, the Governmental employees, etc.), but the most influential members of our own party, the members of the Central Committee and of the Council of People’s Commissars, condemned aloud the effort of the party to remain in power, so that it might carry through its programme. The situation might be regarded as hopeless, we say, if one did not look beneath the mere surface of events. What then remained? To accept the demands made by the opposition would have meant liquidating October.” In that case, there was no reason at all why it was carried through. Only one course was left; to go forward and count upon the revolutionary will of the masses. In *Pravda* of November 7th, appeared the decisive declaration of the Central Committee of our party. It was written by Lenin and carried through with real revolutionary passion, expressed in clear, common, incontestable formulæ, addressed to party members in the

mass. The proclamation put an end to any doubts which might exist as regards the future policy of the party and of its Central Committee: "Shame be on all whose faith is small; on all who hesitate; on all who doubt; on all who let the bourgeoisie frighten them, or who have given way to the cries of its direct or indirect accomplices. Among the *masses* of workers and soldiers of Petrograd, Moscow and elsewhere, *not a shadow* of hesitation exists. United and solid as one man our party stands as guard of the Soviet power, of the interests of all toilers, above all those of the workers and the poorest peasants."—(*Pravda*, No. 132, (113), 20 (7), November, 1917.)

The most acute party crisis was overcome. However, the minor struggle was still not over. The line of battle remained the same. Its political significance, however, declined more and more. We find a most interesting testimony in an address which Uritsky read at the session of the Petrograd Committee of our Party on December 12th, in regard to the summoning of the Constituent Assembly. "The discordances in our party are not new. It is just the same tendency which was noticeable at an earlier time in regard to the question of a rising. Some comrades hold the opinion now that the Constituent Assembly should be the crown of the revolution, as it were. They take the position of conventionalism. They say that we should take care not to commit any tactless act. They are opposed to the fact that members of the Constituent Assembly, viz., Bolsheviks, should have the control of the convocation, the relation of forces, and so on. They look at things purely formally, not reckoning

that from the very fact of such a central crisis the picture of events which are now taking place in regard to the Constituent Assembly, but taking that into consideration, we find it possible to mark the situation, as it relates to the Constituent Assembly. Our point of view is this, we are fighting for the interests of the workers and the poorest peasants, but the point of view of these few comrades is this, we are making a bourgeois revolution which should be crowned by a Constituent Assembly."

The dissolving of the Constituent Assembly turned out to be not only the end of a big chapter in the history of Russia, but also the end of a none the less important chapter in the history of our party. Having overcome the internal party antagonisms, the workers' party not only took possession of power, but also retained that power within its own hands.

The October Rising.

In September—at the time of the Democratic Conference—Lenin insistently called for an immediate rising. He wrote :

"To take the proper Marxian attitude to a rising as an art, we must without any delay organise a *staff* for the forces which are in revolt; distribute the forces; place the most loyal troops at points of greatest importance; surround the Alexander Theatre; occupy the Peter-Paul fortress; arrest the government and General Staff; and send to the junkers and "the wild division" such detachments as are ready to perish rather than allow the enemy

to move to the centre of the city. We must mobilise the armed workers and call them to a last desperate effort, we must seize at one stroke both the telegraph and telephone, and locate *our* staff of revolt at the chief telephone exchange, and establish telephone connections with all mills, barracks and central points of the struggle, and so forth. To say all this is simply to illustrate the point that it is impossible at this juncture to remain a true Marxian, to remain loyal to the revolution apart from treating a rising as an art." (Lenin's Workers, vol. xiv., part 2, p. 140.)

This manner of stating the case pre-supposes that a rising would be prepared for and carried through on party lines, and that victory would subsequently be celebrated by the Congress of Soviets. But the Central Committee did not adopt the suggestion. The rising was directed along Soviet channels, and was linked up by means of agitation, with the Second Congress of Soviets. When the difference is carefully explained it will, of course, be seen that we have to do not with a question of principle, but with a purely technical problem, yet, naturally, one of very great practical importance.

It has already been pointed out that the postponement of a rising made Lenin intensely anxious. Lenin regarded the agitation which, on account of the vacillations of the Party leaders, connected a political change with the approaching Second Congress of Soviets as a delay which could not be tolerated, as a yielding to hesitation, as an indecisive loss of time—really almost a criminal act. That idea he expresses again and again after the

end of September. On September 29th he writes as follows :

“ A tendency, or view, prevails at the Central Committee in which the leaders of the Party share, which favours the Congress of Soviets and is against the immediate seizure of power, against an immediate rising. This tendency or view has to be fought.”

At the beginning of October, he wrote :

“ It is a crime to delay. It is a childish playing with formality to wait for the Congress of Soviets, a trifling game of formality, a betrayal of the revolution.”

In the propositions for the Petrograd Conference of October 8th, he said :

“ Constitutional illusions and hopes for the Congress of Soviets must be fought. The pre-conceived notion that we are bound to wait for it must be rejected.”

And, lastly, on October 24th, Lenin wrote :

“ It is clear as daylight that to delay a rising now is truly something which looks very much like death.”

And further on :

“ Revolutionaries, who might be (and most certainly would be) victorious to-day would never be forgiven by history if they procrastinate, if they run the risk of losing a great deal to-morrow, if they run the risk of losing everything.”

All these letters, all these phrases which were forged upon the anvil of revolution are of peculiar interest both for showing to us the character of

Lenin and for enabling us to form a right appreciation of the state of things at the moment. The feeling at the back of them, that runs through them is a perturbation, a protestation, an indignation against the fatalistic, wailing, Social-Democratic Menshevist attitude to the revolution. It seemed a never-ending business. If time is, as a rule, a matter of consequence in politics, then in war and in revolution it becomes a hundredfold more important. Not everything that can be done to-day can be done to-morrow. To rise, to hurl back the foe; to get hold of power; all that may be possible to-day, but impossible to-morrow. But to seize power means to turn the course of history. That being so, can a lapse of twenty-four hours decide the fate of such an event? Yes, it can. When things have reached the point of an armed rising, then occasions are not measured by the long arshin of policy, but by the short arshin of war. To let slip a week or so, a day or so, sometimes just one day, means under certain circumstances to surrender the revolution, to capitulate. Had not Lenin sounded the tocsin, had he not exercised pressure, had there not been his criticism, his passionate revolutionary suspicion, the Party, you may be sure, would not have been able to straighten out its front at the decisive moment, because the opposition of the leaders was very strong, and the Chief Staff plays an important part in the fortunes of war—in the case of civil war as well. At the same time, it is perfectly clear, that the preparation for and carrying out of the rising under cover of preparing for the Second Congress of Soviets, and under the watchword of defending it, put into our hands incalculable advantage. From the very moment in which we, the Petrograd Soviet, made our protest

against the order of Kerensky for sending two-thirds of the garrison to the front, an armed rising so far as we were concerned practically began. Lenin, who was not in Petrograd at that moment did not appreciate that fact at its full worth. So far as my memory serves there is not in all his letters of that period a single reference to that event. But three-fourths, if not more, of the issue of the rising of October 25th were already predetermined at the moment of our opposition to the despatch of the Petrograd garrison troops, at the moment when we set up the Revolutionary Military Committee (October 16th) and appointed our own commissaries at all army sections and institutions, thereby completely isolating not only the Staff of the Petrograd Military Circuit, but also the Government. Practically speaking this meant that we had an armed rising—an armed, though bloodless rising of the Petrograd regiments against the Provisional Government—under the direction of the Revolutionary Military Committee and under the watchword of Prepare for and Defend the Second Congress of Soviets at which the problem in respect of power was ultimately to be decided. Lenin's counsel was that the rising should begin in Moscow. There, he thought, it would be carried through without bloodshed. But Lenin at that time was not in the open, and, therefore, he could not make a proper estimation of that radical change which had taken place not only in our feelings, but also in the organisation of all the military rank and file after the "pacific" rising of the city garrison in the middle of October. From the moment when, upon the command of the Revolutionary Military Committee, the battalions refused to leave the city, and did

not leave, a victorious revolt, hardly covered over by the remains of the bourgeois democratic state, was in existence in the capital. The rising of the 25th of October was of the nature of a sequel, and that is why it went through with so little pain. In Moscow, on the other hand, the struggle was of a much more protracted and sanguinary character, notwithstanding the fact that the power of the Council of People's Commissaries had already been confirmed at Petrograd. It is quite obvious that if a rising had started in Moscow prior to the revolt at Petrograd, it would then have been inevitably still more protracted and with very uncertain issues. And a defeat in Moscow would have had the worst effects on Petrograd. It does not, of course, mean that a victory could not have been secured along that path. But the path along which events actually moved, turned out to be much more economical, advantageous and well-achieved.

It was possible for us to time more or less precisely, the seizure of power at the moment of the Second Congress of Soviets for the very reason that the "pacific" almost "legal" armed rising was by three-fourths, if not by nine-tenths an accomplished fact—at least in Petrograd. We speak of the rising as "legal," because it arose out of the "normal" conditions of the duality of authority. While the conciliationists reigned in the Petrograd Soviet it happened more than once that the Soviet verified or corrected the decision of the Government. That fact entered as it were into the constitution of what is historically known as the "Kerensky regime," when authority passed into our, Bolshevik, hands. We simply continued and strengthened the methods of duality of authority, we took it upon ourselves

to verify the order for the dispatch of the garrison troops. In so doing we masked, under the traditions and methods of the legality of dual authority, the actual rising of the Petrograd garrison. Further, by formally referring, in our agitation, the problem of power to the Second Congress of Soviets we extended and deepened the traditions of dual authority which had already been brought into existence and laid down the lines of Soviet legality for a Bolshevik rising on an all-Russian scale.

We did not lull the masses to sleep with any illusions of Soviet constitutionalism, because under the fighting cry of a struggle for the Second Congress we won over to our side the weaponed revolutionary army and organised and consolidated it. And at the same time we succeeded, to a greater degree than we could expect, to catch in the trap of Soviet legality our enemies, the conciliationists. It is always a great danger to use political guile, all the more so at a time of revolution—for, to be sure, it is not the enemy whom you will deceive, but it is the masses who are following you whom you will confuse. If our "guile" succeeded to the full, it was not because of any artifice of ingenuity on the part of the extremely clever strategists bent on the avoidance of civil war, but because it arose naturally out of the disintegration of the conciliationists' regime, out of its clamant contradictions. The Provisional Government wanted to shake itself free of the garrison troops. The troops did not want to go to the front. To that natural desire we imparted a political expression, a revolutionary purpose, a camouflage of "legality." In so doing we secured an exceptional unanimity within the garrison, and brought it into the closest contact with

the workers of Petrograd. As far as our enemies were concerned, they were disposed to regard the Soviet camouflage as a thing of substance because their position was hopeless and their thoughts confused. They wanted to be received and we afforded them the full gratification of their desire.

The struggle for Soviet legality went on between us and the conciliationists. The feeling among the masses was that the source of power were the Soviets. From the Soviets, sprang Kerensky, Tseretelli and Skobelev. But we, likewise, stood in closest association with the Soviets because of our essential and manifest fighting formula: "All Power to the Soviets." The bourgeoisie traced its continuity of legality to the State Duma; the conciliationists traced it to the Soviets, but for the purpose of bringing the Soviets to nought; we also traced the continuity of legality to the Soviets, but our object was to give power to the Soviets. The conciliationists were still unable to break up the Soviet succession and hastened to build a bridge between it and pre-Parliamentarism. With this object in view they convoked the Democratic Conference and created the pre-Parliament. The participation of the Soviets in the pre-Parliament, so to say, imparted a sanction to this cause of procedure. The conciliationists tried to hook the revolution with the bait of Soviet legality, and, having got hold of it, to drag it into the channel of bourgeois parliamentarism.

Nor did we for a single moment lose sight of the utility of Soviet legality. When the Democratic Conference ended we tore out of the conciliationists an acquiescence to the convocation of the Second

Congress of Soviets. That Congress brought them many serious embarrassments. In the first place they could not take a stand against the convocation, not having broken with Soviet legality, and in the second place, they could not fail to see that the Congress, composed as it was, held out nothing that was likely to be of benefit to them.

We, however, appealed with all the greater insistence to the Second Congress as the governing entity of the country, and conducted all our preparatory labours so as to support and defend the Congress of Soviets against the inevitable attacks of the counter revolution. If the bait which the conciliationists used was Soviet legality by means of the Pre-parliament arising out of the Soviets, our bait, also, was that same Soviet legality—but by means of the Second Congress of Soviets. To arrange an armed rising under the bald fighting formula of the seizure of power by the party is one thing, but to prepare for and then carry through a rising under the fighting formula of defending the rights of the Congress of Soviets, is quite another thing. Hence, the reference of the question concerning the assumption of power to the Second Congress of Soviets did not in any sense involve any naive expectations that the Congress, in itself, could determine the problem of power. To make Soviet form into such a fetish was a thing quite alien to us. All the work that was necessary—not only the political, but organising and military—technical work also—went on in full force. But the legality, camouflage of the work, was always the same reference to the coming Congress which should decide the question of power. In attacking all along the line we kept up the appearance of

defensive action. The Provisional Government, on the other hand—if it had only decided seriously to defend itself—ought to have attacked the Congress, and to have interdicted its convocation, but in doing so would have furnished its opponents with a motive—most unfavourable to itself—for an armed rising. Further, we not only placed the Provisional Government in a political plight, but made their slow and lazy minds still more sleepy. These people seriously believed that as far as we were concerned, it was all a matter of Soviet parliamentarism, of a new congress where a new resolution concerning power would be introduced—in the style of the resolutions of the Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow—and then the government, having referred the question to the Pre-Parliament and the coming Constituent Assembly would make its bow to us and put us into a ridiculous position. The incontestable testimony of Kerensky shows in what direction the mind of the wisest of the middle class sages moved. In his memoirs, he relates how on October 25th, at midnight, stormy disputations went on in his room between himself, Dan, and others in regard to the rising which at the time was in full swing. Says Kerensky :

“First of all, Dan informed me that they were much better acquainted with the course of things than I, and that I was exaggerating the occasion under the influence of communications supplied to me by my ‘reactionary staff.’ He then further told me that the resolution of the majority of the Soviets of the Republic, which were unwelcome ‘to the ambition of the government,’ was a most useful one; and essential for bringing about ‘a change of attitude on the part of the masses’; that

its effects were 'already making themselves felt,' and that now the influence of Bolshevist propaganda would 'rapidly decline.' On the other hand, he stated, that the Bolsheviks themselves, in negotiations with the leaders of the Soviet majority, declared that they were ready 'to submit to the will of the majority of the Soviets, that they were prepared to take all measures 'to-morrow indeed' for quelling the rising 'which flared up apart from their desire and without this sanction.' In conclusion Dan pointed out that the Bolsheviks would disband their military staff 'on the morrow' (it is always to-morrow!). He informed me that all the measures which I had taken for the suppression of the rising would only 'vex the masses' and that I, generally, by my 'interference' only 'hinder the representatives of the majority of the Soviets from successfully conducting negotiations with the Bolsheviks for the liquidation of the rising. . . .' To make the picture complete, it should be added that just at the time when Dan was making that remarkable communication to me, armed detachments of the 'Red Guard' were occupying governmental buildings one after another. And almost immediately after the departure of Dan and his colleagues from the Winter Palace, Kartashev, the Minister for Worship, was arrested in Million Street, on his way home from a sitting of the Provisional Government, and straight away taken to Smolny, whither Dan was returning to continue peaceful conversations with the Bolsheviks. It has to be confessed that the Bolsheviks acted at that time with great energy and with no less skill. At the time when the rising was in full blast, and when the "Red troops" were operating all over the city, certain Bolshevik leaders, appointed for the pur

pose, not unsuccessfully compelled the representatives of 'revolutionary democracy' to see without seeing, and to hear without hearing. All the night long, these artful men went on disputing about formulas, as to which of them should, as it were, be made the foundation of reconciliation and a means towards a stoppage of the rising. By the method of 'negotiations' the Bolsheviks succeeded to gain an immense amount of time in their favour. The fighting forces of the S.R.'s and Mensheviks were not mobilised in time. But, of course, this had to be demonstrated!" (A. Kerensky, *From Afar*, pp. 197-198.)

Just so! It had to be demonstrated! The conciliationists, as this picture shows were wholly and fully caught with the bait of Soviet legality. Kerensky's supposition that Bolsheviks were, so to say, specially appointed to mislead the Mensheviks and the social revolutionaries in respect of the coming stoppage of the rising is, as a matter of fact, not a correct one. What really occurred was, that those Bolsheviks who actually wanted a cessation of the rising and who believed in the formula of the Socialist government produced by an agreement of parties, took the most active part in the negotiations. Objectively, however, these parliamentarians did do a certain service to the rising—feeding with their own illusions, the illusions of the enemy. But this service to the revolution they were enabled to render just because the Party, in spite of their counsels and cautions pressed forward the rising with unabating energy, and carried it on to its final issue.

Yet to turn such an extensive, enveloping movement into a success, a conflux of extraordinary

events—great and small—was necessary. In the first place, what was needed was an army which had no inclination for any further fighting.

The whole march of the revolution—particularly in the first stages of it—from February to October inclusive, would have assumed, as we have said already, an entirely different form, if we had not had in the country a many-millioned peasant army which was broken up and discontented at the time of the revolution. On such conditions only could it become possible to make the Petrograd garrison experiment a success, and that made the October victory an ultimate certainty. There is no way by which this peculiar set of circumstances—a “bloodless” and a well-nigh unnoticed rising, and a defence of Soviet legality against the Kornilov attacks—can be reduced to any kind of law. On the contrary, it may be quite confidently asserted that the experiment will never and nowhere be repeated in a like form. Nevertheless, a careful study of it is needful. It will tend to widen the horizon of every revolutionary, in having shown to him the many ways which can be used when once the object in view is clear, the position correctly estimated, and when there is a determination to carry through the struggle to its conclusion.

The rising in Moscow was of a much more protracted nature, and was attended with considerably greater sacrifices. This is largely due to the fact that the Moscow garrison was not subjected to such a revolutionary preparation as was the garrison at Petrograd, in connection with the question of dispatching battalions to the battlefront. We said so once, and all say it again, that the armed rising of

Petrograd took place in two parts—in the first half of October, when the Petrograd regiments, in submission to the Soviet resolution, which accorded fully with their own feelings, refused with impunity to carry out the order of the Chief Command; and on October 25th, when all that was necessary was only a small additional rising which cut the navel of that order of government, set up by the February revolution. But in Moscow the rising took place at one go. That, to be sure, is the chief cause of its protracted nature. But along with that was another cause and that was, an insufficient determination on the part of the leaders. What we saw in Moscow was an oscillation from military action to negotiations and back from negotiations to military action. If the hesitation of leaders, of which the followers became aware, is a dangerous course in politics, speaking generally, it becomes a deadly danger at the time of an armed rising. The ruling class loses faith in its power (no hope of victory need be entertained on any other term), but the instrument of government is still within its grasp. The task of the revolutionary class is to get possession of the instrument of government. To do so it must have confidence in its own powers. When once the Party has led the workers to the path of a rising it has to draw from this the necessary deductions. "In war you must be warlike." On such an occasion hesitation and procrastination are less allowable than at any other time. War's measure is the short arshin. To mark time, even for a few short hours, restores confidence to those who are in authority and takes it away from those who have risen. That in turn immediately determines the relation of forces by which the issues of a rising are decided. The march

of the military events of Moscow in their conjunction with political leadership should, step by step, be studied from this angle of observation.

Very important reference could further be made to certain points which indicate the peculiar conditions under which the civil war proceeded. There is, for example, the complicating element of nationality. A study of such a character, based on a careful working through of the materials in existence, should greatly enrich our conception of the mechanism of civil war and thus, render more easy the elaboration of certain methods, rules, and ways, of a sufficiently general character, so as to constitute a sort of "law" of civil war.* While, however, anticipating any private deductions of such a research, it can be stated that the march of the civil war in the provinces was very largely predetermined by its results in Petrograd, in spite of the fact that it was delayed in Moscow. The old machine of state was partly broken by the revolution of February. In such a condition, the Provisional Government inherited it, without being able either to make it new or strong. Consequently, in the period of February to October, the state machine functioned merely as a relic of bureaucratic inertia. It was the custom of the bureaucratic province to do as Petrograd does. This the provinces did in February, and repeated in October. The fact that we made ready for the overthrow of a regime which did not manage to get established, proved to be our greatest advantage. The "February" government wavered in the extreme, and had not the least confidence in itself. That fact made

* Vide, L. Trotsky, "Problems of Civil War," *Pravda*, September 6th, 1924, No. 202.

our work very easy. It nourished the self-confidence both of the revolutionary masses and of the Party itself.

A similar state of things existed in Germany and Austria after November 9th, 1918. But the Social-Democrats of those countries repaired the cracks of the state machine and helped the regime of bourgeois-republicanism to get established. But even now the regime cannot be looked upon as a form of stability, although it has celebrated its sixth birthday. As for other capitalist countries, the advantage of the proximity of a proletarian revolution to a bourgeois revolution will in their case be lacking. Their "February" is long past. Certainly a good deal of feudal lumber still lingers on in England. There need be no talk of an independent bourgeois revolution there. When the proletariat comes into power the broom will soon sweep out the feudal remains. What the proletarian revolution has to deal with in Western Europe is the fully established bourgeois state. That, however, does not imply that an order which is stable has to be dealt with, since the very possibility of a proletarian rising signifies that the process of the break up of capitalism has gone very far indeed. If our October revolution was in conflict with a state machine which failed to get consolidated after February, the rising in other countries will be in antagonism with a state machine which is professedly going to pieces.

It may be assumed—as was pointed out at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern—that in old capitalist countries the "pre-October" resistance of the bourgeoisie will, as a general rule, be much greater than we have found it to be, the proletarian

victory will be much more difficult. Yet, on the other hand, when once the proletariat secures power, then the position in which it will find itself will at once be a great deal more stable and sure than ours was on the day after "October." Our civil war became a real thing only after the proletariat secured the power in the chief urban and industrial centres and lasted for the first three years of Soviet rule. There is every indication that in Central and Western Europe the securing of power will be very much more difficult, yet when once the proletariat has the power, its hands will be far more free than ours were. Of course, all such ideas are purely hypothetical. A good deal will depend upon the order of succession with which the revolution will take place in the various countries of Europe, what possibilities of military intervention will exist, what the economic and military strength of the Soviet Union will be at the time, etc., etc. Anyhow, the fundamental, and as we think, incontrovertible belief, that the process of conquering power will encounter, in Europe and America, a very much more serious, stubborn and carefully thought out resistance on the part of the dominant classes, than the one with which we were faced, makes it an all the greater obligation for us, to view an armed rising and civil war in general, as an art.

Yet Again about the Soviets and the Party.

Both in 1905 and in 1917 our Soviets of Workers' Deputies sprang from the workers' movement as such and became its national form of organisation at a certain stage of the struggle.

The young European parties, however, who more or less accept the Soviets as a "doctrine" or

“principle,” are always in danger of looking at the Soviets as a kind of fetish, or as an element of the revolution which is an end in itself. Admitted that Soviets have certain great advantages in the sense of organisation in the struggle for power, it is, nevertheless, quite probable that there will be cases when a rising will proceed on the basis of some other form of organisation, such as factory and workers' committees; trade unions; and so forth, and that Soviets will emerge either in the very process of the rising, or when it has gained the victory.

After the July days, Lenin began to wage a struggle against making the organisational form of the Soviets into a fetish—and that episode is full of instruction. When, during July the social revolutionary and Menshevist Soviets became organisations which openly drove the soldiers towards the line of attack and which held down the Bolsheviks, the workers' movement was bound to find for itself other ways and channels of action. Lenin pointed to the factory and workers' committee as an organisation of the struggle for power (see for example, the *Recollections of Comrade Ordjonikidze*). The movement would most probably have taken that line if the Kornilov attack had not forced the Conciliationist Soviets to defend themselves; and that afforded to the Bolsheviks an opportunity to put fresh revolutionary life into the Soviets and bring them into close touch with the masses by means of the left, that is to say, the Bolshevik, wing.

Internationally regarded, the problem is of immense importance. This was shown by the recent experiment in Germany. It was just in

Germany where Soviets were on several occasions organising for the purpose of a rising, without a rising taking place for the purpose of getting power, without ever succeeding to do so. What did that lead to? To this. The movement of the proletarian and semi-proletarian masses in 1923 began to group itself around factory and workers' committees. Now these committees at the bottom really functioned in the same way as our Soviets did during the period which immediately preceded the struggle for power. But meanwhile there were some comrades who, during August-September, wanted the immediate formation of Soviets in Germany. A long and heated discussion on the subject took place. The proposal, however, was turned down. And rightly so. Seeing that the factory and works' committees were the converging centres of the revolutionary masses, Soviets at that preliminary period would have only been an overlapping organisation without having any real meaning. All that they would have done would have been to draw away interest from the material aspects of the rising (army, police, armed hundreds, railways, etc.), and fix it on questions concerning a self-sufficient form of organisation. Furthermore, the formation of Soviets as Soviets before a rising, and apart from any immediate tasks connected with a rising would have meant one thing, and one thing only, a plain declaration. "We mean to attack you." The government, obliged to "endure" the factory and works' committees as being centres of great masses, would have struck at the first Soviet, as an official organ for an "attempt" to seize power. The Communists would have been compelled to defend the Soviets as a purely organisational affair. The decisive

contest would not have proceeded for the sake of seizing power, and not for the defence of any material position, nor would it have happened at a moment chosen by us—when a rising would have taken place as a result of a mass movement—no, the struggle would have burst out for the sake of a form of organisation, on behalf of the Soviet “banner,” at a moment chosen by the enemy, and by him forced upon us. At the same time, it is quite obvious, that all the preparatory work for a rising could have successfully been carried on under the organisational form of factory and works’ committees which had already managed to become mass organisations, and which continued to become larger and stronger, and left the party freedom of movement in respect of the date of a rising. No doubt Soviets would have emerged at the proper moment of time. But it is not at all certain that they would have appeared under the conditions referred to, as the direct organisations of a rising, in the very fire of the conflict, because it would have meant that two revolutionary centres would have been set up at a critical moment. “Horses must not be swopped when crossing a stream,” runs the English proverb. It is very probable that when a victory had been secured in the most decisive places of the country that Soviets would everywhere have begun to be set up. In any event, a triumphant rising would inevitably have led to the creation of Soviets as organs of power.

The fact must not be lost sight of that our Soviets appeared at the “democratic” stage of the revolution, they were, so to say, legalised at that stage. Later on we became their inheritors and made use of them. In the proletarian struggles of

the West, such things will not be repeated. In the West Soviets will in most cases arise in response to the call of the Communists, and they will consequently be the direct organs of a proletarian rising. Of course, it is quite possible that the disintegration of the bourgeois state will have gone a good way before the proletariat will be able to take over the power. This will naturally create a condition for the formation of Soviets as the open organisations to prepare for a rising. That, however, will scarcely be the general course of things. It is more likely that there will be cases when it will be only possible to form Soviets in the very last days as the immediate organs of the rising of the masses. And, in conclusion, it is quite probable that there will be instances where Soviets will arise after the rising has passed its crisis, and even as a result of it as the organs of the new power. All these various possibilities should be kept in view in order not to fall into the snare of making a fetish out of an organisation, and so as not to change the Soviets from what they should be, namely an adaptable, vital form of the struggle into an organisational "principle," forcing its way into the movement from without and interfering with the proper course of its development.

Our newspapers have recently been discussing the question as to the uncertainty of the door through which the proletarian revolution will enter into England—will the door be the Communist Party, or the trade unions? This way of stating the problem, pretending as it does to a wide view of history, is radically wrong and dangerous because it blots out the chief lesson of the last

few years. If as a result of the war there has not been a victorious revolution, then it is simply due to the fact that not enough Parties were in existence. That inference applies to Europe as a whole, but it may be worked out more concretely when the fate of the revolutionary movement in various countries is kept in mind. As regards Germany, the case in this respect, is perfectly clear. Both in 1918 and in 1919, the German revolution might have secured a victory if there had been the due party leadership. We saw this for instance, in 1917, in regard to Finland. There the revolutionary movement developed under peculiarly favourable circumstances under the ægis and direct military assistance of revolutionary Russia. But the Finnish party proved to be Social-Democrats as far as its controlling majority was concerned, and so it wangled the revolution. Not less evident is the lesson of the experiment in Hungary. The Hungarian Communists along with the left Social-Democrats did not conquer power, but took it over from the hands of the frightened bourgeoisie. Triumphant without a contest, and without a conquest the Hungarian revolution proved in the very first acts as quite void of any fighting leadership. The Communist Party merged with the Social-Democratic Party, showing thereby that it was not really a Communist Party, and consequently, incapable, in spite of the fighting spirit of the Hungarian proletariat to maintain the power which it secured with such comparative ease. Without a party, apart from a party, in circumvention of a party, by substitution of a party, the proletarian revolution cannot hope to secure a victory. This is what the last ten years chiefly teach. The British trade unions may

to be sure, become a mighty lever of the proletarian revolution. For example, they may, in certain circumstances, and for a given period, even replace workers' Soviets. But this they cannot do apart from the Communist Party, still less in spite of the party, but only on condition that Communist influence became a decisive element in the trade unions. For this conclusion, *i.e.*, the relative role and influence of the party in the proletarian revolution—we have paid too big a price to put it lightheartedly on one side, or in any way to lessen the significance of it.

Consciousness, clearness of purpose, definiteness of method played a much less important part in the revolutions of the bourgeoisie than they are destined to play and actually do play in the revolution of the proletariat. At that time, the dynamic forces of the revolution were also the masses of the people, but they were much less organised and conscious than they are at the present time. The leadership lay in the hands of the various groups of the bourgeoisie which had at its disposal wealth, education and all the organisations connected with these privileges (towns, universities, press, etc.). Bureaucratic monarchism put up a defence as experience required. It acted in a tentative manner. The bourgeoisie seized the opportunity whenever it could—having taken advantage of the movement of the classes below—to throw its whole social weight into the balance of the struggle and seized the reins of power. What marks off the proletarian revolution is the fact that the proletariat enters into it not merely as paramount force of attack, but also—in the person of its vanguard—as a force which directs the struggle. That part

which in a bourgeois revolution was played by the economic might of the bourgeoisie, by its culture, by its municipalities and universities, can in the proletarian revolution be played by the workers' Party and by that alone. The role of the party has become all the more important, seeing that the self-consciousness of the enemy has advanced to an immeasurably higher degree. In the course of its domination through the centuries the bourgeoisie has worked out a school of politics which proved to be incomparably higher than the school of the old bureaucratic monarchy. If parliamentarism was to a certain extent the workers' preparatory school of revolution, it was to the bourgeoisie to a much greater extent, the school of counter-revolutionary strategy. It is enough to say that by means of parliamentarism the bourgeoisie has managed to bring up Social-Democracy which to-day has become the chief bulwark of private property. The epoch of the social revolution in Europe, as the first chapters of it have shown, will be an era not only of strenuous and ruthless struggles, but of fights well planned and calculated—struggles much more thoroughly organised than was our struggle in 1917.

Hence we are obliged to approach the problem of civil war, and particularly of an armed rising, from a quite different point of view than the one now existing. We repeat Marx's utterance, which Lenin frequently repeated that a rising is an art. This idea, however, is quite a hollow phrase when Marx's formula is not accompanied by a study of the fundamental elements of the art of civil war on the basis of the vast experiences which have accumulated during the last few years. We have

frankly to admit that in the superficial attitude taken to the problems of an armed rising, it is evident that the force of the Social-Democratic tradition has not yet been overcome. The party which pays superficial attention to the problems of civil war, hoping that in the hour of need everything will somehow fall into a proper arrangement, will most assuredly sustain a defeat. What we need is to work through in a collective manner, the experiences of the proletarian struggles from 1917 onwards.

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The history of the Party groupings in the course of 1917, which we have been describing, is at the same time in a very real sense, part and parcel of the experience of the civil war, and is in our judgment, of immediate significance to the policy of the Communist International as a whole. What we said before, we say again, that the study of the differences of opinion need not be and must not be regarded as an effort directed against those comrades who were pursuing a wrong policy. On the other hand, it cannot be admitted, that because not all the members of the Party kept in step with the revolutions of the proletariat, therefore, the greatest chapter in the history of the Party should be blotted out. The Party can know and must know its past in *entirety*, in order to make a correct estimate of it, and to assign a proper significance to every particular part of it. A revolutionary party has its tradition made not by hushing things up but by a clear criticism of things.

History has furnished our party with perfectly incomparable revolutionary advantages. The traditions of the heroic struggle against the Tsar-

dom, the habits and ways of revolutionary self-sacrifice, connected with circumstances of underground activity, a wide theoretical working through of the revolutionary experiences of mankind, the struggle against the Narodniks, the struggle against the conciliationists, the mighty experience of the 1905 revolution, the theoretical labour in studying that experience during the years of counter revolution, the examination of problems arising out of the international workers' movement from the angle of the revolutionary lesson of 1905—it is that which in its totality gave to our Party an exceptional temper, a supreme theoretical penetration, and an unexampled revolutionary expanse. Notwithstanding all this, even in such a Party, as far as its leaders were concerned, a group of experienced revolutionaries, old Bolsheviks, was formed, before the moment of decisive action, which was in sharp opposition to the proletarian upheaval, and which in the most critical period of the revolution, roughly from February, 1917, to February, 1918, adopted, in all matters of consequence, an essentially Social-Democratic position. To save the Party and the revolution from the supreme confusion which arose from such a state of things, I.enin's exceptional influence on the Party, unprecedented even at that time, became necessary. This must under no circumstances be forgotten if we want the Communist parties of other countries to learn something from us. The problem of the choice of leaders is a matter of quite exceptional importance to the parties of Western Europe. The experience of the never occurring October in Germany is a clamant example. However, the choice has to be conducted from the standpoint of *revolutionary action*.

During the last few years, Germany has shown many instances in which the leaders of the party were put to the test at the time of a direct struggle. Without such a criterion everything remains precarious. During these years, France was much poorer in respect of even partial revolutionary commotions, but even in the political life of that country some flashes of civil war broke forth, as when the Executive Committee of the Party and the trade union leaders were obliged to take action in regard to acute matters which brooked no delay (*e.g.*, the violent meeting of January 11th, 1924). A careful study of such acute occurrences will supply irreplaceable material for the estimation of party leadership, the conduct of particular party organisation, and of the directing activity of particular workers of the Party. To ignore lessons such as these, not to draw the necessary deductions in respect of the choice of people, means to invite inevitable disaster, because a victory of the proletarian revolution is not possible apart from a penetrating, resolute, and courageous party leadership.

A party, even the most revolutionary party, cannot escape the creation of a conservative feeling in regard to organisation, otherwise it would be without the necessary stability. It is all a question of degree. The vitally necessary dose of conservatism should, in a revolutionary party be united with a perfect freedom from routine, with an initiative to form new adjustments, with a spirit of practical daring. These qualities are most of all tested when changes occur in the course of history. We have already heard the words of Lenin, that it frequently happens when

parties, even the most revolutionary, continue to follow yesterday's course of action at a time when the position of affairs has passed through a sharp change, and when new duties have arisen in consequence, and in doing so become or threaten to become a hindrance to revolutionary development. Both the conservatism of the party and the revolutionary initiative of the party find their most concentrated expressions in the organisation of party leadership. However, the Communist parties of Europe have still to face the most severe "change"—the change from preparative activity to the seizure of power. This change is of a most exacting, undelayable, responsible and formidable character. To let the moment slip, means the greatest defeat that can overtake a party.

The experience of the European struggles, above all of the struggles in Germany, during the last few years, seen in the light of our own experience, makes it evident that there are two types of leaders who are disposed to hold back the party at the very moment when it is necessary that it should take a supreme leap forward. First, there are the leaders who are, as a rule, disposed to see along the path of revolution first and foremost difficulties, hindrances and impediments, and to judge every situation with a preconceived, though not always a conscious intention to refrain from action. In their case, Marxism is turned into a method of establishing the impossibility of revolutionary action. The purest product of this type are the Russian Mensheviks. But the type as such is wider than Menshevism, and at the most critical moment, and in the most responsible position it suddenly manifests itself in the most revolutionary

party. Secondly, there is the type which is distinguished by its superficial agitational character. These representatives see no difficulty, no obstacle till it strikes them on the face. The skill to get over real difficulties by the aid of plausible phrases, to show a lofty optimism ("the sea is but knee deep") whenever a vexed problem has to be faced, very quickly passes into an opposite quality when then time for real action comes. The first type, the revolutionary who makes mountains of mole-hills, sees in the difficulties connected with the seizure of power, simply the heap and culmination of all those difficulties which he has been wont to see all along his path. To the second type, the shallow optimist, the difficulties of revolutionary action are always a sudden event. During the preparatory period the conduct of the one differs from the conduct of the other. The first is sceptical and too much reliance in a revolutionary sense should not be placed on him. The other, on the contrary, may prove to be a rampaging revolutionary. When, however, the time arrives that decisive action is called for, those two are both hand in hand in their opposition to a rising. And when all is said and done, the whole preparatory activity is only of value to the degree in which it renders the party and above all its directing organisations able to determine the time of a rising and take such a rising in hand. For the task of the Communist Party is the capture of power for the purpose of reconstructing society.

Frequent references have recently been made both by word and pen, to the need of "Bolshevising" the Comintern. This is a task that cannot be disputed or delayed, and a special urgency

attaches to it after the terrible lessons of Bulgaria and Germany a year ago. Bolshevism is not a doctrine (*i.e.*, not only a doctrine), but a system of revolutionary training for a change brought about by the proletariat. What does it mean to Bolshevise Communist parties? It means such a training of them, it means their making a choice of such guiding and controlling persons who shall not drift about hither and thither when the time of their "October" comes. "That is the whole of Hegel, of book wisdom, and the meaning of all philosophy."

A Word or Two About this Book.

The first stretch of the "democratic" revolution runs from the change in February to the crisis which took place in April, which was solved on May 6th, by the setting up of a Coalitionist government wherein the Mensheviks and the Narodniks entered. Throughout all that first stage, the author of the present volume played no part whatever, since he arrived at Petrograd only on May 5th, on the very eve when the Coalition government was created. This first stage of the revolution and of its prospects is expounded in articles which were written in America. I believe that in everything which is of an essential character, the articles will be in perfect agreement with that analysis of the revolution which Lenin presented in his "Letters from Afar."

From the moment of my arrival in Petrograd, my activity went on in entire consonance with the Executive Committee of the Bolsheviks. The lines which Lenin laid down for the conquest of power by the proletariat, I, of course, wholly and entirely

accepted. As regards the peasants, there was not a shade of difference between Lenin and myself—he had by that time completed the first stage against the right Bolsheviks, and their cry of “the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasants.” Before my formal admission into the party, I took part in drawing up a number of decisions and documents issued in the name of the party. The only reason which delayed my formal entrance into the party for three months was a desire to hasten the fusion of the Bolsheviks and the best elements of the Inter-regional (Mezh-rayan) organisation—and in general of revolutionary internationalists. This policy, likewise, I carried on with the full consent of Lenin.

The editor of this book has drawn my attention to one of my articles written at that time in favour of unification, which contains a reference to the organisational “cliquishness” of the Bolsheviks. One of these deep thinking pundits, such as Comrade Sorin, will not delay, of course, to deduce this phrase directly from the differences of view regarding the first paragraph of the Statutes. To start a quarrel about this matter, after I made confession by word and by act, of my actual and big mistakes in organisation, seems to me to be unnecessary. A less perverted reader will, however, find a much more simple and immediate explanation of the phrase in question, which I used in the actual conditions of the time. Among the *Inter-regionist* workers there remained from the past a very strong distrust in the organisational policy of the Petrograd committee. Arguments drawn from “cliquishness” with references to all sorts of “wrongdoings” as is usually the case in such cir-

cumstances, were in common use amongst the *Inter-regionists*. I refuted this in an article in the following way : Cliquishness as an inheritance from the past does exist, but if it is to diminish, the *Inter-regionists* will have to bring their separate existence to an end.

My purely polemical "proposition" to the First Congress of Soviets to constitute a government out of twelve Peshekhonovites has been expounded by someone—by Sukhanov it seems—either as a special inclination on my part towards Peshekhonov, or as a particular policy, distinct from that of Lenin. This is very curious. When our party demanded that the Soviets, led by Mensheviks and S.R.'s should take power, it "demanded" in that very act a ministry of Peshekhonovites. In the long run, no difference of principle really existed between Peshekhonov, Chernov and Dan. They were all of the same advantage in making easy the transfer of power from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. Maybe Peshekhonov was slightly better acquainted with statistics, and made a better business impression than Tseretelli or Chernov. A dozen Peshekhonovites meant a government of a dozen representatives of the petty bourgeois democracy instead of a coalition. When the Petrograd masses led by our party raised the cry : "Down with the ten capitalist ministers!" it meant that they demanded that the places of these ministers should be filled by Mensheviks and Narodniks. "Drive out the Cadets!" You, sirs, the bourgeois democrats, take the power into your own hands. Put twelve (or as many as there are) Peshekhonovites into the government, and we promise you as far as it is possible to "peacefully"

remove you from your posts when the hour will strike. And strike it should very soon." There was no special line of action here. It was the self-same line of action which Lenin himself formulated more than once.

It seems to me that there is need to emphasise specially the precaution of the editor of this volume, Comrade Lentsner. The bulk of the speeches contained in this volume is not based on stenographic notes, even defective ones, but on the accounts of the reporters of the conciliationist press which are mixed up with a great deal of ignorance and malice. A cursory perusal of a few of these documents made me waive on one side my first intention to correct and supplement them to a certain extent. Let them stop as they are. They, too, are a kind of document of the epoch, albeit "from the other side."

The present book would not have seen the light apart from the careful and capable work which Comrade Lentsner gave to it (the notes are by him) and of his coadjutors, Comrades Heller, Kryzhanovsky, Rovensky, and I. Rumer. I wish here to express my gratitude to them. I should like particularly to mention the great efforts made by my very close collaborator, M. S. Glazman, in preparing this and other of my books. I pen these lines with feelings of profound sorrow for the exceptionally tragic death of this splendid comrade, worker and man.

L. TROTSKY.

Kislovodsk,
15th September, 1924.

HOW ONE SHOULD NOT WRITE THE HISTORY OF OCTOBER.

(Comrade Trotsky's Book "1917.")

(The Fifth World Congress and the Thirteenth Party Conference of the Russian C.P. unanimously condemned the political line of the Russian Opposition, with Comrade Trotsky at the head, as petty bourgeois and opportunist. In spite of this, Comrade Trotsky is carrying on his struggle still further, but in a new form. Under the flag of Leninism, he aims at a revision of Leninism. His book on Lenin was the first attempt of this sort. Many comrades allowed themselves to be dazzled by the literary side of the book, but the scientific organs of the C.P. of Russia and of the C.P. of Germany immediately recognised its tendency and repudiated it with sharp criticisms.

There now follows the second attack. Comrade Trotsky has written a preface of about sixty pages to the recently published third volume of his work "1917." As in their time, those who came after Marx sought, under the flag of Marxism, to revise Marx, so Comrade Trotsky here attempts a revision of Bolshevism in the name of "Leninism." The *Pravda*, the central organ of the C.P. of Russia, replied to this attempt with the following article which we reprint in full.—Ed.)

Comrade Trotsky's recently published book, "1917," which is devoted to the "Lessons of October," will soon become the mode. This is not to be wondered at, as it aimed at becoming an inner Party sensation.

After the events of the past year, which have proved the incorrectness of the standpoint of our Party Opposition, after the facts, which have again and again proved the correctness of the leadership of our Party, Comrade Trotsky again revives the discussion, although with other means. The preface to the book (and it is in this preface, as well as in the annotations, that there lies the "kernel" of the book) is written in a semi-Æsopic language, so that the totally inexperienced reader will fail to observe the hints and allusions with which the preface is interlarded. This peculiar cryptic language, for which Comrade Trotsky, in spite of the fact that he himself demands "critical clearness," has a strong preference, must be deciphered. For the work of Comrade Trotsky, which claims to be a guide to the "Study of October," threatens to become a guide for "every present and future discussion." It takes upon itself the responsibility to fight against the line of the Party, as well as of the Comintern, in which it in no way bears the character of a theoretical analysis, but more resembles a political platform, upon the basis of which it will be possible to undermine the exact decisions adopted by the respective congresses.

Comrade Trotsky's book is not only written for the Russian reader; this can be recognised without difficulty. It is to a large extent written for the "information" of foreign comrades. Now, when the problem of "bolshevising" stands on the order of the day in a whole number of Communist Parties, when the interest for the history of our Party is undoubtedly increasing, the book of Comrade Trotsky can render a great disservice. It is

not only not a text book of Bolshevism, but it will much rather become a factor for "debolshevizing" the foreign Communist Parties—so biassed, one-sided, and at times exceedingly falsely, does it describe the events, from the analysis of which it seeks to draw conclusions for the present.

This is what renders necessary a critical examination of this new book of Comrade Trotsky. It must not remain unanswered. One can only regret that Comrade Trotsky, who draws conclusions from the "teachings of October" which, it is true, are false, draws no conclusions from the more recent epoch of last year's discussion. The best test of different points of view is, as Comrade Trotsky himself admits, Experience; Life itself. Life however has shown that the ruling line which is recognised by the Party, has not only not brought the country to "the verge of ruin," as the last year's opposition predicted, which prophesied for the country all the plagues of Egypt, but in spite of events, which are independent of every "platform," as the bad harvest, etc., has brought the country forward.

On the other hand a whole number of new tasks under new conditions have arisen; difficulties which are determined by the process of growth. The whole Party desires, before all, concrete work under a leadership which has been tried by experience, upon a "platform" which has withstood this experience. For this reason it was not in the least desirable to reopen the old disputes, even if in another form.

Comrade Trotsky saw fit to do this. Of course, he bears the whole responsibility for it. Willingly

or unwillingly, we must reply to this book, as the Party cannot permit a propaganda which is directed against the decisions which the Party adopted with such firmness and unanimity to remain unanswered. We will, therefore, examine the statement which Comrade Trotsky has now submitted to the Party, the "lessons" which he has drawn from October, and is now very kindly communicating to our young and old comrades.

I.

The Question of Historical Investigation.

The axle upon which the statements of Comrade Trotsky turn is the estimate of the importance of various periods in the history of our Party. He sees things essentially as follows: the whole period of the development of the Party up to October, 1917 is a thing of very little importance. Not until the moment of seizing power was the question decided, it is this period which stands out before all others, only then have we the possibility of testing classes, Parties, their leading cadres, and individuals.

"It would mean a piece of barren scholasticism, but in no way a Marxian political analysis, were we at the present time to occupy ourselves with an analysis of the different viewpoints of revolution in general, and of the Russian in particular, and thereby to overlook the experiences of 1917. It would be as if we were to indulge in disputes over the advantages of various methods of swimming, but obstinately refuse to turn our eyes to the river, where these methods are being applied by bathers. There is no better test for a point of view over

revolution than its application in revolution itself, precisely as a method of swimming can best be proved when the swimmer springs into the water. . (p. xvi.)

“What is the meaning of bolshevising the Communist Parties? It means such an education of these Parties, such a selection of the leading persons, that they will not run off the track at the moment of their October. Herein lies Hegel, the book wisdom and the essence of all philosophies. .” (p. 65.)

These sentences only contain half the truth, and one can, therefore (as Comrade Trotsky does) draw totally false conclusions from them.

Comrade Trotsky says to the Communist Parties: Study October in order to be victorious! One must not overlook October.

Certainly one must not do that. Just as one must neither forget the year 1905, nor the very instructive years of reaction. Who, and where and when, has recommended such a monstrous thing? Who, and where and when, has even ventured to advocate such an absurdity?

No one has recommended it. But precisely in order to understand the pre-conditions of the October victory, one must at all costs look beyond the immediate preparations of the revolt. But in no event must one be separated from the other. In no circumstances must one estimate groups, persons and tendencies by disconnecting them from that period of preparation which Comrade Trotsky compares to disputes over “the best method of swimming.” Of course, in the “critical period,”

when it is a question of a decisive struggle, all questions are faced in all their acuteness, and all shades, tendencies and groups tend to express on this occasion their most characteristic, inner, essential qualities. On the other hand, the explanation for the fact that they play a positive role during the flood-time of revolution, does not always lie in the correctness of their "standpoint."

"It is not difficult to be a revolutionary when revolution has already broken out, when everything is in flames,"—thus Comrade Lenin formulated this aspect of the question. (Collected Works, vol. xvii., p. 183, Russian Edition). In another passage he says: "The revolutionary is not he who becomes a revolutionary on the outbreak of revolution, but he who defends the principles and slogans of the revolution at the time of the most furious reaction." (Ibid, vol. VII/2, p. 151).

That is not the same thing as Trotsky says.

Let us dot the i's. What determined the attitude of the Party of the Bolsheviks in October? It was determined by the whole previous history of the Party, by its struggle against all opportunist deviations, from the extreme Mensheviks up to the Trotskyites (for example, the "August" Bloc). Can one, however, perchance, say that the correct standpoint of Comrade Trotsky (because it coincided with the Bolshevik standpoint) in the October days, resulted from his attitude in the preparatory period? Obviously one cannot say that. On the contrary, had a historical miracle occurred at that time, and had the Bolshevik workers followed that which Comrade Trotsky

proclaimed (unity with the liquidators, fight against the "sectarianism" of Lenin, Menshevist political platform, during the war fight against the Zimmerwald Left, etc.), then there would have been no October victory. Comrade Trotsky, however, entirely avoids dealing with this period, although it would be his duty to impart just these "lessons" to the Party.

Let us quote another example. There fought side by side with us on the October barricades many left social revolutionaries. In the decisive moment of October they contributed their share to the cause of victory. Did that mean, however, that they had been "tried" once and for all by October? Unfortunately this was by no means the case as the post-October experience has shown, which to a considerable extent confirmed the estimate given of these petty bourgeois revolutionaries before October.

October isolated, therefore, in no way suffices for the "test." It is rather the second moment which is of more importance, the moment which Comrade Lenin so categorically pointed out.

The statement of Comrade Trotsky, that the "bolshevising" of the Communist Parties consists in such an education and such a selection of a body of "leaders" that they shall not run off the track at the moment of their October, is, therefore, correct, in as far as it also includes the appropriation of the experiences of the "preparatory period." For even the immediate experiences of the Russian October can neither be understood nor made use of if we do not take to heart the teachings of this preparatory period. Comrade

Trotsky, who regards the matter in such a way that the Bolshevik Party in its actual essence only began to exist after the October days, does not see the uninterrupted connection of the line of the Party in its entirety up to "the present moment."

And just in the same way he fails to see that after the seizure of power, even after the end of the civil war, history is by no means at an end. In the same way the history of our Party is also not at an end, the history which is likewise a "testing of the Party policy," for it not only contains discussions regarding the one or the other standpoint, but also the experiences of practical policy.

One had to take care not "to leave the track" in October, but the same applies to the time of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (when, as Trotsky admits, the "head," that means the life and death, of the Soviet power was at stake). One had also to take care not to leave the track in the discussion of 1921, for without the Lenin policy we would have endangered everything. It would also have been out of place to leave the track in the last year, for without the money reform, without the economic policy, etc., conducted by the Party, we should have likewise arrived at a desperate situation. In all these critical situations, however, Comrade Trotsky has left the track, and in the same manner as in the pre-February period of his political existence, when he had not broken with the open opponents of Bolshevism.

"The tradition of a revolutionary party," writes Comrade Trotsky (p. 62), "will not be created through maintaining silence, but out of critical clearness." Very true. The demand for "critical clearness" however, must not be raised only in

regard to the actions which took place in October, but also in relation to the preceding and the succeeding period of development. Only in this manner is an actual test possible; for the Party of the proletariat acts constantly and passes through more than one "critical" period.

II.

The Lessons of the Revolution of the Year 1917 and the Struggle within the Party.

Shall silence be maintained regarding October and its prologue, the February Revolution? Certainly not. That would show either a lack of conscientiousness or stupidity. But, quite in vain, Comrade Trotsky, with his hints and allusions as well as with open appeals, wishes to create the impression that the history of October is being dealt with in a "step-motherly" fashion, because in this respect some sort of mental reservations (a false, "half conscious estimate") play a role. Such statements as, "Still more inadmissible . . . would it be to maintain silence, out of considerations of a personal character, which are of quite secondary importance; regarding extremely important problems of the October upheaval, which have international significance" (p. xii.), are scarcely in place.

This statement is certainly correct.

But in the first place, Comrade Trotsky conceals the fact that no less has been written over October than over any other period. Lenin's writings contain a brilliant estimate of this period, from which the Party will be able for a long time to draw all the essential teachings of October.

Secondly, Comrade Trotsky fails to mention that the persons in question have repeatedly admitted their errors, as is well-known to the whole Party.

Comrade Zinoviev, in his "History of the Russian Communist Party" and in earlier publications, has spoken with all clearness regarding them, and has declared the same before the Party and before the Communist International; Comrade Lenin also spoke concerning this, but at no time did he connect this error with the later, after October, activity of these comrades who took the wrong course in October.*

Comrade Trotsky now seeks to make use of these errors in order to revise the whole Party police and to "correctly expound" the whole history of the Party. Therein lies the kernel of the statements of Comrade Trotsky. The whole analysis of the events from April to October is so stated

* It is necessary in this connection to refer to certain facts. In spite of differences of opinion, Kamenev, on the proposal of Lenin, was elected at the April Conference to the Central Committee of the Party, and in the moment of the insurrection, on behalf of the Central Committee, took the chair at the Second Soviet Congress. Already in November, 1917, Zinoviev, whose disagreements with the Central Committee only lasted a few days, on behalf of the Central Committee of the Party delivered a report to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee advocating the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. At the Seventh Party Conference (beginning of March, 1918), Zinoviev, on behalf of the Central Committee, spoke for the Lenin policy against Trotsky and the "Lefts." From this it is to be seen that the whole Party regarded the October errors of these comrades as nothing else than a temporary difference of opinion. On the contrary, they entrusted them with tasks of the greatest importance, in spite of the fact that they did not for a moment approve of the errors of these comrades. E

as if the differences of opinion, which "tore the Party to pieces," had become more and more acute until they finally broke out into a conflict which almost led to collapse, and that the revolution was only saved, thanks to the efforts of Comrade Lenin who had the courage to oppose the Central Committee and who was supported by Comrade Trotsky, who, so to speak, "anticipated" the fundamental idea of Lenin.

This analysis hardly contains anything which is in accordance with the facts.

In the first place, Comrade Trotsky totally ignores the Party. It does not exist, its mood is not to be perceived, it has vanished. There stands only Comrade Trotsky, Lenin is visible in the distance, and we see a slow-witted, nameless Central Committee. The Petrograd organisation, which was the real collective organiser of the workers' insurrection, is altogether absent. Comrade Trotsky's whole treatment of history revolves exclusively round "the highest pinnacles" of the Party structure. With regard to the whole Party structure we look in vain in the artistically-painted picture puzzle of Comrade Trotsky. "Where is the Party?" Is it permissible for Marxists to write history in such a manner? That is a caricature of Marxism. To write the history of October and to overlook the Party means to stand with both feet on an individualistic standpoint, upon the standpoint of heroes and masses. Such a standpoint is not suitable for the education of the Party membership. But also from the point of view of an analysis of the leading figures, the chronicle of Comrade Trotsky cannot be approved, for it distorts the facts. Let us see

how Comrade Trotsky describes the course of events :

“The decisions of the April Conference gave the Party a correct attitude. The differences of opinion of the leaders of the Party were not liquidated thereby. On the contrary. In the course of events they assumed a more concrete form, and they reached their acutest point at the most decisive moment of the revolution, in the October days.” (p. xxxi.)

After the July days :

“The mobilising of the right elements of the Party increased. Their criticism became more determined. (p. xxxii.)

And finally before October :

“An extraordinary Party Congress proved to be unnecessary. The pressure of Lenin secured the necessary turn to the left of the forces, both in the Central Committee and in the parliamentary fraction.” (p. xxxvi.)

All this is extremely—“incorrect.” For already at the time of the Sixth Party Congress there had taken place a complete ideological consolidation of the Party. The Central Committee elected at the Sixth Party Congress stood unconditionally on the platform of the revolt. Lenin exercised an enormous influence upon the Central Committee, for Lenin himself was a leading member of the C.C. as is known to everybody. But to represent the matter as if the majority of the C.C. were, so to speak, almost against the revolt, means not to know either the Party or the Central Committee, and means to sin against the truth.

Was not the revolt decided upon on the 10th of October with an overwhelming majority of the Central Committee? The tremendous energy, the truly tremendous revolutionary passion, the ingenious analysis of events and the powerful magnetic power of Comrade Lenin gave a firm stamp to the opinion of the overwhelming majority of the C.C. Comrade Trotsky, however, wants at all costs to separate Lenin from the C.C., to oppose them to each other and to tear asunder the indivisible band which in reality was not loosened for a moment. History must not be distorted in this manner. Were it not so, if that which Comrade Trotsky writes were correct, then it would be quite unintelligible, (1) Why the Party was not split for the conflict; (2) how it was able to triumph; (3) how the conflict (the resignation of some leading members of the C.C.) could be liquidated within a few days by the return of these comrades to their posts. This "miracle" (a miracle from the standpoint of the assumptions of Comrade Trotsky) as is known, was accomplished, and without much difficulty. It is true that one can hint here that after the victory there are many who are prepared to join the victors, as one does "sit in judgment" against victors.

But it must not be forgotten that the victory in Petrograd and in Moscow was merely the beginning of the struggle, the beginning of enormous difficulties, which was perfectly clear to every Party member. These considerations do not help in any way to explain what is to be explained.

All this, however, becomes perfectly understandable if we do not consider the events from such an egocentric point of view as does Comrade

Trotsky. In this case we get the following picture. From April to October there gradually disappear the remnants of vacillation in the Party; in October they have been reduced to a minimum; the Party is proceeding with firm ranks into the fight. Above there remain some comrades who are not in agreement with the general line of the Party. But precisely because the Party (that is no little thing, Comrade Trotsky) was united, precisely because the overwhelming majority of the C.C. went with Lenin, these comrades were also carried along by the general stream of the Party and class, and immediately returned to their posts. They have been far more thoroughly "proved" than merely through the October days.

III.

War, Revolution and the Standpoint of Comrade Trotsky.

The "Chronicle" of Comrade Trotsky, as well as his annotations to the same, not only incorrectly describe the relations within the Party, but also the preparation of the "bolshevizing" of Comrade Trotsky himself. (We are solely interested here in his political attitude.) We learn from the annotations of Comrade Trotsky's book, for example, that in the articles written by L. D. Trotsky in America there was also completely anticipated (!) the later political tactics of the revolutionary Social-Democrats. The fundamental conclusions of these articles agree in almost every detail (!) with the political perspectives, which Comrade Lenin developed in his famous "Letters from Afar." (p. 370.)

We learn here that in the "course of time the differences of opinion between the standpoint of *Nashe Slovo** and Lenin became continually less." (p. 377.) On the other hand, we learn a whole number of details regarding the errors of the *Pravda*, of a number of Bolsheviki, etc.

But after perusing the book we are little informed in what these differences of opinion, which grew continually less, consisted. And we are decidedly misled if we take it as correct that Comrade Trotsky had already anticipated the Leninist policy, as stated by that terrible busybody, Comrade Lenzner, who was entrusted with the perusal of the book and with adding the notes. (Lenin did not know that he, according to Comrade Trotsky, had committed a plagiarism.) The question of the attitude during the war, however, gives the key to a number of other questions and leads us to the laboratory where the slogans were drawn up, which soon were to play such an extraordinary important, one might rightly say, world-historical role.

We will attempt to call to mind several things in this respect.

1. "Peace" or "Civil War." This is the first difference of opinion, one which involves a considerable measure of principle, for precisely here is to be seen, who and how has anticipated the events, as well as the tactics, of the revolutionary social democracy. The slogan of the civil war which was issued by Lenin and the Bolshevik C.C. right at the beginning of the war was a special Bolshevik slogan, a slogan, which drew a line of demarcation between true revolutionaries and, not only all

* "Our Word," at one time the organ of Trotsky.—Ed

shades of Chauvinists, but also of the internationalists of a petty bourgeois, pacifist, "humanitarian" colour who sought to approach the centrist elements. Only by bluntly raising the question of civil war was there created the possibility to select the cadre of those revolutionaries who afterwards formed the kernel of the Communist Party.

Comrade Trotsky was most decidedly opposed to this slogan, which he considered as a narrow slogan, unsuited for mass propaganda. Is that perchance an "anticipation" of the Leninist standpoint?

2. Defeatism and the Fight against it. The second distinguishing criterion of the Bolshevist attitude was the slogan that the revolutionary Social-Democrats (we would now say Communists, must, in the imperialist war, before all desire the defeat of their own government. Comrade Trotsky characterised this attitude as an inverted nationalism, or nationalism with a minus sign. Now, however, the deep meaning of this Leninist attitude, whose roots form the chief source of the Bolshevist idea, is now perfectly clear. Yes, the chief source. One only needs to read, for example, the recently published polemic between Lenin and Plechanov over the draft programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Lenin's Collected Works, No. 2) in order to perceive this. In this polemic with Plechanov, Lenin finds fault with the Plechanov draft on the ground that this is a textbook and not a declaration of war; there we read about capitalism in general, whilst we require war against Russian capitalism—that is, the essence of this polemic on the part of Lenin. Why did

Lenin insist upon this? Precisely because he was a fighter and not a disclaimer. The slogan of the defeat of one's own government was a declaration of war on every form of pacifism, even when it was hidden under the feather bed of noble phrases, in every one who advocated the defence of the fatherland, even when it was hidden under the cleverest mask. This was the most decided break. A real severance of all connections with one's own bourgeois state. It was precisely such an attitude which determined in reality, in actual practice, the international standpoint of Bolshevism. This was the second difference of principle between Trotsky and the Bolsheviki.

3. Unity with the Menshevist Fraction of Tcheidse. Even during the war Comrade Trotsky still advocated unity with such elements as the Tcheidse fraction, and he did not have the courage to declare for a definite organisatory break which was the necessary preliminary to a correct policy. It was not without reason that Lenin greatly feared that many comrades would be misled by Trotskyism. It is interesting to note that Trotsky, even in May, 1917, did not perceive his earlier errors. Thus we read on page 380 of the book in question :

“ On the 7th of May, 1917, there was opened the city conference of the United Social-Democrats (Bolsheviki and Internationalists). The Conference greeted Comrade Trotsky, who was present as guest. In reply to this greeting Comrade Trotsky declared that for him, *who always stood for the unity of the Social-Democratic forces* (italics by the *Pravda*) unity is not an end in itself, that

this formula must be given a revolutionary content, etc. (p. 380).*

From this it is perfectly clear that Comrade Trotsky does not only not condemn his fight for the unity of the liquidators, but makes this tremendous fatal error almost the basis, so to speak, of unity with the Bolsheviki, this time fortunately being prepared to give the formula a revolutionary content.

Unfortunately the same faulty estimation of his own mistakes in the organisatory question is also observed at present, it was clearly revealed by Comrade Trotsky in the last year's discussion). Comrade Trotsky justifies himself with regard to the accusations on the part of "some one of the deep thinking sextons of the type of Comrade Ssorin" on account of his fight against the Bolshevist sectarianism, by a more than strange method.

"My objection to the article was the following: Sectarianism still exists as a heritage of the past. But in order to reduce it the 'Meshrajonzy' must cease their separate existence" (p. 66).

Comrade Trotsky already, therefore, when he advocated uniting with the Bolsheviki, condemned Bolshevist sectarianism as a bad inheritance of the wicked past.

But do we repudiate this heritage? Not in the least, for this so-called sectarianism was, as a matter of fact, the method of the creation of our

* This refers to the so-called "Meshrajonzy," who existed side by side with the Bolsheviki and at this time stood for unity with the "left" Mensheviki. After the July days they, along with Comrade Trotsky, joined the Bolshevist Party.

Party, that is the organisatory basic principle of Bolshevism. And when Comrade Trotsky writes on page 65 of his "preface" that he has recognised his "great organisatory" mistakes, and on page 66 justifies the charge of sectarianism directed against pre-revolutionary Bolshevism, this means that he has not yet drawn all the consequences and all the teachings from the history of our Party. He can, however, not do this if he considers the birthday of the Party to be the day of its union with the "Meshrajonzy" or even the glorious October days, in which Comrade Trotsky, not without birth-pangs, was himself born a Bolshevik.

4. Fight against the Zimmerwald Left. Finally, there must be mentioned the attitude of Comrade Trotsky on a "world scale." Comrade Trotsky who conducted the fight against Chauvinists, social patriots, etc., was scornful towards the Zimmerwald Left. He regarded them likewise as sectarians, as a Bolshevik whim, quite unadapted for the conditions abroad. Already in America, where, as Comrade Lenzner assures us, Comrade Trotsky anticipated the later standpoint of Comrade Lenin, he conducted an active fight against solidarising with the Zimmerwald Left. Trotsky could not approve this "split" from the Zimmerwald centrists. The comrades who were entrusted with the editing of "1917" did not take any trouble to illuminate for the international proletariat this part of our Party history, which is quite as important for the International as the question of civil war, of defeatism, etc., for here there is no less at stake than the choice between the Second and the Third International.

5. The Conception of "Permanent" Revolution. Comrade Trotsky has, as is proved, not only "anticipated" Lenin's later standpoint, but he proved himself to be right in one of the most essential points of our revolutionary theory and at the same time of our revolutionary strategy, and that is, in the question of "permanent" revolution. Comrade Trotsky writes concerning this as follows :

"Lenin, immediately before 1905, gave expression to the unique character of the Russian revolution in the formula of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat, and the peasantry. This formula, as the later development showed, could merely be of importance as a stage to the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the peasantry" (p. xvii.)

What can be the meaning of that? In 1905 there was a fight of the Bolsheviks, who issued the slogan "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry," on the one hand, and the Trotsky-Parvus group, whose slogan was, "Down with the Tsar and up with a Labour government!" on the other hand and finally, with the Poles, at the head of whom stood Rosa Luxemburg, who issued the formula: "the proletariat supported by the peasantry."

Whose standpoint proved to be correct?

Comrade Trotsky evades giving a definite and detailed reply to this question. Indirectly, however, he finds the correctness of his formula confirmed. The formula of Lenin could "merely" be a stage to the formula of Trotsky. But to say that the standpoint of Trotsky proved to be correct is

false. It proved to be incorrect, and the further development has proved its incorrectness. The peculiarity of Comrade Trotsky's attitude consists precisely in the fact that he wished to skip a stage which could not be skipped. (He forgot one trifle. the peasantry.)

"It is not sufficient to be a revolutionary and a follower of socialism or a Communist in general" wrote Comrade Lenin. "One must understand how to find at any moment the particular link in the chain which one must seize with all his force in order to hold the entire chain and to prepare a sure transition to the following link." (Collected Works, vol. 15, p. 223.)

It is precisely this which the slogan of Comrade Trotsky failed to give. He has "disregarded" that special link of the chain which should have been grasped with all force, he has under-estimated the role of the peasantry and thereby practically isolated himself from the workers.

"Magnificent, catching, intoxicating slogans, which have no basis—that is the nature of the revolutionary phrase." (Lenin xv., p. 100.)

It does not follow from the fact that after many years, and after we have passed over a certain stage, the socialist revolution has set in, that Comrade Trotsky is right. Such an assertion would contradict the facts and would be based upon a mis-understanding of the nature of the tactics of Bolshevism, of its, if one may so say, political methodology, which unites a persistent march forward to the great aim with an austere soberness, which rejects all prejudices and all superficiality in its estimate of every concrete situation. Here,

also, Comrade Trotsky is in the wrong. Here also his book entirely misleads the reader. Not to mention the fact that Comrade Trotsky remains silent as to how his "permanent" ultra-left phrase was wedded to an extremely right policy and a bitter struggle against the Bolshevik Party.

IV.

The Lessons of October and the Communist International.

One of the practical foundations upon which the "Preface" of Trotsky is based is the endeavour, to put it mildly, to "dispute" the policy of the E.C.C.I. He sets out to take revenge for the discussion he lost in 1923 and thereby to oppose, not only the line of the C.C., but also the policy of the Comintern as a whole. For this purpose he has distorted the meaning of the most important epochs of the class struggle of the proletariat in Germany and in Bulgaria. In this he hints that the mistakes of several comrades in 1917 caused the failure of the Communists in Germany, and in Bulgaria in 1923. The structure of this idea is very simple when we strip off the husk of words. XYZ erred in the Russian October, XYZ now lead the Communist International. The Comintern has lost the battles, a, b, c. It follows that XYZ are responsible for this, as they are carrying on their traditions of the Russian October. Briefly stated that is the meaning of the long effusion.

The frame of this completely ridiculous syllogism has a concrete content. It is, therefore, necessary critically to illuminate this content, where-

upon the whole complicated construction of Comrade Trotsky will collapse.

Point 1. Bulgaria.

Comrade Trotsky writes :

“In the past year, we had two severe defeats in Bulgaria. First, the Party, owing to doctrinaire and fatalistic considerations, missed a most extraordinary favourable moment for revolutionary action (the peasants' revolt after the Zankov putch). Afterwards the Party, in order to make good its mistakes, plunged into the September revolt without having prepared the political and organisatory pre-conditions therefor” (xii.)

As the reader will easily see, the reason for the defeat is here considered to be, first Menshevik fatalism, and secondly unlimited optimism (no preparation, etc.). These two features are also mentioned in characterising the types of October opportunism. The connection between the Russian October and the present Comintern leadership is, therefore, completely set up.

Let us, however, examine the facts a little more closely. The first defeat was the result of the fact that the Bulgarian Party had dealt with the peasantry quite incorrectly, and did not know how to estimate their movement or the role of the Peasants' League as a whole, or its left-wing. They rather adopted the standpoint, “Down with the king, up with a workers' government.” At the decisive moment, when it was necessary to take the leadership into their hands, and to mount up on the crest of a powerful peasants' wave, the Party declared itself neutral, claiming that the

fight was between the town and the rural bourgeoisie, which was no concern of the proletariat. These were the "considerations" of the C.P. of Bulgaria. They have been committed to writing, and can be now proved by documents. If we wish to have an analogy with our October (we should, by the way, be more cautious with analogies), it would be much more apt to take the Kornilov days (Kerensky-Stambuliksi, Kornilov-Zankov). Here according to the statement of Comrade Trotsky himself, too much support was given to Kerensky, and the distinction between the fight against Kornilov and the defence of Kerensky was not understood. In Bulgaria, however, the exact opposite error was committed.

Wherein, therefore, lies the "Lessons of October?"

Apart from this, the comrades who are at present members of the E.C.C.I. adopted during the Kornilov days a thoroughly correct attitude, and the whole E.C.C.I. exercised a thoroughly correct criticism of the C.P. of Bulgaria and urged them on.

The second defeat in Bulgaria is a fact, and Comrade Trotsky describes the conditions under which it took place. Will you be so good, Comrade Trotsky, to say, whether in this case you support the old formula of Plechanov during the time of the Menshevist decay, "one should not have taken up arms?" Was it necessary or not for the Bulgarian Communists to take up arms?

Yes or no?

Comrade Trotsky does not reply to this. According to our opinion it was necessary to take

up arms, as only by this means was it possible to maintain contact with the peasantry who were entering the struggle with elementary force. But there was no time for preparation. That is the true picture of the events. The "Lessons" of Comrade Trotsky have nothing in the least to do with it.

Point 2. Germany.

Still more interesting is the question of the defeat of the German proletariat in October last year.

"We have seen there in the second half of the past year a *classical* (italics by the *Pravda*) demonstration of the fact that a most extraordinary favourable revolutionary situation of world historical importance can be missed." (xii.)

According to the opinion of Comrade Trotsky, therefore, the failure here consisted in the fact that a "classical" moment was missed. It was necessary at all costs to take up the decisive struggle and the victory would have been ours. Here Comrade Trotsky draws a complete analogy with the October revolution in Russia. There as here, we were pushed forward. In Russia, under the pressure of Lenin, we decided upon action and were victorious—in Germany, without the pressure of Lenin, no decision was made and the appropriate moment was lost. Now, however, under the influence of the Russian October revolution, it is declared that the forces for the decisive struggle were not sufficient. That is the meaning of the "German events" according to Comrade Trotsky.

But here we have before us mere schematising and grey abstraction. Comrade Trotsky elaborates

how history would have been written if the opponents of the revolt had been in the majority in the Russian C.C. : it would then have been said that the forces were too limited, that the enemy was fearfully strong, etc.

All this is only outwardly convincing; yes, it is probable that history would have been written in this manner. But that is in no way a proof that the forces of the German revolution in October, 1923, were not over-estimated.

It is false to say, the moment was a "classical" one. For the Social-Democrats proved themselves to be far stronger than we thought. An analogy with the Russian October is quite out of place here. In Germany there were no armed soldiers who were for the revolution. We could not issue the slogan of peace. There was no peasant agrarian movement. There was no such party as ours. But apart from all that it proved that social-democracy has not yet outlived itself. These concrete facts had, therefore, to be dealt with. At the time of the decisive events the E.C.C.I. declared itself in favour of the October policy. Now as, owing to the objective conditions this suffered a defeat, and as, thanks to the right leaders, this defeat was "greater than necessary," Comrade Trotsky, who has in fact always supported the right opportunist wing which is inclined to capitulation and opposed to the left, now gives a "profound" theoretical basis of his conception, and thereby launches a blow against the leading circles of the Comintern. Such lessons must not be drawn either from the Russian or the German October.

It is also quite inadmissible to cling to many errors to which Comrade Trotsky still clings.

One of the lessons (the actual lessons) of the German October is, that before it, the most far-reaching mobilisation of the masses is necessary. This work has been greatly neglected. In Hamburg, for example, during the revolt there were no workers' councils and our Party organisation was not capable of drawing the ten thousands of strikers into the struggle. Throughout the whole of Germany there were no soviets; according to Comrade Trotsky's opinion that was right, as the soviets were substituted by the factory councils. As a matter of fact, these factory councils could not replace the soviets, as they did not comprise the whole population, including the most backward and indifferent, as the soviets do in the critical and tense moment of the class struggle.

The book of Comrade Trotsky calls for a study of October. This slogan does not contain anything new. It is appropriate for the members of our Party as well as for our foreign comrades. Comrade Trotsky's book, or to be more correct, his preface, claims to be a guide in this study. To this we must say, in the most definite manner; it cannot fulfil this role. It will, however, mislead the comrades, who, behind the exterior fine style, will not observe the complete lack of proportion, the distortion of the true Party history. That is no mirror of the Party, but a caricature.

The publication of this "caricature" is by no means a chance event. After what we have said above it is not difficult to perceive to what the conclusions indicated by Comrade Trotsky lead.

In fact, if, as Comrade Trotsky falsely states, in October, 1917, something correct could be

carried through only against the C.C. is it not possible that such a situation may arise again? What guarantee is there that the leadership will be the right one? And whether it is correct at the present time? The sole "test" is October, 1917. Can one trust those who have not stood this test? And did not the Comintern suffer a defeat in Bulgaria and in Germany in consequence of these leaders? Is it not necessary to study the October in such a way that just these problems are more closely investigated?

That is the essence of those problems which Comrade Trotsky, after the failure of his frontal attack in the past year, brings forward for the attention of his readers. Comrade Trotsky can, however, be quite convinced that the Party will understand how to judge rightly and in good time this quiet undermining work. The Party wants work and no fresh discussion. The Party desires true Bolshevist unity.



BOLSHEVISM OR TROTSKYISM?

WHERE THE LINE OF TROTSKYISM IS LEADING.

By G. ZINOVIEV.

I.

Some Facts Regarding Brest and the First Party Conference after October.

The Differences of Opinion in October and My Mistake at that Time.

To replace Leninism by Trotskyism, that is the task which Comrade Trotsky has set out to accomplish. In this respect he had already in 1922, in his book "1905," attempted to "attain something by allusions." So long as Comrade Lenin held the threads in his hands, Comrade Trotsky decided not to undertake a direct attack. Comrade Trotsky has now obviously decided that "the moment has arrived." According to all the rules of strategy, before one strikes the decisive blow, one must prepare the way by artillery fire. The attack upon the so-called right-wing of Bolshevism is intended as a smoke-screen, particularly regarding the October failures of the writer of these lines.

It is an actual fact that at the beginning of November, 1917, I committed a great error. This error was freely admitted by me, and made good in the course of a few days. As, however, these days were not ordinary days, but very fateful days, as this was a time of extremest tension, the error was highly dangerous.

In any event, I will not minimise the extent of this error.

It was precisely because of the extraordinary tension of these times that Vladimir Ilyitch so energetically opposed our error. All these extremely draconic punitive measures which he at that time proposed against us, all the passionate chastising which he inflicted, were, of course, thoroughly justified. In the shortest time after these events, some weeks afterwards, at the commencement of the disputes over the Brest Peace, Vladimir Ilyitch, as the whole C.C. and all the leading circles of the Party are aware, regarded these differences of opinion as completely liquidated.

In his speech on "Trotskyism or Leninism," Comrade Stalin very rightly remarks that in the September-October period as a result of a number of circumstances, the revolution endeavoured to carry out every step under the form of defence. This was to be understood after all the shilly-shallying connected with the Kornilov period. I, who at that time was living illegally, fell a victim to my failure precisely owing to this peculiarity of that phase of October.

When Comrade Lenin reverted to our error, three years after it had been committed, he wrote as follows :

"Immediately before the October revolution, and soon afterwards, a number of excellent Communists in Russia committed errors, of which one does not like to be reminded. Why not? Because it is not right, except on a special occasion, to refer to such errors, which have been completely made good. They showed hesitations in the period in question in that they feared that the Bolsheviki would isolate themselves and undertake too great a risk in hold-

ing aloof too much from a certain section of the Mensheviki and of the social revolutionaries. The conflict went so far that the comrades in question, as a demonstration, resigned from all responsible posts, both in the Party and in the Soviet, to the greatest joy of the enemies of the social revolution. The matter led to the most bitter polemics in the press on the part of the C.C. of our Party against those who had resigned. And after some weeks, at the most, after some months, all these comrades perceived their errors and returned to their responsible posts in the Party and the Soviets.”*

Comrade Lenin makes no reference whatever to a “right” wing.

For myself, I endeavoured more than once before the Party and before the whole Comintern, to deal with my error. I spoke of it, for example, at the opening of the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern, which took place on the Fifth Anniversary of October, as follows :

“Allow me to say a word regarding a personal matter. It seems to me that I, particularly now on the Fifth Anniversary of the Revolution, am called upon to say that which I am about to say. You are aware, comrades, that five years ago, I, along with some other comrades, made a great mistake, which, as I believe, was the greatest mistake I have ever made in my life. At that time I failed to estimate correctly the whole counter-revolutionary nature of the Mensheviki. Therein lies the nature of our mistake before October, 1917. Although we had

* Lenin, Collected Works, vol. xvii., p. 373.

fought against the Mensheviki for over ten years, nevertheless, I, as well as many other comrades, could not at the decisive moment get rid of the idea that the Mensheviki and S.R., although they were only the right fraction and the right wing, nevertheless formed a portion of the working class. As a matter of fact, they were and are the 'left' extremely skilful, pliable and, therefore, especially dangerous wing of the international bourgeoisie. I, therefore, believe, comrades, that it is our duty to remind all our comrades. . . .etc."

I spoke of our error in the most widely circulated book from my pen, in the "History of the R.C.P." and on numerous earlier occasions.

To consider the writer of these lines as belonging to the "right-wing" of the Bolsheviki, is simply absurd. The whole of the Bolshevik Party is aware that I, working hand in hand with Comrade Lenin in the course of nearly 20 years, never once had even a sharp difference of opinion with him, except in the one case mentioned. The epoch of the years 1914-1917, from the commencement of the imperialist war up to the commencement of the proletarian revolution in our country, was a not unimportant epoch. Precisely in these years there took place the decisive re-groupings in the camp of the international labour movement. The books "Socialism and War," (1915), and "Against the Stream," are sufficient witness that during that time I in no way came forward as representative of a right-wing of Bolshevism.

At the April Conference of 1917, the importance of which Comrade Trotsky misrepresents, I had not the smallest difference of opinion with Comrade

Lenin. In the dispute between Comrade Trotsky on the one side, and Comrades Kamenev, Nogin and Rykov on the other side, I was wholly on the side of Comrade Lenin, as was to be seen from a number of my reports and speeches at the April Conference. The whole dispute was naturally confined within the limits of Bolshevism—as Comrade Lenin and the Party regarded it—and only under the pen of Comrade Trotsky does it assume the form of a struggle of a “right-wing” against the Party.

Not the least differences of opinion occurred between myself and Comrade Lenin during and after the July days. We had the opportunity to test this at our leisure in the course of several weeks as long as I lived together with Vladimir Ilyitch in hiding. The first difference of opinion was noticed by me at the beginning of October, after the liquidation of the Kornilov period, after the article of Comrade Lenin “On Compromises” (in this article Lenin proposed, under certain conditions, an agreement with the Mensheviki and the S.R.). My error consisted in the fact that I endeavoured to continue the line of the article “On Compromises” some days later. In all only a few days, but the days at that time counted as months.

In the famous sitting of the Central Committee of the 10th of October, at which the revolt was decided on, and at which for the first time differences of opinion regarding the time to be fixed for the revolt, and as to judging the prospects in the Constitutional Assembly, arose between me and Kamenev on the one side, and the rest of the members of the C.C. on the other side, the first political Bureau of the

C.C. for the leadership of the revolt was created. The seven following comrades were elected to this Politbureau : Lenin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Trotsky, Stalin, Sokolnikov, and Bubnov. In the no less important joint meeting of the Central Committee and a number of Petrograd functionaries on the 16th of October, after the debates between Comrade Lenin and ourselves, 19 votes were cast for the motion of Comrade Lenin in its final form ; 2 votes were against, and 4 neutral ; while my motion was introduced by Comrade Volodarsky as an amendment to the motion of Comrade Lenin. My amendment read that "in the next five days before meeting our comrades and before discussion we must not arrange any revolt." My written motion, which was submitted to the vote at this meeting, read : "Without postponing the measures for investigation and preparation, it be decided that no action be permitted before consultation with the Bolshevik section of the Soviet Congress."

It was at this time that Comrade Lenin wrote his famous articles against us. I continued to work diligently for the *Pravda*. When the action was finally decided on, in order to silence the exaggerated rumours which had appeared in the press regarding our differences I wrote a short letter to the editor which was published by the Central organ with a comment of the editor that the dispute was ended and that in essentials we were and remained of one mind. (*Pravda*, 21st November, 1917.)

The unsigned leading article which appeared in our Central organ *Rabotshi Putj* (The Path of the Workers), which appeared in place of *Pravda* on the day of the revolt, 25th of October, was written

by me. The second article was likewise written by me and was signed by me. In this last article we read :

“It is a great task which confronts the second Soviet Congress. The events of history are following each other with breathless speed. The final hour is approaching. The least further hesitation brings the danger of immediate collapse. . . .

“The last hopes for a peaceful solution of the crisis are past. The last peaceful hopes which—I must confess—up to the last days were cherished by the writer of these lines, have been dispelled by facts.

“*All Power to the Soviets.*—It is here that everything is being concentrated at the present historical moment.”

In the number of our Central organ *Rabotshi Putj* which appeared on 26th October, a short report was published of my first speech after the period of illegality in the sitting of the Petrograd Soviet of 25th October, the day of the revolt. Here we read as follows :

The Speech of Zinoviev.

“Comrades, we are now in the period of revolt. I believe however, that no doubt can exist regarding the outcome of the revolt—we shall be victorious!

“I am convinced that the overwhelming portion of the peasantry will come over to our side as soon as they become acquainted with our proposals regarding the land question.

“Long live the social revolution which is now beginning. Long live the Petrograd working class who will achieve the final victory!

“To-day we have paid our debt to the international proletariat and delivered a terrible blow to the war, a blow at the breast of all imperialists, the greatest blow at the breast of the hangman Wilhelm.

“Down with the war: Long live International Peace!”

Sharp differences arose in our circle again in the first days of November (according to old calendar) at the moment when the right S.R. and Mensheviki were already shattered and when it was the question whether we would not succeed in bringing over the left S.R. and the best section of the Mensheviki to the side of the Soviet power. In these days I had to take part with other comrades in the famous negotiations with the then existing organisation of the railwaymen. These negotiations led to a complete agreement of the C.C. of our Party with the then Central Executive Committee of the Workers' and Peasants' Councils. These differences lasted actually from two to three days, but during this time they were exceedingly heated.

On the 2nd of November, 1917, the C.C. of our Party, in the presence of Comrade Lenin, adopted a resolution which, among other things, stated:

“The C.C. confirms that, without having excluded anybody from the Second Soviet Congress, it is even now fully prepared to note the return of the Soviet members who have resigned (as is known the right S.R. and the Mensheviki withdrew from

the Second Soviet Congress) and to recognise the coalition with those who have withdrawn from the Soviets, that, therefore, the assertions that the Bolsheviks will not share power with anybody are absolutely devoid of all foundation."

"The C.C. confirms that on the day of the formation of the present government, a few hours before its formation, it invited to its session three representatives of the left S.R. and formally invited them to participate in the government. The refusal of the left S.R. even though it was only limited to a certain time and subject to certain conditions, places on them the full responsibility for the agreement not being arrived at."—(*Pravda*, No. 180, v. 4/17th November, 1917.)

This paragraph of the resolution, which was doubtless written by Comrade Lenin, must be specially noted by the reader in order the better to understand that which follows :

In the *Pravda* (the central organ of our Party was on the 30th of October again named the *Pravda*) we read in No. 180 of 4th of November, the following extract from my speech which I delivered at the session of the Central Executive Committee of the S.R., and of the Social-Democrats on the 2nd of November, 1917 :

"In the name of the C.C. of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (at that time our Party was not yet a Communist Party), I declare that the comrades of the S.R. (it was the question of the left S.R. whom the C.C. of our Party, with Com-

rade Lenin at the head, tried at that time to induce to participate in the first Soviet government) should not have started to criticise us Bolsheviki while events were taking place in the streets of Moscow regarding which our Moscow delegates have reported to-day. (At this time the struggle for the Soviet power was still going on in Moscow.) On this occasion we remind the comrades of the S.R. that before we published the composition of our government we called upon them to take part in the government, but they declared that they would take part in the work of the government, but for the time being would not enter the government."

At the session of the Petrograd Soviet of 3rd November, 1917, the writer stated :

"Comrades. There are among us comrades from the Red Army, soldiers and sailors, who in a few hours will hasten to the aid of our Moscow comrades and brothers. (Loud and prolonged applause.) The revolutionary military committee wished two days ago to send help, but met with obstacles precisely from those quarters from which one could only have expected support. I speak here of some leading circles of the leaders of the railway employees, who in these hours so fateful for the revolution have adopted a "neutral" attitude. In these terrible hours, however, one cannot be "neither hot nor cold"—I do not wish to speak too sharply, but you yourselves will understand, comrades, how the future will judge these facts.

"Just recently a transport of troops to Moscow was held up. When the leaders of the railway workers' union were asked how they could act in

this manner, they replied : We have also held up transports from the other side.

“ We must appeal to the lower sections of the railwaymen and explain to them what “ neutrality ” means under present conditions. I do not doubt that 99 per cent. of the lower sections of the railway employees and workers will side with the fighting soldiers and workers. A whole number of central committees are sitting on the fence. Unfortunately, among these is the central committee of the railway workers. No one could have foreseen that the leading organ of the railway workers would preserve “ neutrality ” whilst workers and soldiers were fighting on the barricades. This state of affairs must be ended. The railway proletariat must stand like one man on the side of the fighting workers and soldiers, they must help them to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie and of the landowners. . . .

“ Greetings to the comrades who are hastening to the help of the revolutionaries in Moscow (long and stormy applause). Now we are giving back to Moscow what it gave the revolution in 1905. At that time the Moscow proletariat began the revolt, and delivered the first blow against despotism. We are happy that we are now able to help, that we now have the possibility of throwing our victorious troops on the Moscow front.

“ Long live the comrades proceeding to Moscow -- all Russia is watching them.”

On the evening of the 3rd of November, and on the morning of the 4th, our negotiations with the

left S.R. and with that conference which had invited the leaders of the railways workers' union, arrived at the most critical stage. At this moment, we committed the greatest errors. The famous declaration of some comrades, among them myself, in the C.C. of the Bolsheviki and the Council of the People's Commissaires (regarding the resignation of our responsible posts owing to the obstinacy of our C.C.) was signed on the 4th November, 1917, and on the 7th November, 1917 my "Letter to the Comrades" was published in the *Pravda* (No. 183). In this letter we said: (I quote the most important part):

"The Central Committee of the All-Russian Soviet Congress placed in the foreground a definite plan of agreement (the resolution of 3rd November), which I fully agree with, as it demands the immediate recognition of the decrees regarding the land, peace, worker's control, and the recognition of the Soviet power.

"In reply to the resolution of the C.E.C. the Mensheviki submitted a number of pre-conditions. The C.E.C., as it did not wish to place any difficulties in the way adopted a resolution proposed by us which removed the hindrances in the way of these negotiations.

"In spite of this the other side would not make any concessions to the C.E.C. The conditions submitted by the latter were rejected by the Mensheviki and the S.R. The attempt to arrive at an agreement was consistently carried out in spite of all obstacles; it led, however, to no result. It is now

evident that the Mensheviki and the S.R. did not want an understanding and only sought for a pretext to wreck it.

“Now all the workers and soldiers will know who bears the responsibility for the wrecking of the agreement. Now—I am convinced—also the left S.R. will throw the blame for the wrecking of the understanding upon the Mensheviki and into our government.

“In the present state of affairs I adhere to the proposition of the comrades and withdraw my declaration regarding resignation from the C.C.

“I appeal to my immediate comrades. Comrades, we made a great sacrifice when we openly raised a protest against the majority of our C.C. and demanded the agreement. This agreement, however, was rejected by the other side. We are living in a serious, responsible time. It is our duty to warn the Party of errors. But we remain with the Party, we prefer to commit errors along with the millions of workers and soldiers and to die with them than to stand aside from them at this decisive historical moment.

“There will and shall be no split in our Party.”

Since the 8th November, I participated as previously in the work of our C.C. On the 9th November, I spoke in its name at the All-Russian Peasants Congress, and on the 10th of November at the session of the Petrograd Soviet. Here I said that we would recognise the Constituent Assembly, “if the Constituent Assembly would give expres-

sion to the actual will of the workers, soldiers and peasants.”

Naturally, now after seven years, it seems monstrous to every member of our Party how one could deceive himself with regard to the real forces of the leaders of the railwaymen and those alleged Internationalists from the camp of the S.R. and Mensheviki grouped round the railway leaders. Of course, in order to understand the situation one must place oneself in the position obtaining at the time. It was not until six months after the October revolt that it became evident that the left S.R. had also become a counter-revolutionary force. In October, 1917, however, they were expressly invited by Comrade Lenin and our C.C. to participate in our first Soviet Government, as they were then connected with a large section of the peasants and with a portion of the workers. In fact, even the negotiations with the leaders of the railwaymen's union were, as the reader has seen, conducted with the approval of the C.C.

The result of the exposure of the Mensheviki and of the S.R. on the occasion of the railway workers' Conference was, that the left S.R., whom Comrade Lenin had formerly in vain called upon to participate in the Soviet government, now entered into it; although some days before the left S.R. had the intention even to resign from the C.E.C., which under the conditions then existing would have meant a severe blow for the Bolsheviks and would have hindered the winning of the peasantry.

In the *Pravda* of 4th November, we read :

“The fraction of the left S.R. in the C.E.C. submitted an ultimative declaration regarding the necessity of drawing up a platform in the name of the C.E.C. The C.E.C. agreed to this demand, and in the name of the C.E.C. a platform was drawn up.”

It was just the rejection of this platform by the Mensheviki and the S.R. at the conference convened by the railway leaders which led to the change in the tactics of the left S.R. in favour of the Soviet power.

At this time there was published in the *Pravda* a number of resolutions from the most important factories in which we find the following :

“Whilst we regard the agreement of the Socialist Parties as desirable, we workers declare that the agreement can only be reached on the basis of the following conditions. . . (These conditions were practically the same as our representatives had submitted to the railway men’s conference.)

In our attitude during these days there was again reflected the hesitation of these workers—in this respect our error was not a personal, not an accidental error.

Now, seven years afterwards, do not the words in the resolution of our Central Committee that “the assertion that the Bolsheviki would not share power with anybody is devoid of all foundation,” sound monstrous from our present standpoint? And yet these words were written down by Comrade Lenin on the 3rd November, 1917, and approved by our C.C. Everyone who reflects over these facts, everyone who remembers that the left S.R.

at that time represented an important section of the peasants, everyone who reflects at all over the conditions at that time, will understand the extent and the character of our error. It was a great, but nevertheless not a "social democratic" error.

We, of course, do not say that in order to prove that our error was a small one. We stood outside of the C.C. of the Party only for three days—from the 4th to 7th November. In spite of this error, as we already said at the Opening Session of the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern, was the greatest error we made in our life. The only thing we wish to prove here is that it is not correct to draw from this error the conclusion that there existed a "right-wing" in Bolshevism.

Everyone who experienced those historical days knows that these differences, how much they strained the relations of such near comrades and friends, left no bitter feeling behind. Everybody adopted a sincere attitude towards the errors of the others, without attempting to "make use of" these errors for "diplomatic" fractionist purposes. Everybody understood that only the exceptional moment led to exceptional means of solving differences, which arose like a whirlwind but which, like a whirlwind soon calmed down without causing great damage.

These differences were swept away by the avalanche of fresh events—they remained isolated with the leading circles of the Party. A few days passed and the error was admitted by those who had committed it and the general staff of the Party and the

whole Party could proceed to the solution of actual tasks. These differences have left behind such little traces in the Party that at the first Party Conference (Seventh) which took place after the October revolt (which dealt already with the question of the Brest Peace), nobody mentioned a single word regarding these differences.

Nobody reproached us regarding this error, although it so happened that I, on behalf of the C.C. had to fight energetically against Comrade Trotsky and the "left,"* and it is clear that the Party, under the fresh impression of the differences, would have attacked the guilty ones if they had estimated this guilt as Comrade Trotsky does now.

Comrade Trotsky now says in the "Lessons of October," seven years after these events, "that our attitude to the question of the Brest Peace was one of capitulation." What did Trotsky himself say on this Seventh Party Congress some weeks after the October differences :

"Before the last journey to Brest-Litovsk, we discussed during the whole time the question of our further tactics. And there was only one vote in the C.C. in favour of immediately signing the peace : that of Zinoviev. (We assert that there was not only one vote, but also Lenin, Stalin and Sverdlov said the same thing : Comrade Kamenev was arrested in Finland.—G.Z.) What he said was, from his standpoint, quite correct : I was fully in

* It is interesting to mention the result of the election of the new C.C. at this Party Conference. The writer of these lines received only one vote less than Comrade Lenin.

agreement with him. He said, that hesitation would only render worse the peace conditions, and that they must be signed at once." (Minutes of the Seventh Party Conference, p. 79.)

If the proposal to sign the Brest Peace was a "capitulation" then Comrade Lenin was a "capitulator." (As a matter of fact, the tactics of Trotsky at that time would have led to the downfall of the revolution, *i.e.*, to an actual capitulation.) If Comrade Trotsky himself spoke in the above-mentioned way, as to this affair, who can give credit to his present ultrapolemic remarks? Is it not evident that all this has been discovered afterwards?

At the Seventh Party Congress the debates turned upon quite other questions. It was Comrade Trotsky this time who submitted a declaration regarding his resignation from all responsible posts.* (Minutes, pp. 147/148). Against Trotsky and against the "left" Communists, there

* "The Party Conference, the highest authority of the Party, has indirectly repudiated the policy which I, with other comrades from our Brest-Litovsk delegation followed, and which from two sides had a certain international repercussion: both among the working class and among the ruling class. This policy rendered the name of the members of this delegation the most hated by the bourgeoisie of Germany and Austria. To-day the whole German and Austro-Hungarian press is full of accusations against the Brest-Litovsk delegation, and particularly against me personally; they declare that we are responsible for the collapse of the peace and for all the further unfortunate results. Whether this is the view of the Party Conference or not, it has by its last vote confirmed this assertion and I, therefore, resign every responsible post with which the Party has hitherto entrusted me." (Speech of Comrade Trotsky at the Seventh Party Conference, March, 1918.)

was directed the resolution of Lenin and Zinoviev (Minutes, p. 3), and as regards resignation from the C.C. in general, Comrade Lenin said the following words :

“I also found myself in a similar situation in the C.C. when the proposal was adopted not to sign the Peace, and I kept silent without closing my eyes to the fact that I could not take over responsibility for this. Every member of the C.C. is free to repudiate responsibility without resigning from the C.C., and without creating a scandal. It is, of course, permissible under certain conditions, and is sometimes even unavoidable; but whether that was necessary just now, with this organisation of the Soviet power which enables us to control in so far as we do not lose contact with the masses, there can only exist one opinion.”

At the Seventh Party Congress, Comrade Trotsky, who at that time had only been six months in our Party, provoked the first Trotsky crisis. Since that time, unfortunately, these crises occur periodically.

II.

The Revision of Leninism under the Flag of Lenin.

The last attack of Comrade Trotsky (the “Lessons of October”) is nothing else than a fairly open attempt to revise—or even directly to liquidate—the foundation of Leninism. It will only require a short time and this will be plain to the whole of our Party and to the whole International. The “novelty” in this attempt consists in the fact that, out of “strategical” considerations, it is

attempted to carry out this revision in the name of Lenin.

We experienced something similar at the beginning of the campaign of Bernstein and his followers, when they began the "revision" of the foundation of Marxism. The ideas of Marx were already so generally recognised in the international labour movement, that even their revision, at least at the beginning, had to be undertaken in the name of Marx. A quarter of a century was necessary before the revisionists could finally throw aside their mask and openly pronounce that, in the field of theory, they had entirely broken away from Marx. This took place in a most open manner, in literature, only in the year 1924 in the recently published collection of articles devoted to the 70th birthday of Kautsky.

The ideas of Leninism at present predominate to such an extent in the international revolutionary movement—and particularly in our country—that the "critics" of Leninism consider it necessary to have recourse to similar methods. They undertake the revision of Leninism "in the name of Lenin," citing Lenin, emphasising their fidelity to the principles of Leninism. This "strategy" however does not help. It is already seen through by the Leninist Party. It only needs a few weeks, and all the sparrows on the house-tops will be twittering over the collapse of this remarkable strategy. Comrade Trotsky has overlooked one trifle: that our Party is so Leninist and so mature that it is capable of distinguishing Leninism from Trotskyism.

The attack of Comrade Trotsky is an attack

with inadequate means. Nobody will succeed in liquidating the foundations of Leninism, or carrying out even a partial revision of the principles of Leninism, or even succeed in getting Trotskyism recognised as a "justifiable tendency" within Leninism. Nobody will succeed in convincing the Party that we now need some sort of synthesis of Leninism and Trotskyism. Trotskyism is as fit to be a constituent part of Leninism as a spoonful of tar can be a constituent part of a vat of honey.

What is Leninism? Leninism is the Marxism of the epoch of the imperialist wars in the world revolution, which began in a country where the peasantry preponderate. Lenin was from head to foot a proletarian revolutionary. But he knew at the same time that he had to work in a country in which the peasantry predominated, and in which the proletariat therefore can only be victorious when it adopts a correct attitude towards the peasantry. After Lenin already in the revolution of 1905 had issued the slogan of "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and of the peasantry," he did not cease for a single moment to be a proletarian revolutionary; he made no concession to bourgeois democracy (the Mensheviks, among them Comrade Trotsky, accused Comrade Lenin at that time that he, who called himself a Marxist, was an ideologist of bourgeois democracy), but he was the only one who, not with mere words, but by deeds, prepared the way for the Socialist revolution in a situation when bourgeois democracy was still a force and was capable of shattering Tsarist despotism.

Lenin felt himself at that time to be the recognised leader of the proletarian revolution—and this

he was in fact. He knew and believed that the Bolshevik Party, that is, the genuine advance-guard of the proletariat, would help the working class as far as possible on the road to the realisation of its class aims, that is to proceed on the road to the victory of the proletarian revolution. He knew that he and his Party, in every country, would do everything possible to extract from this situation the maximum for the final aim of the proletarian revolution. He so understood the connection between the bourgeois-democratic and the proletarian-Socialist revolution, that the first precedes the second, that the second solves in passing the questions of the first, that the second confirms the work of the first.

And as Lenin knew this, he manœuvred with the mastership of a genius in three revolutions, always at the head of the working class, always concretising his tactics so that every suitable historical situation is used to its fullest limits in the interest of his class. Lenin was, on the 24th October, 1917, not the same man that he became on the 26th October, 1917. "Who laughs last, laughs the longest," wrote Lenin some days before the October revolt in an article on the Party programme.

Therefore, Lenin defended at that time among other things the necessity of retaining the minimum programme. But on the morrow, after the victory of the October insurrection, the ingenious commander of the working class was not the same as he was one day before this victory. My class has become stronger, the enemies of my class have become weaker, the forces of the workers' revolution

have increased, hence therefore, more pressure, more boldly forwards! That is the real Lenin! He knows that it is a very difficult way along which one has to lead millions of workers, behind whom, if we wish to be victorious, there must follow the millions and millions of peasants of our country.

From the great slogan "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and of the peasantry" (1905/1907) via the "dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorest peasants" (1917) to the actual "dictatorship of the proletariat" which will be realised on the basis of "alliance with the peasantry"—that is the road of Leninism.

From Menshevism of the Axelrod type (1903/1905) via the "permanent" (1905/1907) variation of Menshevism, to the complete abandonment of the revolution and its substitution by the Menshevik free coalition (1909/1914), to the policy of vacillations (block with Tzeidse and fight against the Zimmerwald Left) during the war (1914/1917)—that is the road of old Trotskyism.

If one considers the literary history of Bolshevism one can say that it is essentially contained in the following works of Lenin: From "The Friends of the People," along with "Development of Capitalism" to "What is to be Done?" along "Two Kinds of Tactics," to the "State and Revolution" with "The Renegade Kautsky." These are the most important literary signposts of Leninism.

Let us consider what these signposts indicate? "The Friends of the People" and "The Development of Capitalism," constitute a penetrat-

ing analysis of the theory of Marxism and the most concrete, profound study of economics and of the social structure of that country in which Bolshvism commences to come into action. "What is to be Done?" along with "Two Kinds of Tactics," is the incomparable criticism of Social-Democratic optimism, the unsurpassed elucidation of the role of the workers' party in the revolution together with the laying down of the tactics of the proletariat in a peasant country on the eve of the bourgeois-democratic revolution which one must endeavour so to carry through that it begins as soon as possible to develop into the Socialist revolution. The "State and Revolution" and the "Renegade Kautsky" are the application of Leninism to the world arena, are along with the book "Imperialism, the Latest Phase of Capitalism" the most profound analysis of the latest imperialism and laying down of the tactics of the already beginning Socialist revolution, which grows out from the first, *i.e.*, the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Compare all this with Trotskyism!

If Lenin is the classical type of the proletarian revolutionary, Trotsky is the "classical" type of the intellectual revolutionary. The latter has, of course, certain strong features, he succeeds sometimes in combining with the proletariat mass, but that which forms the nature of his political activity is the intellectual revolutionarism.

We give below a compressed political description of the life of Trotskyism which possesses the authority of coming from the pen of Lenin :

“ He, Trotsky, was in the year 1903 a Menshevik, left this Party in 1904, returned to the Mensheviki in 1905 and paraded round with ultra-revolutionary phrases. In 1906 he again abandoned this Party; at the end of 1906 he again defended the election alliance with the cadets and in the spring of 1907 he stated at the London Conference that the difference between him and Rosa Luxemburg rather constituted a difference of individual shades of opinion than a difference of political tendency. To-day Trotsky borrows some ideas from the one fraction and to-morrow from the other, and, therefore, considers himself as a man standing above both fractions.” (Lenin’s Collected Works, vol. xi, part 2, p.p. 308/309.)

“ Never in a single serious question of Marxism has Trotsky had a firm opinion, he always squeezes himself in a division between this or that difference of opinion and always runs from one side to the other. At present he is in the company of the ‘ Bund ’ and of the liquidators.

Thus wrote Lenin in an article in the revue “ Enlightenment,” published in 1914.

“ However well meant the intentions of Martov and Trotsky may be subjectively, objectively they support by their tolerance Russian imperialism.”

Thus wrote Lenin in the “ Socialdemokrat ” No. 1, October, 1916.

Let us compare the literary signposts of Bolshevism with those indicating the road of development

of Trotskyism. These are the following books of Comrade Trotsky: "Our Political tasks" (1903), "Our Revolution" (1905/1906), then his collaboration with the liquidatory journal "Nasha Sarja" (Our Dawn), then a bright moment—the book over Kautsky (1919)—which was followed by the "New Course" and "The Lessons of October" (1923/1924). The retrograde development of Comrade Trotsky finds particular sharp expression in the two last-named works.

What was the book: "Our Political Tasks"? This book which appeared with a dedication of the Menshevist patriarch P. A. Axelrod, was the most vulgar Menshevist book which the history of Menshevist literature has ever known. In this book Comrade Trotsky came to the conclusion of a liberal-labour policy.

And what was the book, "Our Revolution," the most left of the books of Trotsky in the first epoch? In this book (see also his book "1905") there was laid down the notorious theory of the "permanent revolution" which Comrade Trotsky is now attempting to impose upon Bolshevism. This "theory" was regarded by Comrade Lenin and all the Bolsheviks as a variety of Menshevism. Not everybody will remember that in this "left" book in which Comrade Trotsky to a certain extent defended the "workers" revolution against the Bolshevik idea of a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. Trotsky wrote:

"But how far can the Socialist policy of the working class go under the economic conditions of

Russia? One can say one thing with certainty: it will much rather encounter political hindrances than be supported by the technical backwardness of the country. Without direct state support of the European proletariat the working class of Russia will not be able to maintain power and transform their temporary rule into a long enduring Socialist dictatorship. One cannot doubt this for a moment." (Trotsky: "Our Revolution," 1904. Russian edition, pp. 277/288.)

What is the meaning of the state support of the European proletariat? In order to possess the possibility of affording state support to the Russian revolution, the European proletariat would first have to capture power in Europe. In the year 1905 and in general up to the war 1914/18 there could be no talk of this. But Trotsky preached the "permanent" revolution in the year 1905.

What is to be inferred from this? Only this that Trotsky in the year 1905 either did not seriously believe in any permanent revolution, or that he preached the permanent revolution in 1905 only under the condition that the European proletariat afforded us "state support," which meant that Trotsky "postponed" the workers' revolution in Russia until the victory of the proletarian revolution in Europe. In the latter case Trotsky appears as the representative of the most stereotyped social democratic standpoint: let "them" first make the revolution and then "we" will "immediately" make the workers' revolution.

Trotsky wrote in those times a great deal as to a victorious Russian revolution being only possible

as a part of a victorious international revolution, for Western European capital supported Tsarism with loans, etc. There was a grain of truth in this and here Trotsky only repeated that which the Bolsheviki said. But Trotsky as usual conceived this connection of the Russian revolution with the international revolution too mechanically.

Comrade Trotsky did not grasp the concrete way of the revolution in our country. He does not even yet grasp the actual importance of the peasantry in our revolution. If any proof were necessary for this, Trotsky has provided this in his last work, "The Lesson of October." We quote the following :

"It was precisely the unripeness of the revolution under the thoroughly unique conditions created by the war which delivered the leadership or at least the appearance of leadership over to the petty bourgeois revolutionaries which consisted in the fact that they defended the historical claim of the bourgeoisie to power. This, however, does not mean that the revolution could only follow that road which it followed from February to October, 1917. This last road resulted not merely from the class relations but from those temporary conditions created by the war.

"As a result of the war the peasantry appeared in the organised and armed form of the army comprising many millions. Before the proletariat could organise itself under its own flag in order to draw the masses of the village behind it, the petty bourgeois revolutionaries found a natural support in the

peasant army exasperated by the war. With the weight of this army of millions from which everything immediately depended, the petty bourgeois revolutionaries exercised pressure upon the proletariat, and at first drew it after them. That the course of the revolution could have been different with the same class bases is best proved by the events which preceded the war." ("Lessons of October," pp. 18/19.)

The road from February till October, 1917 resulted, as you can see, not only from the class relations, but also from those temporary (!) conditions created by the war. What is the meaning of this brain wave? It assumes that the war did not arise from the class relations, that is to say it was a mere chance event. Now, the Russo-Japanese War, out of which grew 1905, the general rehearsal for 1917—was it also a chance? Was that not also created by the temporary conditions? What profundity of thought!

If there had been no imperialist war—and Leninism teaches that the imperialist war is the inevitable outcome of imperialism, as the latest stage of capitalism, therefore, of the course of the class war; if Russia had not been a peasant country and, therefore its vast army had not been a peasant army of a dozen millions: if this peasant army had not been rendered desperate by the imperialist war which the bourgeoisie had to conduct; if the weight of more than hundred millions of peasants had not exercised pressure upon the whole course of the social political life of the country—then the development of the revolution would have proceeded according to Trotsky and the astonished humanity would have experienced the apotheosis of Trotskyism.

It apparently has never occurred to our author that "if ifs and ands were pots and pans," if there had not been an imperialist war with all its inevitable consequences, there would probably never had been the revolution of 1917, and no such relatively easy victory. Our author is also obviously unaware that precisely the development of the revolution from February to October, 1917, confirmed "in passing" the already obvious truth that the whole of Trotskyism with its theory of "permanent" revolution was nothing else than a cleverly thought-out intellectual scheme which was cut according to the requirements of Menshevism.

Let us refer once more to Comrade Lenin :

"Hence their (the Mensheviks) monstrous, idiotic, renegade idea that the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the peasantry contradicts every course of economic development. With us there appears at every crisis of our epoch (1905/1909) a general democratic movement of the muzhik and to ignore this would be a profound error which, in fact, would lead to Menshevism." Thus wrote Lenin in December, 1909.

But Comrade Trotsky even in the year 1924 does not understand that the role of the muzhik in such a crisis as 1917 was not by chance not removed from the course of the class struggle.

It is obvious that it has also never occurred to our author that the course of the great revolution between February and October, 1917, wonderfully confirmed Leninism, among other things in that

section in which Lenin with the theoretical ruthlessness peculiar to him, deals with the Trotskyist variety of Menshevism.

A collaborator of Comrade Trotsky and the "editor" of his book "1917," Comrade Lenzner, asserts in all seriousness that already in the articles written by Trotsky at the beginning of March, 1917, in America in the paper *Nove Mir* ("New World") he anticipated the attitude to the questions taken by Comrade Lenin in his famous "Letters from Abroad." Comrade Trotsky did not even know what the question was whilst Comrade Lenin in his truly famous "Letters from Abroad" already submitted to the Russian working class the scheme of the real October worked out in almost all details.

But this is only half the trouble. The present trouble is that Comrade Trotsky can say nothing better than if there had been no imperialist war and if the peasantry had not predominated in our country, then Trotskyism would have been right as opposed to Leninism.

Is any further proof necessary that Comrade Trotsky understood the Bolshevist attitude to the question of the peasantry as little as he understands it now?

The "Lessons of October" have clearly shown one thing: that even now in the eighth year of the proletarian revolution Comrade Trotsky has not grasped the true nature of Leninism, and that he now as previously is revolving round in the same

circle—in the question of the peasantry—in the question which is the chief source of the false conclusions of Comrade Trotsky beginning from his error of Brest to his error in the question of the trade unions in 1921, ending with his errors at the present time.

In the “Lessons of October” there are almost as many erroneous assertions as there are assertions at all. Therefore, the Communist Youth had little difficulty in detecting that Comrade Trotsky confounded Lenin with Hilferding (in the question of the Constituent Assembly and the so-called combined type of the Constituent Assembly and the Soviets*). Hence it comes that Comrade Sokolnikov demonstrated to Comrade Trotsky that the “left” errors of Comrade Bogdatjev were ascribed by the esteemed author of the “Lessons of October” to Comrade Lenin (the history of the demonstration of April, 1917). Hence it comes that Comrade Kuusinnen can easily prove by means of documents that Comrade Trotsky in the question of the German revolution†) said the exact contrary in January, 1924 to what he now says in the “Lessons of October.”

* For the rest we learn from the second part of “1917” that as late as 29th October, 1917, Comrade Trotsky himself on behalf of the Council of People’s Commissariats wrote in an appeal: “The only thing which can save the country is the Constitutional Assembly which consists of representatives of the working and exploited classes of the people.” It is permitted to ask in which respect this is better than the “combined type?” (“1917” 2nd part, p. 133.)

† One example suffices: “We have seen there (in Germany) in the second half of the past year a classical demonstration of the fact that a most extraordinary favourable revolutionary situation of world historical importance can be missed,” thus

Hence it comes that such important episodes of the revolution as the question of the July demonstration, as the fight for Kronstadt and even the question of the July days are described by Comrade Trotsky after the manner of Suchanov and the paper *Denj* (The "Day" bourgeois) and not as they actually occurred. Hence it comes that the question of the tactics of the Bolsheviki with regard to the Preliminary Parliament and the Democratic Conference are dealt with in an equally incorrect and biased manner.

These "small" errors have been sufficiently refuted by authoritative witnesses of the events. Perhaps we shall be able on another occasion to give an exact description of some of the very important episodes of the revolution.

III.

Was there a Right-wing in the Bolshevik Party?

We must give a clear answer to this question. Everybody who is familiar with the real history of Bolshevism will, without hesitation, give the following answer: there was none and there could be none.

wrote Comrade Trotsky in September, 1924 in the "Lessons of October."

"If the Party (the C.P. of Germany) had declared the revolt in October (last year) as the Berlin comrades have proposed, it would now have been lying with a broken neck." We read these words in the draft thesis of Comrades Radek and Trotsky in January, 1924.

In such a question one cannot have two opinions, one in January, 1924, and another in September, 1924. If, however, one has two opinions regarding such a question, one must not so attack the E.C.C.I. as Comrade Trotsky has done.

There could be no right wing because the Leninist fundamental principles of the structure of the Bolshevik Party excluded every possibility of a right and of a left wing.

There could be no right wing because the first split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had already taken place in 1903 on the eve of the first revolution of 1905.

Comrade Lenin wrote regarding the Italian Socialist Party that even its first splitting from the extreme Chauvinists which took place some years before the world war—that even this superficial split which was far from being complete, helped it in the first period of the imperialist war, in the year 1914 to adopt a more commendable standpoint than the standpoint of those Social-Democratic Parties who up to the year 1917 and even later remained united. Every one who has read the articles of Comrade Lenin from the years 1914/15 on German Social-Democracy (“Against the Stream”) will remember how passionately Lenin advocates the splitting of the German Social Democracy, what great hopes he placed on this split, how he explained the complete collapse of German social democracy among other things as being due to the belated split between the left and right wings.

“The type of the Socialist parties of the epoch of the Second International was the Party which tolerated opportunism in its midst, which during the ten years of the period of peace continually grew in numbers but which hid itself and adapted itself to the revolutionary workers from whom it took over its Marxist terminology and avoided every

clear definition of principle. This type outlived its time.

“In Italy the Party was an exception for the epoch of the Second International : the opportunists with Bissolati at the head were expelled from the Party. The result of this crisis was excellent. . . We, in no way, idealise the Italian Socialist Party and do not guarantee that it will prove to remain firm in the event of Italy coming into the war. We are not speaking of the future of this Party, we are speaking now only of the present. We affirm the indisputable fact that the workers of the majority of the European countries were deceived by the fictitious unity of the opportunists with the revolutionaries and that Italy is a happy exception—a country where, at the present moment there is no such deception. That which for the Second International was a fortunate exception, must and will be a rule for the Third International. The proletariat will always—so long as capitalism exists—be in contact with the petty bourgeoisie. It is unwise, sometimes to reject a temporary alliance with them, but to unite with them, to be united with the opportunists can at present only be defended by the enemies of the proletariat in the present epoch.” (“Against the Stream, p. 36.)

Whoever thinks over these words will understand why in a party which was formed by Comrade Lenin in the fight against the Mensheviki and against Trotsky there could exist no right wing.

“Our Russian Party has long since broken with the opportunist groups and elements. . . . The dead weight of opportunism was not able to drag

down our Party into the deep. And this circumstance rendered it possible—as the split of the Italian Party—to fulfil its revolutionary duty.”

So wrote Lenin in “Socialism and War,” (2nd chapter).

Comrade Trotsky must understand all this and then he will understand why one cannot speak of a ring wing of the Bolshevist Party which was created by Lenin in a “fierce” struggle against all non-Bolshevist fractions, groups and tendencies.

Whoever understands anything of the theory, of the tactics and of the organisational principles of Leninism cannot claim that a right wing existed in the Bolshevik Party. Bolshevism differed fundamentally in that it could not permit and did not permit the Party to be organised as a block of all possible tendencies, as a block of a right, of a left wing, of a centre, etc.

Think over what Comrade Lenin has written for example regarding the period of the emigration time of the Party. He said: the great variety of political tendencies in emigration—Mensheviks, S.R., anarchists, maximalists, which were again divided into sub-sections, had the effect that all non-Bolshevist elements were withdrawn, as by a plaster from the body of the Party. The same was the case in the period of legal and illegal existence of our Party between February and October, 1917. At that time we saw the same variety and multiplicity of political parties, fractions and minor fractions, which inevitably absorbed everything that

was not thoroughly Bolshevik. In this manner the Bolshevik Party became a crystallisation point only for Bolsheviki. Hence our Party was one indivisible whole.

It involves a complete ignorance of Lenin, and of Leninism to admit the possibility that Lenin, even if only for a short time, had tolerated the existence of a right wing in the Bolshevik Party. And what is still more important is, that Leninism is irreconcilable with the existence of a right wing in the Bolshevik Party.

It could be argued that there were Bolshevik "reconciliators" who greatly resembled a right-wing of Bolshevism.

Yes, that is a fact. The Bolshevik "reconciliators" played an episodal role at the commencement of the split between the Bolsheviki and the Mensheviki (1903/04, and then also in the years of the counter-revolution (1910/11). But at the moment of this hesitating attitude of the Bolshevik "reconciliators" it came essentially to a direct split between us and them. The Bolshevik Party, under Lenin's leadership, was ready to amputate this small fragment from its body, and this it did in order to remain a homogeneous Bolshevik Party.

The overwhelming majority of these reconcilers are at present in our ranks and nobody thinks of asserting to-day that they recollect there being in any way a sort of right tendency in the Party. Their most prominent leader was I. F. Dubrovinsky, and nobody who knew him would pretend that he represented in any way a right wing. From one prison to another, from one banishment to an-

other went such comrades Dubrovinsky and Nogin ; and in the period between the one prison and the other, they made many passing errors regarding questions of organisation. Of course, these comrades could have fallen victims to opportunism if their errors had undergone a logical development. This, however, did not happen. Lenin put the question bluntly ; either expulsion or submission to the decisions of the Bolshevik leadership.

That does not mean that in the long years of the history of Bolshevism there were never any differences and various tendencies between the most prominent functionaries of the Party. There were, of course, such differences. In 1906 Kamenev advocated the boycott of the Duma (a "left" attitude), while Comrade Lenin recommended participation in the Duma. In the plenum of the C.C. in 1910 (the last joint Plenum with the Mensheviks) a section of the Bolsheviki attempted unity with Trotsky, whilst Comrade Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders (among them the present writer) were emphatically against this attempt. These, however, were only episodal differences of opinion.

But the differences which we had with the people grouped round the paper *Vperjod* ("Forward") in 1908, and which lasted for some years, could not be regarded as episodal. These alleged "left" people, as a matter of fact, defended opportunist tactics, that is, they abandoned the fundamental basis of Bolshevism. The group was expelled from our organisation and only those have returned who have thoroughly recovered from the *Vperjod* sickness.

Also those differences cannot be characterised as being episodal which arose in connection with the war, and which extended only to a few prominent Bolsheviki at the beginning of the imperialist war. Bolshevism as a whole adopted a thoroughly correct attitude towards the imperialist war and was conscious of the world-historical slogan: "Conversion of the imperialist war into civil war." A few important Bolshevik functionaries, for example, I. Goldenberg, vacillated regarding the question of the character of the war, and it came to an organisatory break with these comrades. Goldenberg was not able to return to the Party until 1921, after he had thoroughly recognised his fault.

What is the explanation of some of the errors committed in the first days of the February Revolution? The General Staff of the Bolsheviki, after years of imperialist war and white terror, came together from various parts of the earth, after the central functionaries of the Bolsheviki had lived separated from their best friends. All were overwhelmed by the world historical events. Many things turned out differently from what had been expected. In the first days of the revolution the Bolsheviki themselves were in the minority among the Petrograd workers. The mood of the soldiers, whom Lenin later called "honest defenders of their country," created great tactical difficulties for us. We asked ourselves how we could approach these masses, how we could at least get them to listen to us. All this led to those difficulties which were responsible for the errors of the *Pravda* in the first days after the February revolution, before the arrival of Comrade Lenin.

Can one from this infer the existence of a right wing in the Bolshevik Party, which Comrade Trotsky attempts to represent as a "Social-Democratic," "semi-Menshevist" wing? Only he who does not know the Bolshevik Party can say such a thing, who judges the Party from the outside, who, for fifteen years has fought against this Party, and who in 1924 again declares war against the Party.

There were serious differences among the Bolsheviks in the period from April to September, 1917. Groups could have been formed out of these differences if the comrades who had erred had not confessed their errors, if events had not quickly liquidated these errors, if the Party had not unanimously repudiated these errors, if the Party had not had a Lenin. Then a split would have occurred, but in no event would a right wing have been formed.

There were sharp differences among the Bolsheviks in October and November, 1917. During this time, the present writer was among those comrades who erred. If the errors had not been immediately recognised as such, if the Party had not unanimously corrected these errors, and again, if the Party had had no Lenin, then these sharp differences could have led to serious results. But as a matter of fact, the contrary of all this occurred.

The first split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks began in 1903. Since about 1910, the Bolshevik Party has had a completely independent organisatory life. Between 1903 and 1910, Bolshevism experienced a period of insufficient organisa-

tory growth. From 1910 to 1917 this could no longer be the case. There was and could be no right wing in the Bolshevik Party.

IV.

*Is the Formation of a Right-wing in the R.C.P.
Possible at the Present Time?*

A really serious question. Our reply to this is: Yes, an attempt is now being made to create such a right-wing in the R.C.P. and in the Comintern. The leading figure in these efforts is Comrade Trotsky. The real problem is whether we can tolerate the formation of such a wing, and if not, how we can avoid it. From whence can a right wing, a right fraction, a right tendency arise? It would be absurd to explain this by the personal responsibility of this or that comrade. No, there exist indisputable objective pre-conditions therefor.

What constitute the essential differences between the present state of affairs in our Party and the position of our Party before the October revolution.

First: The Mensheviki, the S.R. the anarchists and the remaining groups have disappeared from the open political life of our country. In the interest of the successful carrying out of the proletarian dictatorship, the victorious working class, under the lead of our Party, had to render illegal the S.R., the Mensheviki, the anti-Soviet section of the Anarchists, and other groups opposed to the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only the Russian C.P. is legally active. To-day it

cannot be otherwise. With such a state of affairs it is unavoidable that many elements enter our Party, who, in the event of the existence of other legal Parties, would not be with us.

Secondly : We have ideologically shattered two important Parties which, during two decades, were our rivals : the S.R. and the Mensheviki. Some ten thousand members of these Parties have come over to our Party, among them many very active members, as for instance, Comrade Trotsky. A considerable portion of these comrades have been completely assimilated by our party, and now are good Bolsheviki. But we must not disguise the fact that the annihilation of the S.R. and the Mensheviki as legal Parties does not serve to promote the homogeneous composition of our Party.

Thirdly : Our country is passing through a transition period. Up to October, 1917, the situation was in many respects more difficult, but clearer. The Party was confronted with an immediate task : the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. The present situation is more complicated. The Nep, the bourgeois environment, all these factors render our situation extremely complicated. Never in the history of the struggle of the international working class was a workers' Party in such complicated transition period.

Fourthly : The social composition of the Party has become heterogeneous. Up to October, 1917, our Party was almost entirely a Party of Workers. After 1917, the situation has changed. We have at present over a hundred thousand peasant members, some thousands of members from the higher

educational institutions, and many thousands of Soviet employees.

What is the meaning of all our efforts to purge our Party, the Lenin recruitment? The aim of all these efforts is to render the composition of the Party as homogeneous as possible, to prevent a dilution of its social composition.

All these together create the pre-requisites under which the formation of a right wing is possible in the Party created by Lenin—and now without Lenin.

When we deal with the attacks of Comrade Trotsky upon the Bolshevist C.C. with the greatest objectivity, then we see that their content is the following: during these years Comrade Trotsky gave expression to everything which is not strictly Bolshevist, and which feels itself cramped within the frame of the old Leninist tactics. Trotsky is sincerely convinced that the old methods of Leninism can no longer to-day fulfil their task, when the Party is acting in such a vast arena. According to his opinion, the Party must become a block of various tendencies and fractions.

We all know that all those social processes which are developing in our country are reflected in our Party, which is in possession of power and which has suppressed all the other, anti-Soviet, Parties. We Leninists draw from this the conclusion that it is all the more necessary to preserve the greatest possible homogeneity of the Party, the greatest firmness of leadership, and the greatest possible

devotion to Leninism. To manœuvre, sometimes even to make concessions, is unavoidable. But it is necessary that the Party shall always remain Bolshevik. Trotsky, on the other hand, draws different conclusions from the complexity of our present situation. It seems to him that the earlier "sectarianism," steel-firmness, is leading the country to the edge of the abyss. According to his view, the Party must become a combination of various tendencies and fractions, and that it shall not immediately conduct the state and economic apparatus, but leave more scope for bourgeois specialists, etc.

This idea of Comrade Trotsky would, in the present international and inner-political situation, logically lead in the best case to the substitution of the Bolshevik Party by a "broad Labour Party," after the model of the English MacDonald Labour Party in a "Soviet edition." It is quite possible that Comrade Trotsky has not thought out his idea to its logical conclusion, but he is steering in this direction, unless he returns to Bolshevism.

A Party which has to work under such conditions needs a number of transmission belts to secure its influence upon the peasantry, upon the employees, upon the intelligentsia, etc. The system of levers which secures the dictatorship of the proletariat is complicated (Soviets, trade unions, etc.). But it does not follow from this that the Party can become a block of tendencies, a sort of "parliament of opinions."

It is a matter of course that the Bolshevik Party

in the year 1924 cannot simply copy the Bolshevik Party of, say, 1914, or even of 1917. We cannot limit ourselves merely to admitting workers into our Party as members. By means of the Lenin recruitment we did everything possible in order to increase the number of industrial workers in our Party. For some years we held back the influx of peasants into our Party. But we have now come to the conclusion that we must again admit a considerable number of peasants. A workers' party which governs the state in a peasant country, must have among its members a certain percentage of peasants.

The regulation of the composition of our Party is a complicated and difficult task. It is closely connected with the most difficult and sometimes the most delicate political problems. The Party must manœuvre in this connection. At the present epoch the Party cannot be so homogeneous as it was before the seizure of power.

Therefore, the policy, and also the leadership of the Party, must be as Bolshevik as it has been hitherto, as Lenin has taught us. The working class realises its hegemony in the revolution, and the Party is the leading advance-guard of the class possessing this hegemony.

From this there arises the question of the inner orientation of the Party. The Bolshevik Party of 1924 must base itself upon the picked troops of its members, upon the workers. No other section outside the workers can serve as the barometer for the policy of our Party.

Must we, therefore, permit the existence or the formation of a right wing in our Party?

We must not!

It does not in the least follow that because we have to be content with a non-sufficiently homogeneous social composition of our Party, that because we have to attract a certain number of non-workers into our Party, we can water down the policy of the Party, that the leadership of the Party must also be heterogeneous. On the contrary! Precisely because the Party, under the present conditions, cannot be so homogeneous in its composition as it was before the seizure of power, the policy of the Party must, more strictly than ever, base itself upon the workers: and precisely, therefore, the leadership of the Party must be specially firm and Leninist.

The objective conditions under which our Party must work at present are such that there exists the danger of the formation of a right wing. He who wishes to remain true to the spirit of Leninism must exert all his forces in order to help the Party to withstand these tendencies. With a skilful and correct application of the principles of Leninism to the present situation, we will succeed in preventing the formation of a right wing in our Party.

Those comrades, however, who, like Comrade Trotsky, not only do not resist these tendencies, but become their representatives, those comrades who oppose the Leninist Central Committee which

clearly perceives the danger and has to manoeuvre in a complicated situation, thereby become the enemies of Leninism.

Whether this is their intention or not it is all the same. Whether they clearly recognise this or not it is also all the same.

Let us take, for example, two prominent comrades (let us say, Comrades A. and B.). Both comrades are the most disciplined and excellent comrades. Comrade A. however, came over to Bolshevism at another time and by other ways than Comrade B. Comrade A. came from the peasant movement. Comrade B. came from the workers' movement, he has been a Bolshevik for twenty years. Our Party needs both. When, however, Comrade A. begins to develop within the Party in a certain manner, as so often happens, and begins to demand that the policy of the Party shall be based not upon the workers, but upon the peasants, or when he begins to demand that the General Staff of the Party should be transformed into a block of various groups—what would our Party say to this Comrade A. in this event?

Something similar, but in a more serious form, is now being done by Comrade Trotsky. He is giving expression to everything in the Party which is not Bolshevik.

Can the Party tolerate this? Is it to be wondered if the Party administers such a severe rebuke to Comrade Trotsky?

V.

*Whither is the Present Development of Trotsky
Leading?*

Comrade Trotsky, as an obvious individualist, has, of course, many features of character which are only characteristic for him personally. Comrade Trotsky often sets up such a political platform that only one person can stand on it. It would be a mistake, however, to see in this standpoint of Trotsky only the individual. There is no doubt that he represents a fairly broad section of the factors of our situation.

Since 1922, but even more since 1923, there has been an indisputable increase in the prosperity of the country, an indisputable improvement in the material situation and the mood of the workers. At the same time we see from all the expressions of Comrade Trotsky that precisely during these years his political mood has become worse. The curve of the political mood of the broad masses of the workers of our country is in an upward direction, the political mood of Comrade Trotsky is in a downward direction.

Comrade Trotsky is beginning to see things in ever darker colours. He prophesies the decline of the country on the eve of an indisputable improvement in the economic situation, he makes false diagnoses and proposes wrong remedies, he loses more and more of his followers, etc. Let us call to mind that Comrade Trotsky, at the time of his first encounter with Comrade Lenin and the Leninist C.C. at the time of the dispute over the Brest

Peace, still had a considerable portion of the Party on his side. At the time of the second encounter with Lenin, in 1921 (trade union discussion), Comrade Trotsky still had about a fifth of the delegates to the Party Conference on his side, and this in the presence of Lenin. During last year's discussion Trotsky's following was already much smaller, but nevertheless, there were still hundreds of comrades who were prepared consistently to defend his platform. In the present attack of Comrade Trotsky against the C.C. the comrades defending the platform of Comrade Trotsky can be counted on the fingers. And this is not a mere chance.

This fact alone shows that Comrade Trotsky in recent years, of course, without wishing it himself, has given expression, not to the mood of the proletarian masses, but often involuntarily to the mood of other sections of the population.

If we pursue the line of development of Comrade Trotsky, if we test his latest political evolution in all its details during the last two or three years, it is not difficult to encounter apparent contradictions: and sometimes it may seem as if Comrade Trotsky were criticising the C.C., not from the right but from the left. Was it not Comrade Trotsky who accused the C.C. and its representatives in the Comintern that they had "missed" the German revolution? Is that then not a "left" criticism? But when we bear in mind that along with the "left" phrases of Comrade Trotsky there stands the fact that Trotsky, during the whole of 1923, supported the right wing of the C.P. of Germany, and on the other hand the fact that the

right elements of all sections of the Comintern during last year's discussion supported the standpoint of Trotsky, then the question is seen in quite another light. When we remember that even in January, 1924, the draft resolution of Comrade Trotsky, Radek and Piatakov contained passages, according to which if the C.P. of Germany in October, 1923, had entered upon a revolt it would to-day be a heap of ruins, then it becomes clear that Comrade Trotsky here, as in all the other questions which he deals with in the "Lessons of October," has not been in any way consistent.

In the activity of Comrade Trotsky there is much that is individual, much that is the mere reflection of passing moods, much that is brilliant. His platform is not yet finally settled. His political standpoint shimmers in all the colours of the rainbow. Our task consists in understanding what substance there is in all this, what is the basis of all this; and we maintain that the basis consists of something which is not Bolshevik and not Leninist.

From whence comes this variety of form? It has its basis in the fact that Comrade Trotsky's political development is not yet ended, and that it is taking place in a time of transition, in the period of the new Economic Policy.

Through all the variety, through all the improvisations of Comrade Trotsky, there comes to light one definite tendency.

Let us imagine for a moment what would be the state of our country if our Party, instead of ener-

getically resisting the proposals of Comrade Trotsky had accepted his most important proposals since 1921. This would have meant :

1. The trade unions would have become state institutions, there would have taken place the notorious "fusion" of the trade unions with the official state and economic organs. The trade unions, which to-day constitute our broadest basis and embrace six million workers and employees, would have been converted into a bureaucratic appendage of the official machine. In other words, we would have created a basis for Menshevism and undermined with our own hands the dictatorship of the proletariat.

2. The Party would have become excluded from the immediate leadership of the economic and state organs. The Soviet apparatus would have become more independent. "The emancipation of the Soviets from the Party" would not merely have remained on paper, in the writings of the emigrants, but would have been partly realised. It is hardly necessary to point out to a Bolshevik that such a tendency would have had innumerable fatal consequences.

3. The bourgeois specialists would have won a far greater influence in all branches of our work, and not only on the military field. It is almost superfluous to point out that that was one of the most important features of the political platform of Comrade Trotsky, and one of the most important points of his differences with our Party.

Of course it is absolutely necessary that we attract honest specialists into our work, and that we create such an atmosphere as will enable them to render useful service for our cause. If, however, the question of specialists had been solved, not according to Lenin, but according to Trotsky, it would have meant the greatest political concession to the new bourgeoisie.

4. In the questions of the inner life of the Party we would have had to recognise that, not the workers at the benches but the youths in the high schools constitute the barometer of the Party; the youths in the high schools, among whom there are excellent proletarian elements, but among whom there are not a few people who are connected by a thousand social ties to the petty bourgeoisie and, through them, to the Nep and the new bourgeoisie.

5. We should not have carried out the currency reform because, according to Trotsky, "first" industry had to be restored, and then the currency reform was to be taken in hand. It is not necessary to mention that if we had accepted this "ingenious" proposal, the weight of the Socialist element upon the economy of our country would only have been reduced and the new bourgeoisie would have thereby become stronger.

6. As regards the question of our relation to the peasantry, we should have committed the greatest errors. Instead of the beginning of an alliance with the peasantry, we should be altogether estranged from them. The peasantry, alienated by our errors, would have sought another political

leader, and, of course, would have found it in the new bourgeoisie.

No comrade will be able to say that we have invented the above six points. Every serious Bolshevik will have to admit that the struggle between the Leninist C.C. and Comrade Trotsky turns precisely upon these points, and not upon the question of "personal prestige," as the philistines think.

What would be the state of affairs in our country, if in these six questions, we had followed the road urged by Trotsky? It would have become a Russia of the Nep, in the sense and to the extent which the ideology of the new bourgeoisie reckoned upon. And the prospects of the transformation of Russia of the new economic policy into a Socialist Russia would have been very remote, and would even have entirely vanished.

If we add to all this the opportunist errors of Comrade Trotsky in the questions of international politics (over-estimation of the democratic-pacifist era, over-estimation of the miraculous peace-making quality of American super-imperialism, under-estimation of the counter revolutionary nature of social democracy, under-estimation of the duration of fascism) and the fact that he supported all right, semi-social democratic elements in the various sections of the Comintern, then it is clear in what direction Comrade Trotsky is drawing our Party.

In this heaping up of one error upon another, Comrade Trotsky has his own "system." As a whole that system is, right deviation.

The new bourgeoisie of our country is precisely a new and not the old bourgeoisie. It has seen a variety of things and has also learnt something from the "Lessons of October." It saw the masses in action. It saw the ruthless handing of the bourgeoisie by the Bolsheviki in the first period of the October Revolution, and the concessions of the Bolsheviki to the bourgeoisie in 1921, when these same ruthless Bolsheviki were compelled to introduce the new economic policy. It now knows the value of the real relation of forces which, among others consists in the international bourgeois environment of the first Soviet country. It has its new intelligentsia, educated for the most part in our educational establishments. It has learnt to penetrate into the struggle of tendencies within our own Party, it has learnt to take advantage of Soviet legality.

It is a bourgeoisie which has passed through the fire of the greatest revolution; a bourgeoisie which understands how to bring about its alliance with the leaders of the international bourgeoisie. In one word, it is a bourgeoisie with a keen class-consciousness; an adaptable bourgeoisie, which has become more clever through the experiences of the revolution and better understands the importance of the Workers' Party and the currents within this Party.

We must not disguise the fact; the social composition of our state apparatus is such, that an important part of the personnel of this apparatus must be considered as an agency of this new bourgeoisie. The same must be said regarding a certain

section of the students and of the intelligentsia in general.

To demand from the Bolshevik Party in the years 1921 to 1924, in the period of transition, the before-mentioned six points, means nothing less than to help, even if unwillingly, the new bourgeoisie.

Comrade Trotsky has taken a wrong turning. He wants to fight against the exaggerated "sectarianism" of the old Bolsheviki, which appears to him as "narrow-mindedness" and in reality he is fighting against the bases of Bolshevism. As a matter of fact, of course, without wishing it, he is rendering the class enemy an invaluable service.

We ask the former and present followers of Comrade Trotsky, whether they are aware that every attack of Comrade Trotsky against the Bolshevik C.C. since 1921 has been hailed throughout the whole of the non-Bolshevik camp with ever-increasing joy?

Marx has already said that one can express the feeling of the petty bourgeoisie without oneself being a small shopkeeper. Of course, Comrade Trotsky has the best intentions. But the way to Hell is paved with good intentions. Comrade Trotsky must once and for all give up "saving" our Party from alleged errors. He must understand and admit his own political errors, which for the greater part arise from the remnants of his political ideology of the time from 1903 to 1917, when Comrade Trotsky was an open opponent of Bolshevism. He must cease from stirring up periodical

“crises,” with the regularity and the punctuality of a calendar, every year, and recently every six months. He must understand that nobody will succeed in crushing Leninism by force under Trotskyism. In one word, it must be understood that Bolshevism remains Bolshevism.

What is to be Done? Split? Nonsense! There can be no talk of such a thing! Our Party is more united than it ever was.

Disciplinary measures? That is also absurd! Nobody needs this; something else is necessary at present.

It is necessary that the Party secure itself against a repetition of the “attacks” upon Leninism. Serious Party guarantees are necessary that the decisions of the Party shall be binding for Comrade Trotsky. The Party is not a debating society, but a Party, which, moreover, is in a very complicated situation. The slogan of the present day is :

Bolshevizing of all strata of the Party! Ideological struggle against Trotskyism!

And before all: enlightenment, enlightenment and again enlightenment!

Our Party consists for the greater part of relatively new members. It is necessary that the Party study the question of Leninism and Trotskyism. It is necessary that the Party clearly see that here it is a question of two fundamentally different systems of tactics.

It is not merely a question of the past history of the Party. It is here a question of two methods of dealing with present-day politics, which are closely connected with such cardinal questions as the question of the relation between the working class and the peasantry. And we cannot avoid thanking Comrade Trotsky that he has at any rate provided the Party with a good opportunity of analysing a deviation from Leninism and thinking more deeply into the fundamentals of Leninism.

Of course, the Party must insist that Party discipline is also binding for Comrade Trotsky; and we are convinced that the Party will be able to insist on this. The more clearness there is in the Party regarding the question of Leninism and of Trotskyism, the less ground there will be for such an attempt as Comrade Trotsky has undertaken. The less response there is in the Party to this attempt, the less desire he will have to repeat it. And the response this time is very small. Comrade Trotsky has so changed the form of his "platform" that there is only room for one man upon it—Comrade Trotsky himself.

During the last discussion Comrade Trotsky declared the student youth to be the reliable "barometer." We did not agree with him then and we do not agree with him now. But it must be stated that even this, not entirely ideal, barometer, has not responded this time as in recent years, which proves that the student youth do not wish to replace Leninism by Trotskyism.

The best means to hold Comrade Trotsky back from further errors, which will estrange him still

further from Bolshevism, is for the whole Party as one man to repudiate his deviation, and then we hope he will soon retrieve his errors.

It is to be hoped that Comrade Trotsky, when he perceives the harmfulness of this tendency and the unanimity of the Party against his enormous errors, will turn back from his wrong path.

Comrade Lenin more than once formulated the "law" of the political evolution of Comrade Trotsky. If things are going well, Comrade Trotsky approaches the Bolshevik line; when things are going bad, then Comrade Trotsky inclines to the right. In order to keep him back from turning to the right, the ideological defence of the whole Party is necessary.

The Party will say its final word, and once again the premature hopes of the enemy will be disappointed. The Bolshevik Party will receive a new and more powerful steeling, and true Leninism will become the ideological equipment of the whole Party down to the last member.

LENINISM OR TROTSKYISM?

By Comrade STALIN

At the Plenary Meeting of the Communist Section
of the Central Trade Union Council on November
19th, 1924.

Comrades, I will confine myself to unmasking a few legends which have been spread by Comrade Trotsky and others of the same opinion as to the October revolution, the part played by Comrade Trotsky in the revolution, as to the Party and the preparations for October, etc. In doing so I shall treat Trotskyism as a singular ideology which is quite irreconcilable with Leninism, and speak of the duties of the Party in connection with the recent literary undertakings of Comrade Trotsky.

The Facts as to the October Revolution.

First of all, as to the October revolution. Strong rumours are being spread among the members of the Party, that the C.C. as a whole is said to have been opposed to the insurrection in October, 1917. The tale usually goes that on Oct. 10th, when the C.C. passed a resolution regarding the organisation of the revolt, the majority of the C.C. pronounced against the revolt, but that just then a workman forced his way into the committee and said: "You have passed a resolution against the revolt, but I tell you that it will take place in spite of everything." The C.C. is said to have been alarmed by these threats, to have discussed anew the question of the revolt, and to have decided to organise it.

This is no simple rumour, comrades. The well-known John Reed, who was not connected with our Party, and naturally could not know the history of our conspirative meeting on October 10th, so that he fell into Mr. Suchanow's trap, writes about it in his book "Ten Days which Shook the World." This tale is printed and repeated in a whole series of brochures which originate from the pens of Trotsky's adherents, among others in one of the latest brochures about October written by Comrade Syrkin.

These rumours are supported in an increased degree by the latest literary enterprise of Comrade Trotsky. It is hardly necessary to prove that all these and similar "Arabian Nights" do not correspond to the facts, that nothing of the sort happened or could have happened at the meeting of the C.C. We might, therefore, pass over these rumours, for indeed, many unfounded and silly rumours are manufactured in the studies of persons in opposition or not connected with the Party. We have, as a matter of fact, done so until recently, for instance, by paying no attention to the mistakes of John Reed and not troubling to correct them. But after the recent enterprises of Comrade Trotsky, it is really impossible to pass over these legends, for efforts are being made to educate the youth on the lines of these legends, which have unfortunately already met with some success. I feel, therefore, compelled to confront these silly rumours with the actual facts.

Let us take the minutes of the meeting of the C.C. of our Party from 10th to 23rd Oct. 1917.

Present: Lenin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin, Trotsky, Sverdlov, Uritzky, Dzershinsky, Kollontay, Bubnov, Sokolnikov, Lomov. The question to be discussed is the situation at the time and the insurrection. After the debate, a resolution of Comrade Lenin's as to the revolt is put to the vote. The resolution was passed with a majority of 10 votes against 2. It seems, therefore, perfectly clear that the C.C. resolved by a majority of 10 against 2 votes to proceed immediately with the practical work for the organisation of the insurrection. At this meeting, the C.C. chose a political central committee with the title of a political bureau, consisting of Lenin, Zinoviev, Stalin, Kamenev, Trotsky, Sokolnikov and Bubnov to lead the revolt.

These are the facts.

These Minutes immediately destroy several legends. They destroy the legend that a majority of the C.C. pronounced against the insurrection. They also destroy the legend that the C.C. was faced by a split on the question of the insurrection. It is evident from the Minutes, that the opponents of immediate revolt—Comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev, joined the organ for the political direction of the revolt, just as did those who were in favour of it. There was not and cannot be any question of a split.

Comrade Trotsky asserts that in the persons of Comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev, we had in October, a right-wing, almost a wing of Social-Democrats in our Party. In view of this it seems

difficult to understand how it could happen that the Party escaped a split; how it could happen that, in spite of the differences of opinion, the comrades in question were placed by the Party at the most important posts, were elected to the political central committee of the insurrection, etc. Lenin's intolerance of Social-Democrats is well known in the Party; the Party knows that he would not for a moment have agreed to have comrades with Social-Democratic leanings in the Party let alone in the most important posts.

How is it to be explained that the Party escaped a split? It is explained by the fact that these comrades were old Bolsheviki who stood on the general foundation of Bolshevism. In what did this general foundation consist? In a conformity of views as to the fundamental questions, the questions as to the character of the Russian revolution, as to the driving force of the revolution, the role of the peasants, the principles of party leadership, etc. Without such a general foundation, a split would have been inevitable. No split took place, and the differences of opinion only lasted a few days, and that because Comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev were Leninists, were Bolsheviki.

Let us now pass on to the legend as to the special part played by Comrade Trotsky in the October revolution. Comrade Trotsky's partisans vigorously spread rumours that the inaugurator and the only leader of the October revolution was Comrade Trotsky. These rumours are specially spread by Comrade Lenzner, editor of Trotsky's works. By the fact that Comrade Trotsky system-

atically neglects to mention the Party, the C.C. and the Petrograd committee, and is silent as to the leading part played by these organisations in the work of the revolution, putting himself in the foreground as its central figure, he himself, intentionally or unintentionally, promotes the spread of the rumour as to the special part played by him in the revolution.

I am far from denying the undoubtedly important part played by Comrade Trotsky in the revolution. I must, however, say that Comrade Trotsky, neither did nor could play any special part, that he as chairman of the Petrograd Soviet only carried out the will of the Party authorities in question who supervised everyone of his steps. To members of the petty bourgeoisie, such Suchanov, all this may appear strange, but the facts, the actual facts completely confirm my statement.

Let us take the Minutes of the following meeting of the 16th of October. Present : the members of the C.C. plus representatives of the Petrograd committee plus representatives of the military organisation, of the factory committees of the trade unions, of the railwaymen. Among those present were, besides the members of the C.C., Krylenko, Schotman, Kalinin, Volodarsky, Schlapnikov, Lazis and others. The question for discussion is the insurrection from the purely practical point of view of organisation. Lenin's resolution as to the insurrection was passed by a majority of 20 votes against 2, 2 refraining from voting. The practical central committee for organising the direction of the revolt was elected. Five comrades were elected

to this committee : Sverdlov, Stalin, Dsherinsky, Bubnov, Uritzky. The duties of the central committee consisted in directing all the practical organs of the insurrection in accordance with the instructions of the C.C. As you see, something "terrible" happened at this meeting of the C.C. *i.e.*, the "inaugurator," the "central figure," the "only leader" of the insurrection, Comrade Trotsky, was not elected a member of the practical central committee, whose duty it was to direct the insurrection.

How can this be reconciled with the opinion in general circulation as to the special part played by Comrade Trotsky? It is indeed somewhat "strange" as Suchanov or Comrade Trotsky's adherents would say. Strictly speaking, there is, however, nothing "strange" in it, for Comrade Trotsky a comparatively new man in our Party at the time of October, neither did nor could play a special part, either in the Party or in the October revolution. He, like all the responsible functionaries, was only an agent of the will of the C.C. Anyone who knows the mechanism of the Party leadership of the Bolsheviki will understand without much difficulty, that it could not have been otherwise, for had Comrade Trotsky begun to act contrary to the will of the C.C., he would have been deprived of his influence on the course of things. All the talk about the special part played by Comrade Trotsky is a legend which is spread by officious "Party" gossips.

This, of course, does not mean that the October revolution did not have its instigator and leader. But this was Lenin and no other—the same Lenin whose resolutions were accepted by the Central

Committee in deciding the question of the revolution, the same Lenin who was not hindered by illegality from becoming the instigator of the revolution, in spite of the assertions of Comrade Trotsky. It is foolish and ridiculous to endeavour by gossiping about illegality to erase that indubitable fact that the leader of the Party, V. I. Lenin, was the instigator of the revolution.

These are the facts.

Granted, they say, but it cannot be denied that Comrade Trotsky fought well in the October period. Yes, it is true, Comrade Trotsky really fought bravely in October. But in October, not only Comrade Trotsky fought bravely, so did even the left social revolutionaries who at that time stood side by side with the Bolsheviki. Altogether it must be said that it is not difficult to fight bravely in a period of victorious insurrection, when the enemy is isolated and the insurrection is growing. In such moments even the backward ones become heroes. But the battle of the proletariat is not always an attack, not always exclusively a chain of successes. The fight of the proletariat has its trials, its defeats. A true revolutionary is one who not only shows courage in the period of victorious insurrection, but who at the same time shows courage at a moment of retreat of the revolution, in a period of defeat of the proletariat; who does not lose his head nor fall out, if the revolution fails and the enemy succeeds; who, in the period of the retreat of the revolution, does not fall a victim to panic and despair.

The left social revolutionaries did not fight badly

in the October period when they supported the Bolsheviks. Who however, is not aware that these "brave" warriors were seized with panic in the Brest period when the attack of German imperialism threw them into despair and hysterics? It is a sad but indisputable fact that Comrade Trotsky, who had fought well in the October period, lost his courage in the Brest period, the period of temporary failure of the revolution, to such an extent that in this difficult moment he was not steadfast enough to resist following in the footsteps of the left social revolutionaries. There is no doubt that the moment was a very difficult one, that it was necessary to display an iron self-possession so as not to be worn out, to give way at the right moment and to accept peace at the right moment, to protect the proletarian army against the thrust of German imperialism, to preserve the peasant reserves and after having in this way attained a breathing space, to strike out at the enemy with renewed force. But alas, Comrade Trotsky did not display such courage and such revolutionary steadfastness at this difficult moment.

In Comrade Trotsky's opinion, the chief lesson of the proletarian revolution of October is "not to run off the rails." This is wrong, for the assertion of Comrade Trotsky contains only a small part of the truth as to the lessons of the revolution. The whole truth as to the lesson is to avoid "running off the rails," not only in the days of the revolutionary attack, but also in the days of retreat of the revolution, when the enemy has gained the upper hand and the revolution is suffering defeat. The revolution is not exhausted with October. October is only the beginning of the proletarian

revolution. It is bad to run off the rails when the revolution is in the process of development, it is worse when it happens in the hour of severe trial of the revolution, after power has been seized. It is no less important to hold fast to the power on the day after the revolution, than to seize it. Since Comrade Trotsky ran off the rails in the Brest period, the period of severe trial for our revolution when it was almost a case of yielding up the power, he ought to understand that his pointing out of the mistakes made by Kamenev and Zinoviev in October, is entirely out of place.

The Party and the Preparations for October.

Let us now pass on to the question of the preparations for October. If one listens to Comrade Trotsky, one is tempted to think that the Bolshevik Party during the whole period of October only did just what turned up, that it was devoured by internal dissensions, and that it hindered Lenin in every possible way and that, had it not been for Comrade Trotsky, no one knows how the revolution might have ended. It is rather amusing to hear these strange statements of Comrade Trotsky about the Party, who in the same "preface" to Volume III. states that "the chief weapon of the proletarian revolution is the Party," that "without the Party, beyond the Party, independently of the Party, by a substitution of the Party, the proletarian revolution cannot win," from which argument Allah himself could not understand how our revolution could have been victorious, since "its chief weapon" was inadequate and yet no victory is possible "independently of the Party." It is not,

however, the first time that Comrade Trotsky serves us up such strange fare. We must take it for granted that the entertaining speeches about our Party belong to the usual peculiarities of Comrade Trotsky. Let us glance briefly at the preparations for October according to the various periods.

1. The Period of Re-Orientation of the Party (March-April). The fundamental facts of this period are: (a) the fall of Czarism; (b) the formation of the provisional government (dictatorship) of the bourgeoisie; (c) the rise of soldiers' and workmen's soviets (dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry); (d) the double government; (e) the April demonstration; (f) the first crisis of power.

The characteristic feature of this period is the fact that side by side, concurrently and simultaneously, there exist both the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat and the peasantry, the latter showing confidence in the former, believing in its efforts for peace, voluntarily conferring the power on the bourgeoisie and thus turning itself into its appendage. Serious conflicts between the two dictatorships had not yet arisen. Instead of this there was a "contact commission."

This was the greatest change in the history of Russia and a hitherto unexperienced turn in the history of our Party. The old pre-revolutionary platform of the direct overthrow of the government was clear and definite, but was no longer united to

the new conditions of the fight. It was now impossible to aim directly at the overthrow of the Government, for it was bound up with the Soviets which were under the influence of the social patriots, and the Party would have had to carry on an unbearable fight against both the Government and the Soviets. But it was also impossible to carry out a policy for the support of the Provisional Government for this was a government of imperialism.

A re-orientation of the Party under the new conditions of the fight was necessary. The Party (its majority) approached this re-orientation very cautiously. It adopted the policy of a pressure of the Soviets on the Provisional Government in the question of peace, but did not at once make up its mind to take the further step from the old slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry to the new slogan of all power to the Soviets. This double-faced policy was calculated to convince the Soviets through the concrete questions of peace of the genuinely imperialistic nature of the Provisional Government, and thus to tear them away from the latter. This was an entirely mistaken policy; for it produced pacifist illusions, supplied water to the mills of social patriotism and rendered the revolutionary education of the masses difficult. This mistaken attitude I shared at that time with other members of the Party, and I only renounced it altogether in the middle of April after I had subscribed to Lenin's theses.*

* It is, well-known that Comrade Zinoviev, whom Comrade Trotsky would like to turn into an "adherent of Hilferding" entirely shared Lenin's point of view.

A re-orientation was necessary. This re-orientation was given to the party by Lenin in his famous theses of April. I will not enter into detail as to these theses, as they are known to everyone. Were there at that time differences of opinion between the Party and Lenin? Yes, there were. How long did these differences of opinion last? Not more than a fortnight. The conference of the organisation of the whole town of Petrograd (second half of April), which accepted Lenin's theses, was a turning point in the development of our Party. The State Conference at the end of April only completed the work of the Petrograd conference in a measure appropriate to the State, gathering, by the united attitude of the Party, nine-tenths of the Party round itself.

Now, after seven years, Comrade Trotsky shows malicious joy at long passed differences of opinion among the Bolsheviki, by representing these differences of opinion almost as a fight of two Parties within Bolshevism. But first of all, Comrade Trotsky exaggerates in an outrageous manner, and inflates the whole subject; for the Bolshevik Party has outlived these differences of opinion without being in the least shaken. In the second place our Party would be a caste and not a revolutionary Party if it did not admit different shades of opinion in its midst, but it is well-known that there were differences of opinion amongst us also in the past, thus, for instance, in the period of the third Duma, which, however, did not interfere with the unity of our Party. Thirdly, it will not be superfluous to ask what was Comrade Trotsky's attitude at that time, he who now takes malicious pleasure in long past differences of opinions.

The so-called editor of Trotsky's works, Comrade Lenzner, maintains that the American letters of Comrade Trotsky. (March) "completely anticipate" Lenin's "Letters from Abroad" (March) which form the foundations of Lenin's April theses. He writes verbatim: "completely anticipate." Comrade Trotsky makes no objection to this analogy, so evidently accepts it with thanks, But first of all, Comrade Trotsky's letters "in no way resemble" Lenin's letters, either in spirit or in their conclusions, for they fully reflect Comrade Trotsky's anti-Bolshevist slogan: "No Tsar, but a Labour Government," a slogan which means the revolution without the peasantry. It is only necessary to look through these two groups of letters to convince oneself of this fact. Secondly, how can it be explained in this case that Lenin thought it necessary two days after his return from abroad to draw a line of separation between himself and Trotsky?

Who does not know of Lenin's repeated declarations, that Trotsky's slogan "No Tsar, but a Labour Government" is an attempt to "overlook the peasant movement which is not yet out of date," that this slogan is playing with the seizure of power by the Labour Government?"* What can Lenin's Bolshevist theses have in common with the anti-Bolshevist scheme of Comrade Trotsky, with his "playing with the seizure of power"? And where do these people get the passion with which

* See Lenin's Works, vol. xiv., pp. 31 and 32 (Russian edition). See also the reports at the conference of the whole of Petrograd and at the Imperial Conference of the R.C.P. (middle and end of April, 1917.)

they compare a miserable hovel with Mont Blanc? Why did Comrade Lenzner have to add, to the many legends about our revolution, another legend about "the anticipation" of Lenin's famous "Letters from Afar," by the American letters of Comrade Trotsky?"†

† We must consider as one of these legends the wide-spread version that Comrade Trotsky was the "only" or the "chief organiser" of the victories at the fronts in the civil war. In the interest of truth, comrades, I must declare that this version is absolutely contrary to the truth. I am far from denying the important part played by Comrade Trotsky in the civil war. I must, however, declare with all firmness, that the honour of being the organiser of our victories falls on no individual but on the great community of the advanced workers of our country, the Russian Communist Party. Perhaps it will not be superfluous to quote a few examples. You know that Koltchak and Denikin were regarded as the chief enemies of the Soviet Republic. You know that our country only breathed freely after the victory over these enemies. And history says that our troops defeated these two enemies. Koltchak as well as Denikin in opposition to Trotsky's plans. Judge for yourselves!

1. Re Koltchak. It was in the summer of 1919. Our troops attacked Koltchak and operated before Ufa. Meeting of the C.C. Comrade Trotsky proposed to stop the attack on the line of Bjalaja river (before Ufa), to leave the Urals in Koltchak's hands, to remove part of our troops, from the Eastern front and to throw them on to the Southern front. Heated debates took place. The C.C. did not agree with Comrade Trotsky and found that the Urals with their works, their network of railways, should not be left in Koltchak's hands, because he could there easily bring his troops into order, collect large farmers round him and advance to the Volga, but that first of all Koltchak should be driven back over the ridge of the Urals into the Siberian steppes, and that only then should the transference of troops to the South be proceeded with. The C.C. declined Comrade Trotsky's plan. The latter resigned. The C.C. did not accept his resignation. The Commander in Chief, Wazetis, a partisan of Comrade Trotsky's plan, retired. His place was taken by a new Commander in Chief, Comrade Kamenev. From this moment onward, Comrade Trotsky declined any direct participation in the transactions on the Eastern front.

2. The period of the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses (May-August). Fundamental facts of this period: (a) The April demonstration in Petrograd and the formation of a Coalition Government with the participation of the "Socialists"; (b) the demonstration on May 1st in the most important centres of Russia with the slogan of the "democratic peace"; (c) the June demonstration in Petrograd with the chief slogan: "Down with the capitalist ministers!"; (d) the June offensive on the front and the failures of the Russian army; (e) the armed July demonstration in Petrograd and the resignation of the ministers of the Cadet party from the government; (f) the bringing up of counter-revolutionary troops from the front, the destruction of the editorial office of the *Pravda*, the fight for the counter-revolution against the Soviets and the formation of a new coalition government with Kerensky at its head: (g) the Sixth Party Session at which was given the slogan for the preparation of an armed insurrection; (h) the counter-revolutionary imperial council and the general strike in Moscow; (i) the unfortunate attack of Kornilov on Petrograd, the revival of the Soviets,

2. Re Denikin. The affair took place in Autumn, 1919. The attack against Denikin failed. The "steel ring" round Mamontov (the storming of Mamontov) was an obvious failure. Denikin took Kursk. Denikin approaches Orel. Comrade Trotsky was called from the Southern front to a meeting of the C.C. The C.C. declared the situation to be disquieting and resolved to send new military functionaries to the Southern front and to recall Comrade Trotsky. These functionaries demanded "non-interference" on the part of Comrade Trotsky on the Southern front. Comrade Trotsky withdrew from immediate participation in the action on the Southern front. The operations on the Southern front up to the taking of Rostov on the Don and of Odessa by our troops, proceeded without Comrade Trotsky.

resignation of the cadets and formation of the "directorium."

As the characteristic feature of this period we must regard the sharpening of the crisis and the destruction of that unstable equilibrium between the Soviets and the Provisional Government, which in the previous period had, for better or worse, continued to exist. The double rule was unbearable for both sides. The fragile construction of the "contact commission" saw its last days. The "crisis of power" and the "ministerial leap-frog" were at that time the most fashionable expressions. The crisis at the front and the disintegration behind the front did their work in that they strengthened the extreme wings and wedged in the social compromisers and social patriots on both sides. The revolution was mobilised, which brought about the mobilisation of the counter revolution. The counter revolution on the other hand fanned the flame of the revolution by intensifying the revolutionary conflagration. The question of the transference of power to a new class became the question of the day.

Were there at that time differences of opinion in our Party? There were. But, contrary to the statements of Comrade Trotsky who attempted to discover a "right" and a "left" wing of the Party they were of a purely objective nature. That is to say, they were differences of opinion of a kind without which no active Party life and no real party work can exist.

Comrade Trotsky is wrong when he maintains that the April demonstration in Petrograd brought

about differences of opinion within the C.C. The C.C. was in this question absolutely unanimous and condemned the attempt of a group of comrades to arrest the "Provisional Government" at the moment when the Bolsheviki were in the minority both in the Soviets and in the army. If Comrade Trotsky had not written his "history" of October according to Suchanov's material, but on the basis of the actual documents, he could easily have convinced himself of the incorrectness of his assertion.

Comrade Trotsky is undoubtedly wrong when he asserts that the "right" members of the C.C. designated as an "adventure" the attempt, on "Lenin's initiative" to organise a demonstration on June 9th. If Comrade Trotsky had not written in accordance with Suchanov's information he would certainly have known that the demonstration of July 9th was postponed in complete agreement with Lenin and that Lenin defended the postponement in an important speech at the well-known meeting of the Petrograd Committee (see Minutes of the Petrograd Committee).

Comrade Trotsky is entirely in the wrong when he speaks of the "tragic" differences of opinion within the C.C. in connection with the armed July demonstration. Comrade Trotsky is simply using his imagination when he assumes that some members of the leading group of the C.C. "must have regarded the July episode as a harmful adventure." Comrade Trotsky, who at that time was not yet a member of the C.C. but only our Soviet representative in Parliament, could not, of course, know

that the C.C. only regarded the July demonstration as a means for getting information about the opponent, that the C.C. (and Lenin) did not wish to turn nor think of turning the demonstration into an insurrection at a moment when the Soviets of the chief towns were still in favour of the social patriots. It is quite possible that some of the Bolsheviki actually pulled long faces in connection with the July defeat. I know for instance that some of the Bolsheviki who were arrested were even ready to leave our ranks. But to draw conclusions from this against some who are said to have been "rights" and to have been members of the C.C. is to distort history in a reckless manner.

Comrade Trotsky is wrong when he declares that in the Kornilov days, some of the heads of the Party showed a tendency to form a block with the social patriots in order to support the Provisional Government. Of course, the same so-called "rights" are meant, the comrades who disturb Trotsky's sleep. Trotsky is wrong; documents exist, such as the central organ of the Party at that time, which upset Comrade Trotsky's statements. Comrade Trotsky refers to a letter of Lenin's to the C.C. with a warning against supporting Kerensky. But Comrade Trotsky fails to understand Lenin's letters, their significance, their object. Sometimes Lenin purposely anticipates in his letters and places in the foreground those possible mistakes which might occur, criticises them in advance, so as to warn the Party and deter it from mistakes, or he sometimes exaggerates a "trifle" and "makes a mountain out of a molehill" for the same educational purpose.

A party leader, especially when he is in an illegal position cannot act otherwise, for he must see further than his companions and it is his duty to warn against every possible mistake, even "trifles." But to draw a conclusion as to "tragic" differences of opinion from these letters of Lenin (and there are plenty of such letters) and to blazon it forth, shows a lack of understanding of Lenin's letters, a lack of knowledge of Lenin. This no doubt explains the fact that Comrade Trotsky sometimes entirely fails to hit the mark. To resume: There were in the days of Kornilov's advance, as a matter of fact, absolutely no differences of opinion in the C.C.

After the July defeat, it is true, a difference of opinion did arise between the C.C. and Lenin as to the fate of the Soviets. It is well-known that Lenin, who wished to concentrate the attention of the Party on the preparations for the insurrection outside the Soviets, warned it against allowing itself to be seduced by the Soviets, as in his opinion, the Soviets which had already been rendered nauseous by the social patriots, had become hopelessly barren. The C.C. and the Sixth Party Session took a more cautious line and decided that there was no sufficient reason for thinking it impossible to revive the Soviets. Kornilov's advance showed that this decision was right. In any case this difference of opinion had no actual significance for the Party. Lenin subsequently admitted that the line taken by the Sixth Party Session had been the right one. It is interesting that Comrade Trotsky did not cling to this difference of opinion and did not exaggerate it to a "monstrous" degree.

A united and consolidated Party which stands in the centre of the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses, this is the picture of the situation of our Party at that period.

3. The Period of the Organisation of the Attack (September-October). The fundamental facts of this period are : (a) the summoning of the Democratic Council and the collapse of the idea of a block with the cadets ; (b) the going over of the Soviets of Moscow and Petrograd to the Bolsheviks ; (c) the Soviet Congress of the Northern district and the resolution of the Petrograd Soviet against the transfer of troops ; (d) the resolution of the C.C. of the revolutionary military committee of the Petrograd Soviet ; (e) the resolution of the Petrograd garrison regarding the system of the commissioners of the revolutionary military committee ; (f) the formation of armed Bolshevik fighting forces and the arrest of members of the "Provisional Government" ; (g) the seizure of power by the revolutionary military committee of the Petrograd Soviet and the formation of the Soviet of the People's Commissioners by the Second Soviet Congress.

As the characteristic feature of this period we must regard the rapid growth of the crisis, the complete confusion of the ruling circles, the isolation of the S.R. and of the Mensheviks and the wholesale going over of the vacillating elements to the Bolsheviks.

An original peculiarity of the revolutionary tactics of this period must be pointed out. This

peculiarity consists therein that the revolution attempted to carry out every, or almost every step of its attack under the appearance of defence. There is no doubt that the refusal to permit the transfer of troops was a serious aggressive act of the revolution; nevertheless this attack was undertaken under the slogan of the defence of Petrograd against a possible attack of the external enemy. There is no doubt that the formation of the revolutionary military committee was a still more serious step in the attack against the Provisional Government; nevertheless it was carried out under the slogan of the organisation of the Soviet control over the activities of the military staff. There is no doubt that the open going over of the garrison to the revolutionary military committee and the organisation of the network of Soviet commissioners indicated the beginning of the insurrection; nevertheless these steps were taken under the slogan of the defence of the Petrograd Soviets against possible attacks of the counter-revolution.

It is as though the revolution had hidden its acts of aggression under the cloak of defence so as to attract all the more easily the undecided elements into its sphere of influence. This must also explain the apparent defensive character of the speeches, articles and slogans of this period, which none the less, in their intrinsic value, bore a thoroughly offensive character.

Were there at this period differences of opinion within the C.C.? Yes, there were, and those not unimportant ones. I have already mentioned the differences of opinion as regards the insurrection.

They were fully explained in the Minutes of the C.C. of October 10th and 16th. We must now give more attention to three questions: the questions of the participation in the "Preliminary Parliament," of the part played by the Soviets in the insurrection and the time fixed for the insurrection. This is all the more necessary because Comrade Trotsky in his eagerness to put himself in a conspicuous place, unintentionally misrepresents Lenin's attitude towards the last two questions.

There is no doubt that the differences of opinion as to the question of the Preliminary Parliament were of a serious nature. What was, so to speak, the object of the Preliminary Parliament? That of helping the bourgeoisie to push the Soviets into the background and to lay the foundations of bourgeois parliamentarism. Whether the Preliminary Parliament, in the revolutionary situation which had become so complicated, was able to carry out this task, is another question. Events have shown that this object was unattainable, and the Preliminary Parliament itself represented a miscarriage of the Korniloviad. There is, however, no doubt that this was the aim pursued by the Mensheviki and the social revolutionaries when they created the revolutionary parliament. What can, under these circumstances, have been the share of the Bolsheviki in the Preliminary Parliament? Nothing else than the intention to deceive the proletariat as to the real character of the Preliminary Parliament. This chiefly explains that passion with which Lenin, in his letters, scourges the adherents of the Preliminary Parliament.

The participation in the Preliminary Parliament was doubtless a serious mistake. It would, however, be wrong to take for granted, as does Comrade Trotsky, that the partisans of participation entered the Preliminary Parliament with the object of organic work, to "guide the Labour movement into the channel of social democracy." This is quite wrong. This is not true. If it were true the party would not have succeeded in correcting this mistake by the demonstrative exit from the Preliminary Parliament. The living force and the revolutionary power of our Party were expressed, among other ways, in that it was able so speedily to make good its mistake. And now allow me to correct a slight inexactness which has crept into the report of the "editor" of Trotsky's works, Comrade Lenzner, concerning the committee of the Bolshevist fraction which decided the question of the Preliminary Parliament. Comrade Lenzner states that at this meeting there were two reporters, Kamenev and Trotsky. This is untrue. As a matter of fact there were four reporters: two for the boycott of the Preliminary Parliament (Trotsky and Stalin) and two for participation (Kamenev and Nogin).

But Comrade Trotsky is seen in a still worse light when it comes to Lenin's attitude towards the question of the form of the insurrection. Comrade Trotsky makes it appear as though, had Lenin been followed, the Party would in October have seized power "independently of the Soviet and behind its back" (Trotsky "On Lenin," p. 71 of the Russian edition). In the subsequent criticism of this nonsense which is ascribed to Lenin, Trotsky "dances and plays" and finally ends with the

condescending sentence: "This would have been a mistake." Comrade Trotsky here tells a lie about Lenin; he misrepresents Lenin's view as to the part of the Soviets in the insurrection. We could quote a heap of documents which prove that Lenin proposed the seizure of power by the Soviets, by those of Petrograd or Moscow, and not behind the back of the Soviets. For what purpose did Comrade Trotsky need this more than strange legend about Lenin?

Comrade Trotsky comes off no better when he "expounds" the attitude of the C.C. and of Lenin to the question of the date for the insurrection. Comrade Trotsky communicates facts with regard to the famous meeting of October 10th, and maintains that at this meeting "a resolution was passed to the effect that the insurrection should take place not later than October 15th." (Trotsky "On Lenin," p. 72, Russian edition). It looks as though the C.C. had fixed the day of the revolution for October 15th, and had then itself made the resolution of no effect by postponing it to October 25th. Is this true? No, it is untrue. In this whole period, the C.C. only passed two resolutions altogether concerning the insurrection, one on the tenth, and one on the 16th of October. Let us look at these resolutions.

The resolution of the C.C. on October 10th is as follows:

"The C.C. finds that for the following reasons an armed insurrection is on the agenda: the international situation of the Russian revolution (mutiny in the German navy, the increasing

growth of the socialist world revolution in the whole of Europe, the fear that the imperialists would make peace in order to choke the revolution in Russia), the military situation (the unquestionable determination of the Russian bourgeoisie and of Kerensky and Co. to hand over Petrograd to the Germans), the conquest of a majority in the Soviets by the proletarian Party, all this in connection with the peasant insurrection and with the transference of the confidence of the masses of the people to our Party (elections in Moscow), finally the obvious preparations for the second Korniloviad (removal of the troops from Petrograd, transfer of Cossacks to Petrograd, the encircling of Minsk by Cossacks, etc.).

“The C.C. thus finds that the insurrection has unavoidably and completely matured, and, therefore, calls upon all organisations of the Party to act accordingly and to judge and solve all practical questions (concerning the Soviet Congress of the Northern territory, the removal of troops from Petrograd, the coming into action of those from Moscow, Minsk, etc.), from this point of view.”

The resolution of the conference between the C.C. and the responsible functionaries on October 16th is as follows :

“This assembly welcomes and warmly supports the resolution of the C.C. and calls upon all organisations and all workers and soldiers to support the armed insurrection in every way and with all intensity, and to support the central committee which has been appointed for this purpose by the C.C. ; it expresses its full conviction that the C.C. and the Soviets will in due time make known

the right moment and the suitable means for the insurrection."

You see, that Comrade Trotsky's memory played him false as regards the date fixed for the insurrection and the resolution of the C.C. concerning the insurrection.

Comrade Trotsky is absolutely in the wrong when he maintains that Lenin under-estimated the legality of the Soviet, that Lenin had not understood the serious significance of the seizure of power by the All-Russian Soviet Congress on October 25th, that just for this reason Lenin had insisted on the seizure of power before October 25th. This is untrue. Lenin proposed the seizure of power before October 25th for two reasons. Firstly because it was to be feared that the counter revolutionaries might at any moment hand over Petrograd to the Germans, which would have cost the rising insurrection blood, and that, therefore, every day was precious. Secondly because of the mistake of the Petrograd Soviet in fixing and publicly announcing the day for the insurrection (October 25th), which could only be made good by the insurrection actually taking place before the day legally fixed.

The fact is that Lenin regarded the insurrection as an art and must have known that the enemy who (thanks to the lack of caution of the Petrograd Soviet) was informed as to the day of the insurrection, would undoubtedly make every effort to prepare for this day, that it was, therefore, necessary to steal a march on the enemy, i.e., to begin with the insurrection necessarily

before the day formally fixed. This chiefly explains the passion with which Lenin in his letters upbraids those who regard the date, October 25th as a fetish.

Events have shown that Lenin was entirely in the right. It is known that the insurrection was begun before the All-Russian Soviet Congress. It is known that the power was actually seized before the opening of the All-Russian Soviet Congress, and that it was seized, not by the Soviet Congress but by the Petrograd Soviet, by the revolutionary military committee. The Soviet congress only took over the power from the hands of the Petrograd Soviets. For this reason Comrade Trotsky's long dissertations on the significance of the legality of the Soviets are certainly quite superfluous.

A living and powerful Party, at the head of the revolutionary masses, who storm and overthrow the bourgeois power, this is the condition of our Party at that period.

This is the truth as to the legends regarding the preparations for October.

Trotskyism or Leninism.

We have already spoken of the legends about the Party and about Lenin, which Comrade Trotsky and his followers have disseminated. We have unveiled and refuted these legends. Now, however, the question arises: for what purpose did Comrade Trotsky want all these legends as to the preparations for October, as to Lenin and Lenin's

Party? Why were the recent literary attacks of Comrade Trotsky on the party necessary? What is the sense, the purpose, the aim of these attacks, at present when the Party does not wish to discuss, when the Party is overburdened with a large amount of urgent tasks, at present when the Party needs united work for the restoration of its internal economy and not a new quarrel about old questions? Why does Comrade Trotsky want to drag the Party back to new discussions?

Comrade Trotsky declares that all this is necessary for the "study" of October. But is it not possible to study the history of October without once more attacking the Party and its leader Lenin? But what kind of a "history" of October is this which begins and ends with the dethronement of the chief leader of the October revolution with the dethronement of the Party which organised and carried out this revolution?

No, this is no case of the study of October. This is not the way to study October. This is not the way the history of October is written. There is obviously another "intention." And according to all evidence, this "intention" is, that Comrade Trotsky is, with his literary attacks making another (one more!) attempt to prepare the conditions for replacing Leninism by Trotskyism. Comrade Trotsky feels it "absolutely" necessary to divest the Party and its cadres, which carried out the revolution, of their glory so as to pass from the dethronement of the Party to the dethronement of Leninism. The dethronement of Leninism is, however, necessary in order to represent Trotskyism as the "only proletarian" (no

joke) ideology. All this of course (yes, of course!) under the flag of Leninism so that the process of being dragged over may be "as painless as possible."

This is the essence of Comrade Trotsky's most recent literary attacks.

For this Comrade Trotsky's literary attacks strain the question of Trotskyism to breaking point.

What then is Trotskyism?

Trotskyism has three distinguishing features which place it in irreconcilable opposition to Leninism. What are these characteristic features?

Firstly. Trotskyism is the theory of the "permanent (uninterrupted) revolution"? But what is Trotskyism's conception of the "permanent revolution"? It is the revolution without consideration of the small peasantry as a revolutionary force. Comrade Trotsky's permanent revolution is, as Lenin says, the "neglect" of the peasant movement, a "game for the seizure of power." Where does the danger of this lie? In that such a revolution, if one took the trouble to realise it, would end with a complete breakdown, as it would deprive the Russian proletariat of its ally, the small peasantry. This explains the fight which Leninism has been carrying on against Trotskyism since the year 1905.

How does Comrade Trotsky estimate Leninism from the point of view of this fight? He regards

it as a theory which contains in itself "anti-revolutionary" features. (Trotsky "1905," Russian edition p. 285). On what is this angry remark against Leninism based? On the fact that Leninism always has defended and still does defend the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. Trotsky does not confine himself to this angry remark. He goes further when he states :

"The whole construction of Leninism is at present built up on lies and contains the poisonous germ of its own disintegration." (See Comrade Trotsky's letter to Tscheidse of Feb. 25th, 1913.)

As you see we are confronted by two opposed lines.

Secondly. Trotskyism is a distrust of the doings of the Bolshevik Party, of its unity, of its hostility to the opportunist elements. Trotskyism is, in the sphere of organisation, the theory of an association of revolutionaries and opportunists, of their groups and grouplets in the bosom of one united Party. The history of Comrade Trotsky's "August block" is surely known to you, in which Martov's adherents and Otsovisists (those in favour of the withdrawal of the Duma delegates), liquidators and Trotskians, having formed a "real" Party, work comfortably together. It is known that the aim of this strangely patched Party was the destruction of the Bolshevik Party. What then were at that time our "differences of opinion?" In that Leninism saw the guarantee of the development of the proletarian Party in the destruction of the "August block," whereas Trot-

skyism saw in this block the foundation for the creation of a "real" Party.

Again, as you see, two opposed lines.

Thirdly, Trotskyism is a mistrust of the leaders of Bolshevism, an attempt to discredit and dethrone them. I know no current in the Party which could be compared with Trotskyism in its discrediting of the leaders of Leninism or of the central institutions of the Party. What for instance is Comrade Trotsky's "amiable" remark about Lenin worth, when he describes him as a "professional exploiter of every backwardness in the Russian workers' movement?" (See the already quoted letter to Tscheidse). This is however, by no means the most "amiable" remark of all the "amiable" remarks of Comrade Trotsky.

How was it possible that Comrade Trotsky who bore such an unpleasant burden on his back, yet found himself during the October movement in the ranks of the Bolsheviki? This happened because Comrade Trotsky at that time relieved himself (literally relieved) of his burden and hid it in a cupboard. Without this "operation" serious co-operation with Comrade Trotsky would have been impossible. The theory of the "August block," *i.e.*, the theory of unity with the Mensheviki had been destroyed and cast away by the revolution, for how could there be any question of unity when there was an armed fight between the Bolsheviki and the Mensheviki? Comrade Trotsky had no alternative than to recognise the fact of the uselessness of this theory.

The same unpleasant affair "happened" with the permanent revolution, for none of the Bolsheviki thought of seizing power immediately on the day after the February revolution; Comrade Trotsky should have known that the Boleshviki, to quote Lenin's words, would not allow him "to play with the seizure of power." Trotsky had no alternative but to acknowledge the policy of the Bolsheviki in the question of the struggle for influence in the Soviets, the struggle for the conquest of the peasantry. As for the third characteristic of Trotskyism (the mistrust of the Bolshevik leaders) it, of course, had to retire into the background in view of the obvious breakdown of the first two characteristics.

Could Comrade Trotsky in such a situation do anything but hide his burden in a cupboard and go to the Bolsheviki, he who, without even the presence of a serious group behind him, came to the Bolsheviki as a political bankrupt, robbed of his army? Of course, he could do nothing else!

What lesson is to be learned from this? There is only one lesson: the long co-operation of the Leninists with Comrade Trotsky was only possible through his completely renouncing his old burden, through his completely identifying himself with Leninism. Comrade Trotsky writes on the lessons of October but he forgets that in addition to all the other lessons there is one more lesson of October which I have just told you, and that this is of primary importance for Trotskyism. It would do Trotskyism no harm to pay attention to this lesson of October.

But this lesson, as we have seen, has not agreed well with Trotskyism. The point of the matter is that the old burden of Trotskyism, which was hidden away in a cupboard in the days of the October movement, has now been dragged to light in the hope of disposing of it, all the more so as the market here has widened. Undoubtedly we have in the recent literary attacks of Comrade Trotsky an attempt to return to Trotskyism, to "overcome Leninism" and to drag forward and apply all the special peculiarities of Trotskyism.

The new Trotskyism is not a simple continuation of the old Trotskyism, it has become somewhat ragged and threadbare, it is in its spirit incomparably milder and in its form more moderate than the old Trotskyism, but without doubt, it retains fundamentally all the peculiarities of the old Trotskyism. The new Trotskyism does not make up its mind to fight openly against Leninism, it prefers to work under the general flag of Leninism and protects itself under the slogan of the interpretation, the improvement of Leninism. This for the reason that it is weak. We cannot regard it as an accident that the rise of the new Trotskyism coincided with the moment of Lenin's death. Under Lenin he would not have dared to take this step.

What are the Characteristic Features of the New Trotskyism?

1. The question of the permanent revolution. The new Trotskyism does not consider it necessary openly to defend the permanent revolution. It "simply" affirms that the October revolution has fully confirmed the idea of the permanent

revolution. From this it draws the following conclusion: the correct and acceptable features of Leninism are those which existed since the war, in the period of the October revolution, and on the other hand the incorrect and unacceptable features are those which existed before the war, before the October Revolution. Hence the theory of the Trotskians as to the division of Leninism into two parts: the pre-war Leninism, the "old, worthless" Leninism with its idea of a dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, and the new post-war Leninism of October, which they intend to adapt to the demands of Trotskyism. Trotskyism needs this theory of the division of Leninism as a first, more or less "acceptable" step which should facilitate the subsequent steps in the fight against Leninism.

But Leninism is no eclectic theory which is cemented together out of various elements and which permits of being divided. Leninism is an indivisible theory, which arose in the year 1903, has experienced three revolutions and now marches forward as the war banner of the world's proletariat. "Bolshevism," says Lenin, "has existed as a current in political life and as a political Party since the year 1903. Only the history of Bolshevism in the whole period of its existence can satisfactorily explain how it could, under the most difficult conditions, work out and preserve the iron discipline which is necessary for the victory of the proletariat." (See Lenin "Infantile Sickness.") Bolshevism and Leninism are essentially one. They are two names for one and the same object. Therefore, the theory of the division of Leninism in two parts is a theory of the destruction of Lenin-

ism, a theory of a replacement of Leninism by Trotskyism.

We need not waste words in proving that the Party cannot reconcile itself to these strange theories.

2. The question of the nature of the Party. The old Trotskyism undermined the Bolshevik Party with the aid of the theory (and practice) of unity with the Mensheviki. But this theory has so utterly become a scandal, that one does not care to be even reminded of it. Modern Trotskyism has invented a new, less scandalous and almost "democratic" theory of the opposition of the old cadres to the youth of the Party, in order to undermine the Party.

Trotskyism recognises no unified and indivisible history of our Party. Trotskyism divides the history of our Party into two unequal parts, the part before, and the part after October. The part of the history of our Party before October is in reality no history, but a "preliminary history," an unimportant or at least only slightly important period of preparation for our Party. That part of the history of the Party after October is the really genuine history of our Party. There "old, pre-historic," unimportant cadres of our Party, here the new, real, "historical" Party. It is hardly necessary to point out that this original scheme of the Party history is a scheme for the undermining of the unity between the old and the new cadres of our Party, a scheme for the destruction of the active Bolshevik Party.

We need not waste any words in proving that the Party cannot reconcile itself to this strange theory.

3. The Question of Bolshevism. The old Trotskyism made efforts to belittle Lenin more or less openly without fearing the consequences. The new Trotskyism proceeds more cautiously. It makes efforts to carry on the part of the old Trotskyism in the form of praising Lenin, of praising his greatness. I think it worth while to quote a few examples.

The Party knows Lenin as a ruthless revolutionary. It also knows however, that Lenin was cautious, did not love intriguing politicians, and not infrequently held back too sharp terrorists, including Trotsky himself, with a firm hand. Comrade Trotsky treats this theme in his book "On Lenin." But from his characterisation it would seem that Lenin only pretended, as "he emphasised on every suitable occasion the inevitability of terror." (Page 104 of the Russian edition.) The impression resulting is, that Lenin was the most bloodthirsty of all the bloodthirsty Bolsheviks. Why did Comrade Trotsky need this unnecessary and in no way justified laying on of colour?

The Party knows Lenin as an exemplary comrade who did not care to answer questions on his own responsibility, impulsively, without the leading committee, without carefully feeling his way, and after cautious examination. Comrade Trotsky deals with this side of the question also in his book. But he gives us a picture not of Lenin, but of some Chinese mandarin, who decides at random the most important questions in the silence of his

study, as though he were illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

You wish to know how our Party decided the question of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly? Hear Comrade Trotsky :

“The Constituent Assembly must, of course, be dissolved,” said Lenin, “but what then about the left social revolutionaries?” Old Natanson reassured us, however. He came to us “to talk things over,” and said immediately after the first words : “Well, if it comes to that, as far as I am concerned, dissolve the Constituent Assembly by force.”

“Bravo,” cried Lenin, full of joy, “what is right, must remain right. But will your people agree to it.”

“Some of us are vacillating, but I believe that in the long run they will agree,” answered Natanson. (See Trotsky “On Lenin,” p. 92, Russian edition.)

Thus is history written.

You want to know how the Party decided the question of the supreme war council. Listen to Comrade Trotsky :

“Without serious and experienced military leaders, we shall not emerge from this chaos,” said I to Vladimir Ilyitch, every time that I visited the staff.

“That is obviously true ; but they will certainly betray us.”

"We will attach a commissar to each of them."

"Two would be better still," exclaimed Lenin, "but stalwart ones. It is surely impossible that we have no stalwart Communists."

Thus began the formation of the supreme military council. (Trotsky: "On Lenin," p. 106, Russian edition.) That is how Comrade Trotsky writes history.

Why did Comrade Trotsky need these Arabian Night entertainments which compromise Lenin? Surely not to magnify the Party leader, V. I. Lenin? We can hardly think so.

The Party knows Lenin as the greatest Marxist of our time, the profoundest theoretician and the most experienced revolutionary who was not guilty of even a shade of blanquism. Comrade Trotsky treats this side of the question also in his book. His characterisation however, reveals no giant Lenin, but some kind of a blanquist dwarf, who advises the Party in the October days "to seize power with their own hands independently of the Soviet and behind its back." I have already said that this characterisation does not contain a word of truth.

Why did Comrade Trotsky need this glaring . . . inexactness? Is it not an attempt to slight Lenin "just a little?"

These are the characteristic features of the new Trotskyism.

Wherein lies the danger of the new Trotskyism? In that Trotskyism, according to its whole inner content, shows every sign of becoming a centre and

meeting place of non-proletarian elements, which are striving to weaken and disintegrate the dictatorship of the proletariat.

What then? you will ask. What are the immediate duties of the Party in connection with the new literary attacks of Comrade Trotsky?

Trotskyism now steps forward with the object of dethroning Bolshevism and undermining its principles. The duty of the Party is to bury Trotskyism as a line of thought.

Reprisals against the opposition and the danger of a split are spoken of. This is nonsense, comrades. Our Party is strong and powerful. It will admit of no splits. As for reprisals, I am distinctly opposed to them. We need no reprisals now, but a developed battle of ideas against the resurrection of Trotskyism.

We did not desire this literary discussion, nor did we strive for it. Trotskyism forces it upon us by its anti-Leninist attacks. Well then, comrades, we are ready!

LENINISM OR TROTSKYISM?

By L. KAMENEV.

The following is a written version of the speech given by me on the 18th November at the session held by the Moscow Committee, enlarged by the active Party functionaries, and repeated on 19th November at the session of the Communist fraction of the Trade Union Council, and on 21st November at the conference of military functionaries.—L.K.

Comrades! The subject of my speech will be Comrade Trotsky's latest publication, the article which appeared on the eve of the seventh anniversary of the October revolution, and entitled by its author "The Lessons of October."

Trotsky presents the Party with books fairly frequently. Hitherto we have not thought it necessary to pay much attention to these books, although it is not difficult to find in many of them various deviations from Bolshevism, from the official ideology of our Party. But this book must be accorded special attention, and subjected to a thorough analysis, the more that Comrade Trotsky has selected the theme of the "Lessons of October" for his last publication.

As our whole Party, the whole Communist International, the whole international Labour movement and the whole working youth, are learning the lessons taught by the October revolution, and will continue to learn them, it is not possible to consider the interpretation of these lessons as the private affair of this or that writer. As the "Lessons of October" appears with the countenance of the Party, and as it has been written by a

member of the C.C. and the political bureau of our Party, which—and this is no secret—is the leading Party in the Comintern, then it is perfectly clear that we are threatened by the danger of having such proclamations, such “lessons,” accepted as text book by not only our youthful members, but also by the whole Comintern. And the form assumed by Comrade Trotsky’s work shows it to aim at being a text book for the Comintern.

All who have read the article are bound to see that it appeals not only to our Party, but the international proletariat as well, and to the Communist Parties of all countries. And thus it is not a matter of private opinion, but a political conflict concerning the whole Party. Should any comrades maintain that the conflict aroused by Comrade Trotsky’s book is merely a conflict between Trotsky, Bucharin, Zinoviev, Stalin, and Kamenev, a difference of opinion between literates, these comrades would prove that they are unable to grasp the real interests of the Party. Comrades holding such an opinion can only do so because they would like to utilise the Party conflicts for the purpose of forming some third group based on the slogan: “The literates are quarrelling among themselves, but it has nothing to do with us.”

No one has a right to stand aside in this conflict. It concerns one of the most far-reaching questions of our inner life, and of the life of the Comintern. The question is: Can the Party recommend the proletariat to accept the lessons as taught by Comrade Trotsky’s book, or should the Party exercise the whole of its authority in warning the proletariat against the teaching of the “Lessons of October?”

I am not desirous of here entering into a long controversy with this article of Comrade Trotsky's. Comrade Trotsky is an excellent writer, and his gifted pen has done for the Party much valuable service. But here it serves interests hostile to the Party, here it does not serve Bolshevism, but the cause of those seeking to disintegrate and discredit Bolshevism—both the Bolshevism embodying the ideology of the proletarian revolution and the Bolshevism organising the fighting force of the proletariat. And Comrade Trotsky does this by means of an exceedingly artistic, but essentially incorrect, and inaccurate description of the whole of the events between February and October. I have no doubt but that the Party will call upon a number of its writers, among those who participated in the events of this period and took immediate part in the struggle leading up to the October revolution, and that these will refute the various misrepresentations made by Comrade Trotsky with reference to decisive moments in the history of our Party during this epoch.

The April demonstration is misrepresented, the April conference is misrepresented, the events in June and July are misrepresented, the events in connection with the preliminary parliament are misrepresented, and finally the course taken by events in October itself are misrepresented. Here I cannot dwell upon the details required for the restoration of historical truth, or on the confronting of Comrade Trotsky's assertions by documentary evidence. What I want to deal with here is the general question of the social and political import of the attitude adopted by Comrade Trotsky, and the significance of this attitude when considered in the light of the previous positions taken

up by Comrade Trotsky, and of the role played by Comrade Trotsky.

We have hitherto abstained from putting this question, for easily comprehensible reasons. But now we can avoid it no longer, for Comrade Trotsky, in thus raising the question of October, the question of the rôle played by our Party, and by Lenin in the creation of the ideology underlying the October revolution, himself forces us to deal with the question from all the standpoints which have been adopted by Comrade Trotsky during the history of the Bolshevist Party.

I am thus obliged to deal with the concrete question of Trotskyism and Bolshevism, and in doing this I refer to Comrade Trotsky's latest utterance merely as one of the clearest and most instructive examples of the general line pursued by Comrade Trotsky.

We must first of all ask ourselves: Does any general line really exist. What do we understand under the term "Trotskyism"? Is it a question of Comrade Trotsky's personality, or of general and by no means personal phenomena pertaining to the history of the Labour movement in Russia during the last twenty years? What have we to deal with here? With a personality, with an individuality, or with some generalisation, some trend called into being by the general conditions of the evolution of the labour movement in a petty bourgeois country? With an accidental phenomenon, or with a phenomenon based upon a past which we cannot forget? If you turn to Comrade Lenin's works for a reply to this question, you will find that up to the time of the February revolution, and again, with a brief interruption, after

the year 1918, scarcely a work appeared from Comrade Lenin's pen in which Trotskyism was not dealt with systematically. Why?

I.

TROTSKYISM AND THE PARTY BEFORE THE
REVOLUTION OF 1917.

Our Party originated in a petty bourgeois capitalistically backward country. Our proletariat existed under more backward conditions than any other proletariat in Europe. It was surrounded by more agrarian and petty-bourgeois elements than any other proletariat. And the question of how this proletariat succeeded in the midst of Tsarist despotism, in creating and welding together a Party destined to lead the whole international labour movement, this is the main question of the self-knowledge essential to the Party.

This question of our origin and development has frequently been raised in the Party itself, and the Party has made it clear to itself why and in what manner the proletariat of Russia (to use the old word), in a backward agrarian country, and under the despotism of the Tsar, has been enabled to create that Leninism which is to-day the guiding star of the whole international proletariat, of the proletariat of countries much further developed in capitalism and much further advanced in economics than Russia. One thing is certain: Under these conditions the Party of the revolutionary proletariat, the Party of the Bolsheviki, could only originate in the form of constant, systematic, and unceasing struggle against the petty bourgeois element striving to subordinate the working class. Bolshevism in its innermost essence signifies a

struggle, in the sense that it originated, grew and attained its firm foothold in the midst of an uninterrupted and constant struggle against every influence exercised by the bourgeoisie on the proletariat.

The most concentrated expression of the policy of bourgeois influence on the proletariat is afforded by Menshevism. The thirty years of the history of Bolshevism is the history of thirty years of struggle against Menshevism. Leninism is the teaching of the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. Precisely for this reason Leninism is, therefore, at the same time the teaching of the struggle against Menshevism.

The forms in which the bourgeoisie has exercised its influence over the proletariat have changed with the changes of the historical epoch. And the forms and methods of Menshevism have changed accordingly. What has remained unchanged is the "wild" Leninist struggle against Menshevism, Lenin's ability to distinguish the true character of Menshevism in every changing form, and to recognise the essential hostility of Menshevism against the Bolshevik ideology and the development of the Bolshevik Party. Everyone knows this, or at least it may be assumed that everyone ought to know it. Everyone comprehends that those who are not fully conscious that Bolshevism signifies a systematic struggle against Menshevism, understand nothing whatever of Bolshevism, nothing of the reasons why Bolshevism has been victorious. But everyone does not know, though it has been assumed till recently that everyone was bound to know it, that precisely as Leninism originated, grew and conquered, in a constant and systematic

struggle against Menshevism, it originated, grew and conquered in a constant and systematic struggle against Trotskyism.

Why? Because Trotskyism, during the whole of the period in which our Party was preparing for the decisive class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, and in which Leninism was the source of the teaching of the proletarian revolution and welded the Party together as leader of the revolution—during the whole of this time Trotskyism played no other role than that of an agent of Menshevism, a glossing over of Menshevism, a masking of Menshevism.

Everyone who studies the history of the Party in the works of the Party in the works of Lenin—and we have not, nor shall we ever have, a better and profounder textbook on the history of the Party and the revolution, or one richer in matter and the conclusions to be drawn from it—will be inevitably convinced that during the whole of his struggle for the Party and for the revolution, and during the whole of his struggle against the Mensheviki, Lenin regarded Trotsky (taking the line followed by him for decades in its totality, and his separate actions) exclusively as an agent of Menshevism, as a servant of Menshevism, as a tool employed by Menshevism for the purpose of gaining influence in this or that section of the working class. To Lenin, Trotsky and Trotskyism were characteristic and not accidental phenomena, caused by the pressure exercised by the bourgeoisie, in precisely the same manner as the other phenomena hostile to the really proletarian Party, the many other groups and sub-groups, fractions and sub-fractions,

whole and semi-tendencies, which the working class have had to combat when creating their own Party.

To Lenin, Trotsky was entirely uninteresting as a personality after the year 1903. For Lenin and for the Party he has been the typical embodiment of one of these historical currents which have run counter to the creation of the Bolshevik Party, and to the development of Bolshevik ideology, the ideology of proletarian revolution and Bolshevik proletarian organisation. To Lenin, Trotsky was the wordy embodiment of an element hostile to the proletariat, an element showing talent at times, and at other times entirely superfluous and extravagant; he regarded Trotsky as little as a personality as he regarded Martov, Tschernov, and Axelrod as personalities. To him these were again simply the embodiment of certain social phenomena. This systematic struggle against Trotskyism as an anti-Bolshevik current is to be found in every volume of Lenin's works up to the time when Trotsky joined our Party. At this point there is an interruption, followed by the resumption of this struggle—in another form.

The Period of the First Revolution (1905).

Up to the time of the Second Party Congress, up to the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, Comrade Trotsky worked for the Leninist *Iskra*, like Martov, Potressov, and other Mensheviks. Comrade Trotsky's zeal for the execution of Lenin's plans even led to his receiving the nickname of "Lenin's cudgel," at the first meetings of the Party Congress. An honourable role! But for Comrade Trotsky's political history this role is less characteristic than the fact that he immedi-

ately changed roles as soon as the Mensheviki appeared on the scene at the later sessions of this same Congress.

The organisatory rupture between the Mensheviki and the Bolsheviki took place at the Party Congress on the question of the election of the Central Committee of the Party.

Three members had to be elected to the C.C. With respect to two members the Mensheviki and the Bolsheviki were in agreement. As third member the Mensheviki wanted the "Lenin's cudgel" of yesterday, but Lenin would not agree at any price. The Mensheviki would not give way at any price. It is probable that Lenin and Martov had both formed a correct estimate of the degree in which the "cudgel" was "Lenin's." Lenin had the majority at the Congress, and Trotsky was not elected. Upon this Comrade Trotsky, in collaboration with Martov, Dan, Axelrod, and others, formed the fraction of the Mensheviki, broke the decisions of the Party Congress, headed the boycott against the central authorities of the Party under Lenin's leadership, and wrote a political pamphlet against Lenin—one of the most arrogant and offensive productions in Menshevist literature in which Lenin's whole policy is explained as mere greed of power on the part of a "candidate for the post of dictator." The whole set of Mensheviki, headed by Martov, Dan and others, recommend the press to propagate this pamphlet as far as possible. This was the beginning of the history of Menshevism, and of the history of Comrade Trotsky in the Party.

Trotsky, now became sword-bearer to Martov and Axelrod, lost all interest as a political figure in the

eyes of Lenin. Lenin entered into lengthy and systematic conflicts with the Mensheviks, with Plechanov, Martov, Axelrod, Martinov; he explained and revealed their standpoint to the workers; but he held it to be superfluous to lose time in contentions with their co-worker Trotsky.

“Plechanov must be combatted, Martov’s arguments must be refuted, and we can contend against the extreme opportunist Martinov, but it is not worth while to lose time in contending against Trotsky”—so said Lenin at that time to his fellow workers. But when, in the summer of 1905, Comrade Trotsky tried to draw himself out of the Menshevik bog by presenting the ideas of Parvus on “permanent revolution” in his own wording, then Lenin entered into a detailed discussion on the ideas and slogans brought out by Parvus, and rejected them. With reference to Trotsky’s pamphlet he merely expressed his regret that the “revolutionary social democrat” Parvus should deem it possible to concur “with Trotsky” and his “Revolutionary phrases.” Lenin had not another word to say about Comrade Trotsky and his “original” theory. (See Lenin, complete works, Russian edition, vol. 7, p. 130.)

And now Comrade Trotsky is endeavouring to lay precisely this pamphlet before the Party as certificate of his revolutionary past, and is trying to prove that Lenin was only right in so far as he shared the standpoint of Trotsky’s pamphlet. We shall deal with this in detail later on.

During the whole period of the first revolution, when the working masses had for the first time the opportunity of testing in action the various

theories of the Russian revolution, and their resultant tactical methods, and when Lenin defended the Bolshevik scheme of revolution in desperate battle, he did not think it once necessary to add anything to his characterisation of Trotsky's principles, or to the designation of "revolutionary phrases."

Lenin knew that Trotsky's "Left phrases" on the "permanent revolution" would certainly have no effect upon the actual course taken by the labour movement revolution, and would not in the least prevent Comrade Trotsky from remaining in the Menshevist organisation, co-operating in the Menshevist central organ, and collaborating politically with the Mensheviki. Lenin had the Marxist habit of judging people, parties and fractions according to their deeds, and not according to their words.

During the whole epoch of the first revolution (1905 till 1907), which gave the proletariat its first opportunity of appearing in the arena as mass force, and of expressing its class policy and relations to other classes by actual action, there was a bitter struggle between two tactics only, between two political trends only, between two schemes of Russian revolution only, between Menshevism, which under-estimated or neglected the peasantry and aimed at an understanding between the working class and the bourgeoisie, and Bolshevism, which called upon the peasantry to support the working class, both in its struggle against Tsarism, and in its struggle against the bourgeoisie on behalf of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. This struggle between Bolsheviks and Mensheviki during the first revolution, essentially a struggle for the direction to be assumed

by the revolution, as also the whole of the first revolution itself, contained all the elements of the struggle ended in the second revolution in 1917. The Parvus-Trotsky theory played no part whatever in either the first or the second revolution. It remained the empty phrase foreseen by Lenin, and had nothing to do with the actual course taken by the class struggle. It has not been preserved in the living events of the actual struggle, but solely in the dusty files of old Menshevist newspapers. Therefore, Lenin never lost a word, during the revolution, in the refutation of this theory.

The Period of Counter-Revolution.

The tide of revolution ebbed. The Party reorganised for difficult and tedious work in the atmosphere of counter revolution. The "Left phrases" entirely lost effect. The foundations for new tactics had to be laid, and every effort had to be made to save all that was to be saved—the banner of the revolutionary tactics of the proletariat and the principles of their illegal organisations—from the counter-revolutionary pogroms, the destruction of proletarian organisations, the orgies of apostasy, the atmosphere of exhaustion in the working class, and the treachery and malicious joy at the failure of the revolution. The banner of the revolutionary policy of the working class, derided and trodden in the dust by all the Mensheviki, had to be defended. At this moment, the most difficult of all for the Bolshevik Party, since the whole atmosphere engendered by the crushing of the revolution took effect against the Bolsheviks, and aid was given on all sides to Menshevist and liquidatory tendencies (liquidatory

both with regard to the Party and the revolution) —at this moment Comrade Trotsky, who at the time of the rising revolution combined with Parvus in wanting “to be absolutely more revolutionary than the others,” should obviously have rushed to the help of the Bolsheviki. At least this was the course taken by Plechanov, who had been our opponent in principle from 1905 till 1907; the old revolutionist could not bear to stand aside, and in the face of general apostasy he rushed into the fight side by side with the Bolsheviki, under the slogan of “General Differentiation,” that is, a general separation of proletarian revolutionists from the Menshevist liquidators.* Trotsky acted differently.

During this period of the beginning of the counter revolution, Comrade Trotsky stepped forward for the first time at the London Party Congress. At this Congress, the Bolsheviki were fighting against the Menshevist liquidators, especially against the fraction of the second Duma, headed by men now well known to us, Dan and Zeretelli. The Bolsheviki criticised this Duma fraction as a fraction which, representing the Menshevist standpoint, was attempting to tread the path of West European social-democratic parliamentarism. We are only too well aware that this is a hothouse in which the most poisonous fruits of treachery against the working class find the most fertile soil. The Bolsheviki criticised severely the very first step being taken in this direction.

Comrade Trotsky, of course, defended the Menshevist fraction against the attacks of the Bolshe-

* Plechanov's revolutionary enthusiasm was, however, not maintained for very long.—L.K.

viki. Lenin characterised his standpoint as follows :

“Trotsky spoke on behalf of the Centre; he expressed the views of the ‘federation.’ (The federation is the most opportunist and unprincipled organisation which has ever existed in the Party; lack of principle is even more characteristic of it than opportunism. It was the organisation of the artisans, and reflected their unproletarian spirit). He attacked us for submitting the draft of an ‘unacceptable’ resolution. He threatened with an actual split. Is this not monstrous. . . ? The fact that it is possible for a question to be put in such a manner shows in itself that our Party contains something foreign to it. . . This is not a standpoint based on principles, it is the lack of principle, characteristic of the ‘Centre’—and at the same time, naturally, of its defender, Trotsky.” (See Lenin, complete works, vol. viii., pp. 387 to 388.)

Comrade Lenin found equally trenchant terms in which to characterise Comrade Trotsky’s standpoint at the time when our Party summed up its experiences won in 1905, and established on this basis the foundation for the whole future of the Party. The words uttered by Lenin at this time reached into the future, and foresaw the role which Comrade Trotsky was destined to play in our Party during the next decade.

This was Comrade Trotsky’s first deed after the revolution of 1905. From this time onwards until the year 1917 Comrade Trotsky acted unceasingly as defender of the Mensheviks against the Bolsheviks, as adversary of the Bolshevik Party steeling-

itself in the struggle of that time; and he was invariably regarded by the Party as an adversary.

Let us follow Lenin still further, and see how he characterised the role played by Comrade Trotsky during the difficult process of creating a Bolshevik Party, that is, during the process of creating the theory and organisation for the leadership of the proletarian revolution.

May, 1910.

This is the date of the formal separation of the Bolsheviks, the final mental and organisatory withdrawal of the Bolsheviks from the supporters of bourgeois influence upon the proletariat, from the Menshevik liquidators headed by Martov and Axelrod, and from the "Otsovists," led by the subsequent renegade Alexinsky. Lenin writes (Complete works, XI./2, pp. 49 to 53):

"The representatives of the two extreme tendencies, both of which are subject to bourgeois ideology, and both of which are equally hostile to the Party, agree with one another in their contest against the Bolsheviks. . . . The resolution proposed by Trotsky differs in form only from the effusions of Axelrod and Alexinsky. Its terms are exceedingly 'cautious' and aim at expressing a 'super-fractional' justice. But what is its actual import? The 'Bolshevik leaders' are to blame for everything—this 'philosophy of history' does not differ in any way from that of Axelrod and Alexinsky. . . ."

"It is not difficult to see," continues Lenin, "how the empty, hollow phrases of Trotsky's resolution serve for the defence of the same stand-

point as that adopted by Axelrod and Co. and Alexinsky and Co. Here lies the great and abysmal difference between the conciliatory pose of Trotsky and Co., in reality the most faithful servants of the liquidators and Otsovists, and forming the more dangerous evil for the Party that they are skilled at concealing their true character behind clever and artificial phrases, and behind apparently anti-fractional and pro-Party declarations, and between that really Party standpoint which stands for the purging of the Party from all liquidators and Otsovists."

The irreconcilable struggle for the principles of Bolshevism continued. All the enemies of Bolshevism joined hands and attacked the Bolsheviki, the Party, and its central authorities: Lenin, dealing with the significance of this struggle and Trotsky's part in it, wrote as follows at the end of 1910 (XI/2, pp. 182, 183, 187):

"Martov's article and Trotsky's resolution are backed up by certain practical actions directed against the Party. Martov's article is merely a literary form clothing the campaign undertaken by the Mensheviki for the purpose of causing schism in our C.C. Trotsky's resolution pursues the same Menshevist aims: the destruction of the central authorities (of the Bolsheviki) so hated by the liquidators, and with this the destruction of the Party as an organisation. It is not sufficient merely to expose these anti-Party actions on the part of the Mensheviki and Trotsky; they must be combatted."

You will see, comrades, that many things have happened in our Party and many of the things

which may appear new to our younger comrades are by no means so new to older ones, or to the younger comrades who have studied Lenin's works attentively. "There is nothing new under the sun."

Lenin continues :

"We, therefore, declare on behalf of the whole Party, that Trotsky is carrying on an anti-Party policy, that he is undermining the legality of the Party, and entering on a path of adventure and schism. . . Comrade Trotsky preserves silence on this incontestable truth (about the anti-Party groups), because the real aims of his policy cannot stand the truth. These real aims are : an anti-Party bloc. Such a bloc is being supported and organised by Trotsky. . . . It goes without saying that Trotsky supports this bloc, for the anti-Party elements here get everything they require : liberty for their fractions, glorification and concealment of their activity, skilful advocacy defending them before the working class. It is precisely from the standpoint of 'fundamental principles' that we have to regard this bloc as adventurism in the exactest meaning of the word. Trotsky does not venture to assert that he finds in the Mensheviki . . . in the Otsovists, real Marxists, real defenders of the established principles of social democracy. But it is just this necessity of continual dodging which is characteristic of the adventurer. The bloc formed by Trotsky with Potressov and the group round the *Vperjod* ("Forward") is just an adventure, judged from the viewpoint of 'fundamental principles.' This assertion is no less important from the standpoint of the tasks of Party politics . . . The experience of a year has shown

that in reality it is precisely the Potressov group, precisely the *Vperjod* set, who incorporate the influence exercised by the bourgeoisie on the proletariat. . . Thirdly and finally, Trotsky's policy is an adventure in an organisatory sense."

1911.

The struggle for the Party and its ideas continued. Trotsky continued his anti-Party policy. Lenin supplemented his characterisation. In June, 1911 Lenin writes as follows (XI/2, p. 322) :

"All Bolsheviki must now gather more closely together, strengthen their fraction, determine their Party line with greater accuracy and clarity, collect all scattered forces, and take up the fight for the R.S.D.L.P. (Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party) purged of the supporters of bourgeois influence upon the proletariat."

And he immediately adds :

"Such people as Trotsky, with his puffed-up phrases on the R.S.D.L.P., with his kowtowing to the liquidators who have nothing whatever in common with the R.S.D.L.P., are now the 'disease of the age.' In reality they are the bearers of capitulation to the liquidators, who are anxious to form a labour party on Stolipin's lines."

After the lapse of a few months, Lenin wrote as follows in a special circular addressed "to all Party organisations, groups and circles" :

"Let us merely mention one feature, the most characteristic and general one, in the utterances of Trotsky's little group : In the question of tactics, and of differences of opinion on principles

within the Party, Trotsky's arsenal can only supply weapons against the left-wing of the Party. It need not be said that such a policy is grist to the mill of the adherents of the *Golos* (the Menshevik newspaper, the 'Voice') and to all the other various degrees of opportunists." (XI/12, pp. 335/38.)

Trotsky continued his policy, and Lenin continued his characterisation :

"The real liquidators conceal themselves behind their phraseology, and make every endeavour to frustrate the work being done by the anti-liquidators, that is, the Bolsheviki . . . Trotsky and the Trotskyists and opportunists like him, are more harmful than all the liquidators, for the convinced liquidators state their views openly, and it is easy for the workers to recognise the errors of these views. But Trotsky and those similar to him deceive the workers, conceal the evil, and make it impossible to expose and remedy it. . . . Everyone who supports Trotsky's group supports the policy of lies and deception of the workers, the policy concealing liquidatory aims. Full liberty of action for Messrs. Potressov and Co. in Russia, and the clothing of their actions in 'revolutionary' phrases for abroad—this is the essential character of Trotsky's policy." (XI/2, pp. 359/60.)

This characterisation : the disguise of Right actions in Left pseudo-revolutionary phrases, was for Lenin the distinguishing feature of Trotskyism, repeating itself from year to year in different and progressive forms. And Lenin was never weary of pointing out this feature to the Party as the most important and characteristic, and at the same time

most dangerous feature of Trotskyism. A few months after writing the characterisation here quoted, Lenin wrote as follows on Trotsky :

“One trifle has been overlooked by this poor hero of phraseology : A social democrat (in our present terminology a Communist) is not a revolutionist unless he recognises the harmfulness of anti-revolutionary, pseudo-socialism in a given country at a given time, that is, unless he is able to recognise that liquidatory and Otsovist aims are harmful in Russia, and unless he knows how to combat similar unsocial democratic tendencies.”

A few months after this (December, 1911) Lenin wrote :

“Trotsky calls himself an adherent of the Party principles, but on the basis of almost total disregard of the Russian Party central, which was called into existence by the overwhelming majority of the Russian social democratic organisation . . . The revolutionary phrase serves to conceal the tendency of liquidation, to justify it, and thus to confuse the consciousness of the workers. . . It is Trotsky’s special task to veil the aims of the liquidators, and to throw sand into the eyes of the workers. . . It is not possible to discuss essentials with Trotsky, for he has no views. It is only possible to contend with convinced liquidators and otsovists ; but we do not care to enter into discussion with a man who plays at concealing the errors of either group : we merely expose him as a diplomatist of the meanest description.” (XI/2, pp. 446, 448.)

It is not difficult to prophesy that these Party historical documents here quoted will presently be

explained away in the most convenient and Philistine manner, by references to : Anger, heat of the contest, accidental collisions, etc. I thus consider it to be my duty, though a disagreeable one—since Comrade Trotsky has now forced the Party to occupy itself with the history of the relations between Trotskyism and Bolshevism—to follow Lenin's utterances, and the characterisation made by Lenin of the relations between the Party and Trotskyism, not only for a single year, not only with regard to any single question, but systematically during the whole period of fifteen years which have passed since the Party became acquainted with Trotskyism.

If a definite relation has existed between Trotskyism and our Party for a number of years, cropping up systematically at every turning point of Party history, and not merely becoming apparent on one single question or on one single occasion, then even the most Philistine and sluggish mentality cannot explain away this circumstance by references to momentary anger, accidental conflicts, and the like. Even the most sluggish mind must recognise that if Lenin continued for fifteen years to enlighten the Party on Trotskyism, and his characterisation proved correct at every turning point of Party history, whether the tide of revolution was rising, falling or rising again, then it is not a case of animosity, of personal opinion, but it is perfectly obvious that Trotskyism represents a trend of policy which reappears systematically, and that the foundation of Bolshevism as the theory and practice of the proletarian Communist revolution can only be laid down by fighting against this trend of policy.

Comrade Trotsky confined himself to defending to the Russian workers the standpoint which I have above characterised in Lenin's words. The position held by the Bolsheviks in the Second International is well known. Even at that time the Bolsheviks, especially Lenin, were hated by the leaders of the Second International. Even at that time these leaders felt that Bolshevism, and again especially Lenin, represented some new force destined to supplant them, and, therefore, the press organs of the Second International opened their pages to every slander against the Bolsheviks and Bolshevism. But during the whole period of Lenin's exile, during the whole period of the revolution and counter-revolution, Lenin was never given even one single opportunity of appealing to the workers from the tribune of the press organs of the Second International, and of telling the German, French or Austrian workers the truth about Bolshevism.

In actual fact, we were boycotted by the Second International. But on the other hand Lenin's opponents, Martov, Dan, and Trotsky, were given every opportunity of expressing their views, and these were able to spread abroad any amount of lies and slanders, since they were assured in advance that Lenin would not be permitted to reply. Trotsky availed himself of this opportunity to lay the "philosophy" of Bolshevism before the international labour movement in something like the following form: The Leninists were a clique of intellectuals who, under the leadership of Lenin, a man who shrank at nothing, were holding the Russian proletarian movement in their hands in some obscure manner, whilst it was only the ignorance

and backwardness of the Russian proletariat which made it trust the Bolsheviki. The most important task was to rescue the proletariat of Russia from the power of this clique and its leader, Lenin.

This is the conception of Bolshevism which Comrade Trotsky forced upon the International at that time. This is the manner in which he represented the historical victory of the inner Party struggle in Russia, the import of the struggle between the Bolsheviki and the Mensheviki, to the socialist workers of Europe. With reference to the article sent on this subject to the International by Martov and Trotsky, Lenin wrote the following in the year 1911 :

“ Martov expresses the view of the Mensheviks ; Trotsky clings to the Mensheviki and hides behind particularly sounding and hollow phrases. For Martov the ‘ Russian experience ’ meant that the ‘ Blanquist and anarchist unculture had won the victory over Marxist culture (read : Bolshevism over Menshevism). Russian social democracy had been too zealously Russian (that is, revolutionary—L.K.) as differentiated from the ‘ general European ’ (that is, parliamentary) methods of tactics. We find Trotsky representing the same ‘ historical philosophy.’ The ‘ sectarian spirit, intellectual individualism, ideological fetishism ’ are placed in the foreground. ‘ The struggle for influence over the politically immature proletariat ’—that is the core of the matter to him.”

After describing the views thus presented to the German workers by Comrade Trotsky, Lenin continues :

“The theory that the struggle between Bolshevism and Menshevism is a struggle for influence over an immature proletariat is by no means new. We find it in innumerable books, pamphlets and articles published by the liberal press since the year 1905 (if not since 1903). Martov and Trotsky lay liberal views, trimmed with Marxism, before the German comrades . . .

“ ‘It is an illusion to believe ’ declares Trotsky, ‘that Bolshevism and Menshevism have struck deep roots in the proletariat.’ This is a typical example of the sounding but empty phrases of which our Trotsky is master. It is not in the ‘depths of the proletariat’ that the differences lie between Bolshevism and Menshevism, but in the economic conditions of the Russian revolution. Martov and Trotsky, by ignoring these conditions, have deprived themselves of the possibility of comprehending the historical import of the internal party conflict in Russia. . . To talk about various trends in the Russian revolution, and to label these ‘sectarianism,’ ‘unculture,’ etc., (the terms employed by Trotsky against the Bolsheviks, with the idea of alarming the German Philistines.—L.K), without according a single word to the most important economic interests of the proletariat, the liberal bourgeoisie, and the democratic peasantry, is to sink to the level of the most vulgar journalism.”

Comrade Lenin explained the matter to Comrade Trotsky :

“ Martov defends the education of the peasantry (who are carrying on a revolutionary struggle against the aristocracy) by the liberals (who be-

trayed the peasantry to the aristocracy). This is nothing else than the substitution of liberalism for Marxism, it is nothing more nor less than liberalism disguised in Marxist phrases. . . The struggle between Menshevism and Bolshevism is indissolubly bound up with this actuality, for it is here the struggle between the support lent to the liberals (on the part of the Mensheviki) and the overthrow of the hegemony of the liberals over the peasantry (by the Bolshevikiki). Thus the attempt to explain away our dissensions by the influence of the intelligentsia, the immaturity of the proletariat, etc., is merely a naive and childish repetition of liberal fairy tales."

We see that "Trotsky came to Lenin" by means of telling the international proletariat liberal fairy tales on Leninism.

"A chasm lies between our standpoint and Martov's standpoint, and this chasm between the views of various 'intellectuals' merely reflects, despite Trotsky's opinions to the contrary, the chasm which actually existed in the year 1905 between two classes, that is, between the revolutionary fighting proletariat and the treacherous bourgeoisie."

This is what Comrade Trotsky, according to Lenin, did not comprehend about Bolshevism. But if he did not comprehend this, did he comprehend anything about it at all?

"Trotsky distorts Bolshevism, for he has never been able to form any definite views on the role played by the proletariat in the Russian bourgeois revolution."

Comrade Lenin, after characterising Trotsky's whole representation of Bolshevism to the uninformed German workers as a "refined breach of faith," closed his characterisation with the following words :

"In 1903, Trotsky was a Menshevist, he left the Mensheviki in 1904, returned to the Mensheviki in 1905, brandishing ultra-revolutionary phrases on the whole, and again turned his back upon the Mensheviki in 1906 : at the end of 1906 he defended the election alliance with the cadets (thus actually siding with the Mensheviki again), and in the spring of 1907 he declared at the London congress that 'the difference between him and Rosa Luxemburg was rather a difference of individual shading than of political tendency.' Trotsky plagiarises to-day from the ideas of one fraction, to-morrow from those of the other, and thus he regards himself as a being superior to both fractions. Theoretically, Trotsky does not agree with the liquidators and Otsovists on any single question, but in actual practice he is entirely in agreement with the *Golos and Vperjod* group (that is, with the supporters of bourgeois influence over the proletariat.—L.K.). I must declare that Trotsky represents his fraction only, and enjoys a certain amount of faith exclusively on the part of the Otsovists and liquidators." (Complete works XI/2 pp. 292, 293, 296, 307, 308.)

1912.

The year 1912 was a year of changes. In January the Bolsheviki broke off the last remains of organisatory connections with the Mensheviki, and formed their own purely Bolshevist Central

Committee at their own Bolshevik conference (at Prague). They excluded the liquidators from the Party, and proclaimed a programme of revolutionary action. After the blood-bath on the Lena, a stormy wave of proletarian movement arose, for the first time since 1905. This movement appropriated the programme and tactics of the Bolsheviks in their entirety. The "Bolshevik epidemic" (to use the malicious term coined by the Mensheviks at the time) began to spread, and presently gained the final victory. The awakening labour movement removed the liquidators systematically from every position which they had contrived to gain during the previous sorrowful years of counter-revolution. This was the beginning of the revolutionary attack under the slogans of the Bolsheviks, under the leadership of the Bolsheviks—an attack which led to barricade fighting in Leningrad as early as the middle of 1914.

What was the attitude adopted by Comrade Trotsky with regard to these decisive events? Did this wave of revolutionary uplift, this strengthening of the labour movement, perhaps induce Comrade Trotsky to abandon the standpoint of an agent of Menshevism, held by him during the preceding years of disintegration and decay? Did his ultra-left theory of "permanent revolution" after lying unused for years in his drawer, perhaps aid him to break the bonds fettering him to counter-revolutionary Menshevism?

No: Comrade Trotsky remained true to himself and—to the Menshevik liquidators.

He replied to the organisatory development and establishment of the Bolshevik Party by a closer

alliance with the Mensheviki in their struggle against Bolshevism. It was due to his endeavours that the so-called "August bloc" came into being; this bloc was the alliance and organisatory mustering of every non-Bolshevist and anti-Bolshevist group and sub-group.

"This bloc," writes Lenin, "is composed of lack of principle, hypocrisy, and empty phrases. . . . The basis of this bloc is evident: the liquidators receive full liberty to proceed as before, and Comrade Trotsky covers them by the revolutionary phrase, which costs him nothing and binds him to nothing." (Complete works, XII/4, p. 94, April, 1912.)

On the orders of this bloc, Comrade Trotsky spread abroad even more slanders than before against the Bolsheviki, as leaders of the proletarian advance then beginning. Comrade Lenin characterised Trotsky's writings at that time as "deceiving and misleading the whole working class." With regard to an article written by Trotsky for the German workers, Lenin wrote that it represented

"such a compilation of unconsidered self-praise and sententious lies that there can be no doubt but that the liquidatory commission to write this article was placed in competent hands." (Ibid. p. 93.)

But perhaps Comrade Trotsky was only in agreement with the enemies of the Bolsheviki as far as the Bolshevist organisation was concerned, perhaps there was still some difference between him and the Mensheviki, the servants of the liberals, in questions referring to the tasks, the aims, and

the tactics of the rising proletarian movement, in questions referring to the tasks, aims and tactics of the new revolution? Let us ask Lenin again :

“Trotsky abused the Conference in every key, and assured the good people that ‘the struggle for the right of combination’ was the basis of the events on the Lena and their after-effects, that ‘this demand stands, and will continue to stand, as the central point of the revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat.’ Scarcely had a week passed away, and these miserable phrases, ground out of the same machine which supplies the liquidators with their phrases, were blown away like dust.”

“It is only the liberal chatterboxes and the liberal labour politicians”—continues Lenin—“who are capable of placing the right of combination in ‘the centre of revolutionary mobilisation.’ ”

Lenin then compares the policy pursued by the liquidators and by Comrade Trotsky with the revolutionary Bolshevik policy of the Petersburg proletariat :

“The proletariat of Petersburg”—writes Lenin—“has grasped that the new revolutionary struggle is not to be carried on for the sake of one single right (the right of combination.—L.K.), but for the liberty of the whole people. The proletariat of Petersburg has grasped that the evil must be attacked at its centre, at its source, that the whole system of Tsarist reactionary Russia must be destroyed. The proletariat of Petersburg has grasped that it is a piece of ridiculous stupidity to make this demand for the right of combination. . . . There is no greater lie than the liberal invention, repeated by the liquidators and immediately after-

wards by Trotsky, that the "struggle for the right of combination" lay at the root of the tragedy on the Lena, and of the mighty echoes awakened by this event all over the country." (Complete works, XII/1, pp. 183, 185.)

The difference is very obvious between the Bolshevik conception of fundamental tasks and that of the Mensheviks and Comrade Trotsky. But Lenin explains again and again the counter-revolutionary trend of Comrade Trotsky's conception of these tasks.

Trotsky followed Axelrod. He found himself superior to the "uncultured," "barbaric," "sectarian," "Asiatic," Bolsheviks in that he, Trotsky is a "European," and fights "beneath the tactical flag of European social democracy." But what is the meaning of this confrontation of "Europeanism" and "European tactics" with Bolshevism? It means one thing only: renunciation of the fulfilment of the immediate revolutionary tasks in the Russia of the Tsar and the great landowners, and all for the sake of the parliamentary tactics of the European socialists.

"This famous "Europeanisation"—writes Lenin—"is being talked about by Dan and Martov, Trotsky and Levitzky, and by the other liquidators, in every possible key. It is one of the main rivets securing their opportunism. Their opportunism lies in the fact that the moment which they choose for imparting a "European," parliamentary propagandist character to the Party is precisely the moment when the Party is not faced by European tasks, but by an immediate struggle on the spot. Their idea is thus to avoid the task of re-

volution, and to substitute revolutionary tactics by parliamentary tactics."

The little word "Europeanism," on the lips of the liquidators and Trotsky during the period between 1910 and 1914, further supplemented by the little word "barbarism" (of the Bolsheviki) served to conceal the renunciation of the revolutionary tasks and revolutionary tactics of the proletariat of Russia. Let us read what Lenin wrote in reply to such a "European" article from Comrade Trotsky's pen :

"This is the daydream of an opportunist intellectual who, in the midst of the difficult and non-European conditions facing the labour movement in Russia (Lenin wrote this article for the legal *Svesda* and, therefore, employed legal terms; here we should read: under the conditions imposed by the revolutionary tasks facing the labour movement in Russia.—L.K.) has worked out an excellent European plan, and, because he has done this, boasts of his 'Europeanism' to the whole world." (Complete Works, XII/1, pp. 222, 223, July, 1924.)

These tactics, actually implying approbation of the transition of the Party from the path of revolution to the path of the then peaceful European socialists, were proclaimed at the time when the new wave of revolution following the blood-bath on the Lena demanded an expressly revolutionary leadership. It is possible that someone will submit the question: "How is it possible that the theory of "permanent revolution" did not restrain Comrade Trotsky from such unrevolutionary tactics? How could he, the representative of this ultra-left theory, lend his support to such anti-

revolutionary tactics, side by side with the Mensheviki, during the obviously revolutionary situation from 1912 to 1914?"

But anyone putting this question would only prove that he has not yet comprehended Lenin's characterisation of Trotskyism: "Right politics disguised in Left phraseology."

"Examine the standpoint of the liquidators"—Lenin continued to explain to the naive in the year 1913—the essential character of their liquidatory standpoint is artificially disguised beneath Trotsky's revolutionary phrases. The naive and entirely inexperienced are still often deceived by this disguise. . . . But the slightest closer examination immediately disperses this self-deception."

1914.

Then came the year 1914. The revolutionary movement in the proletariat made rapid strides forward, the waves of the tempest of revolution rose higher and higher. Trotsky's viewpoint remained unchanged in the questions of the principles of revolution and the tactics of the proletarian movement. Let us read what Lenin wrote about him in the year 1914:

"Comrade Trotsky has never yet possessed a definite opinion on any single earnest Marxian question: he has always crept into the breach made by this or that difference, and has oscillated from one side to another." (Complete Works, XII/2, pp. 536, 537.)

"The liquidators have their own viewpoint—a liberal and not a Marxian one. Everyone familiar

with the writings of Dan, Martov, Potressov and Co., knows this viewpoint. But Trotsky has no viewpoint, never has had one; he has merely transitions and flittings from the liberals to the Marxists and back again, fragments of words and sounding phrases, swing here and there. . . In reality, Trotsky's resounding, confused, and empty phrases, so misleading to the untrained worker, serve solely for the defence of the liquidators; Trotsky accomplishes this by preserving silence on the question of illegality (that is, of the revolutionary organisation and policy of the working class.—L.K.), by endeavouring to convince us that a liberal labour policy does not exist amongst us at all (that is, no endeavour on the part of the Mensheviks to subordinate the labour movement to the cadets, etc.—L.K.) Comrade Trotsky addresses a special and lengthy sermon to the seven deputies, headed by Tscheidse, instructing them as to the cleverest methods of carrying out the policy of rejection of illegality and of the Party." (Lenin, XII/2, pp. 410 to 413.)

Then came the tempestuous months of the year 1914. The labour movement advanced from political and economic strikes to armed demonstrations, only interrupted by the mobilisation of the army. In July, the workers of Petersburg were already at the barricades. It was necessary to strike a balance, it was necessary to show to the working class the political currents and tendencies emerging from illegality and from the influence of the refugees from abroad, in order that they might carry on their movement further. Lenin wrote a comprehensive article and had it published in May, 1914, in the Bolshevist periodical *Prosvescht-*

schenje ("Enlightenment"). Here he drew the balance of the ten years of struggle between Bolshevism and Trotskyism, the struggle which we have followed in its various stages :

"The old participators in Russia's Marxist movement know Trotsky's figure very well; there is no need to say anything about him to them. But the younger generation of workers does not know him, for he represents a certain type. At the time of the old *Iskra* (1901 to 1903) people of this type oscillated between the "Economists" and the *Iskra* group. . . .

When we speak of the liquidators, we so designate a certain ideological tendency rooted in "Menshevism" and "Economism" . . . a tendency closely bound up with the policy and ideology of a certain class, the liberal bourgeoisie.

These people "explain" that they are above the fractions, but the sole basis for this assertion is that they take their ideas from one fraction to-day, from another to-morrow."

"Trotsky was an open adherent of the *Iskra* from 1901 till 1903, and Rjasanov named the role played by Trotsky at the Party Congress in 1903 that of a "Lenin's cudgel." By the end of 1903, Trotsky was an open Menshevist, he had deserted from the *Iskra* to the "Economists." He proclaimed that "a deep chasm yawned between the old and the new *Iskra*." In the years 1904-05 he left the Mensheviks and maintained an irresolute attitude; at one time he co-operated with Martinov (an "economist"), at another time he dished up his left "permanent revolution" again. In 1906-07 he approached the Bolsheviki, and in the spring

of 1907 he declared himself in full agreement with Rosa Luxemburg.

During the epoch of the decline he turned to the right again after lengthy "anti-fractional" vacillations, and in August, 1912, he joined the bloc of the liquidators. Now he leaves them again, but in all essentials he repeats their ideas.

Such types are characteristic of the crumbling away of the historical formations of yesterday, when the mass labour movement in Russia was not fully awakened.

The younger generation of workers must learn to recognise this type of person, who, without concerning himself about Party decisions or about the experience won in the present labour movement in Russia, simply step forward with the most unheard of claims." (XII/2, p. 462.)

Lenin deemed it necessary to say this to the younger generation of workers on the eve of a fresh advance of the revolutionary movement in the working class; he here drew the balance of the ten years' struggle carried on by Bolshevism not only against Menshevism, but also against Trotskyism.

It is comprehensible to everyone that when a characterisation of this kind is repeated from year to year, and not merely with reference to this or that error, but with reference to the whole course pursued by Comrade Trotsky, it is not done for any superficial reason. Comrade Lenin saw in Trotsky the embodiment of a current, of a political tendency, harmful to Bolshevism. For this reason and for this reason only, Lenin considered it necessary to warn the Party against Trotskyism.

The War Period.

Then came the war, rightly designated by Lenin as an event of world historical importance in the life of humanity, and as the greatest test of international socialism, rendering apparent the impassable chasm between opportunism and revolutionary Communism. The moment came when everyone had to show his colours. The moment came when all vacillation had to cease once and for all, and when a definite end had to be put to what Lenin termed inferior diplomacy, the diplomacy of having one foot in each camp.

But did this really come about? Did the war induce Comrade Trotsky to break once and for all with opportunism and support of the Right, and to renounce the role of defender and disguise for the Mensheviks, in which role he had been exposed for ten years by Comrade Lenin?

Since the time when Comrade Trotsky entered our Party, serving it well, and thereby adding many glorious pages to the history of his own life and to the history of the Party, we have not considered it possible to enter into this question. But when he takes it upon himself to falsify the history and the ideas of Bolshevism, when he attempts to appropriate to himself the ideology of the Party, when he endeavours to supplant Leninism by Trotskyism in the ideology of the Russian and international proletariat, then he himself forces us to put this question.

Did the war actually separate Trotsky from the opportunists? Did the "inferior diplomacy" cease in the face of these great events? Not at all. Just as Comrade Trotsky contrived to combine an arch-revolutionary "left" phrase with co-operation with

the Mensheviki in 1905, in the same manner he managed to combine his internationalism during the war with the support of opportunism.

1915.

As early as the summer of 1915, Lenin wrote as follows :

“In a reactionary war, the revolutionary class is bound to desire the defeat of its government. This is an axiom, contested only by the conscious adherents or unskilled assistants of social democracy. . . Trotsky belongs to these last.

“Trotsky, who as usual does not agree in principle with the social democrats on any single question, coincides with them in every question in actual practice. . . .

“Martov and Trotsky are anxious to combine the Platonic defence of internationalism with the unconditional demand for unity with the *Nasha Sarja* (“Our Dawn”), with the organisation committee (central committee of the Mensheviki), or with the Tscheidze fraction.”

At the end of 1915, Lenin wrote :

“In reality Trotsky is supporting the liberal politicians of Russia, who, by their disavowal of the rôle played by the peasantry, really mean that they do not wish to raise the peasantry to revolution.”

Again :

“Trotsky, and the company of foreign flunkeys of opportunism, are doing their utmost to patch up the differences, and to save the opportunism of *Nascha Sarja* group by the defence and praise of the Tscheidze fraction.”

1916.

At the beginning of 1916 :

“The powerless diplomatists, and such preachers of compromise as Kautsky in Germany, Longuet in France, and Martov in Russia, are most harmful to the labour movement, for they defend the fiction of unity and thus prevent the real and matured alliance of the opposition of all countries, the founding of the Third International.”

In March, 1916 :

“And Trotsky? He is entirely in favour of the right of self-determination, but for him this is merely an empty phrase, since he does not demand separation of the nation oppressed by the ‘Fatherland’ of the socialists in any given case. He preserves silence on the hypocrisy of Kautsky and his followers.”

In October, 1916, just twelve months before our October :

“However good the intentions of Martov and Trotsky may be subjectively, they are none the less aiding Russian social imperialism by their complaisance.”

In December, 1916 :

“As early as the year 1902 Hobson recognised not only the significance of the ‘United States of Europe’ (Kautsky’s disciple, Trotsky, may take cognisance of this) but also the significance of a fact which the sanctimonious followers of Kautsky in every country are anxious to conceal : ‘that the opportunists (social chauvinists) are co-operating with the imperialist bourgeoisie for the creation of an imperialist Europe supported on the shoulders of Asia and Africa. . .’ One of the conclusions

which we have drawn from this is the necessity of separation from social chauvinism."

1917.

On 17th February, 1917 (February, 1917!!) :

"The name of Trotsky signifies: Left phraseology and bloc with the Right against the aim of the Left!"

Six weeks after the February revolution, on 7th March, 1917, Lenin wrote :

"In my opinion, the matter of the greatest importance at the present juncture is not foolish attempts at a 'coming to an understanding,' on the lines projected by Trotsky and Co., 'with the social patriots or with the even more dangerous elements of the organisation committee type (Mensheviks), but to continue the work of our Party in a logical international spirit.' "

There is one important point which must not be omitted here: During the whole of this period Comrade Trotsky was a decided adversary of the "Zimmerwald Left," whose leader was Lenin, and which formed the germ of the Third International. The Third International was not born only of the struggle against Scheidemann, Vandervelde, and their like, it originated and grew in strength at the same time in the struggle against the Zimmerwald "Centre," against Kautsky and Trotsky. The practical policy of this Centre was as follows: no final rupture with the Second International, no founding of the Third International, the aims striven for by Lenin as head of the Zimmerwald Left.

Lenin never altered his characterisation and opinion of the line taken by Comrade Trotsky, either at the time when the tide of revolution was at its highest, or at the time of its lowest ebb.

No Leninist taking the name seriously can admit even the thought that Comrade Lenin, in thus systematically revealing Comrade Trotsky's standpoint for so many years in succession, was influenced by any individual motives. In his systematic and impassioned fight against Trotskyism, Comrade Lenin was solely influenced by the fact that he saw in Trotskyism a certain current hostile to the ideology and the organisation of the Bolshevik Party; a current which in actual practice served the ends of Menshevism.

As Comrade Lenin would say, it is comparatively easy to combat Menshevism, for its open and consistent anti-proletarian character, obviously liberal in essentials, is at once comprehended by only slightly experienced workers, and is thus rejected by the workers. It is more needful to combat the concealed forms of Menshevism, those forms which clothe opportunist policy in Left revolutionary phraseology, the form which adapts Menshevism to the revolutionary feeling of the masses. Those who fight against us with open visor are not our sole enemies, we have another foe in that group which disguises the efforts of open enemies by means of revolutionary phrases, and furthers the cause of the enemies of the Party by exploiting the confidence felt in these phrases.

Lenin merely formulated the relations to Trotskyism, characteristic for the whole Bolshevik Party, although Comrade Trotsky succeeded at times, in especially difficult moments in the life

of the Party, in drawing some few Bolsheviki over to him, if only for a brief period, by means of his phrases and inferior diplomacy.

II.

COMRADE TROTSKY ENTERS THE PARTY.

The above described relations between Bolshevism and Trotskyism were characterised by Comrade Trotsky himself in the words: "I came to Lenin fighting," This phrase not only evidences a desire to win approbation, but it is very well expressed. Comrade Trotsky is a master of elegant phraseology. But the matter in question is unfortunately much too serious in character to be settled by a well turned sentence.

In the first place this phrase is not strictly accurate, and in the second place it is calculated to carry away the reader by its beauty and to conceal Comrade Trotsky's real thoughts. This elegant phrase is a piece of hypocrisy.

Is it then really true that the whole history of Trotsky's attitude, as we have followed it here from 1903 to 1907, can be characterised by these words of his: "I came to Lenin fighting?" Trotsky is apparently extremely satisfied with the history of his relations to Bolshevism; at least he wrote in his book, "The New Course," which appeared a few months ago: "I do not consider that the road by which I reached Lenin is any less suitable or certain than other roads." For Trotsky this is very reassuring. But is it possible for the Party, without deceiving itself, to regard the road upon which Trotsky reached our Party as

suitable and certain? If this road really was a "road to Lenin," then every one-time Menshevik and social revolutionist, of whom there are not a few in our Party, can make use of Trotsky's words and declare: "In reality I was not a Menshevik or social revolutionist, I was merely making my way, fighting, to Bolshevism."

One thing at least is evident: the Party cannot recommend anybody to take Trotsky's road to Bolshevism.

The comrades who have come over to us from other parties have generally declared that they have been mistaken, that they have had a different conception of the interests of the working class, and had thought to serve these interests in a different manner, but that they are now convinced that they have been on the wrong road. The Party did not demand any such avowal from Comrade Trotsky, and was quite right in not doing so. Comrade Trotsky stood the test, and stood it excellently. But this does not by any means signify that the Party can permit Comrade Trotsky to designate his fifteen years of fighting against Bolshevism and Lenin as a suitable and sure path to Leninism. I maintain that Trotsky sees the road by which he approached Lenin from an entirely opposite standpoint to ours; that he does not believe Bolshevism to have proved right and Trotskyism wrong.

Trotsky came to the Party with the conviction, not that he was going to learn anything from Bolshevism, but that he was going to teach the Party Trotskyism, and substitute Leninism by Trotskyism. In Trotsky's book "War and Revolution" we read:

“There were three points in which the newspaper *Nashe Slovo* (Trotsky’s organ—L.K.) had not yet arrived at an agreement with the *Social Democrat* (organ of the C.C. of the Bolsheviki, conducted by Lenin and Zinoviev—L.K.), even after the former had finally passed into the hands of the left-wing of the editorial staff. These points referred to defeatism, to the struggle for peace, and to the character of the approaching Russian revolutions. *Nashe Slovo* rejected defeatism (which Lenin had held from the beginning of the war to be the fundamental principle of really revolutionary internationalism—L.K.). The *Social Democrat* rejected the slogan of the struggle for peace . . . and opposed it by the slogan of civil war (rejected by Trotsky—L.K.). *Nashe Slovo*, finally, supported the view that it must be made the task of our Party to conquer power in the name of socialist revolution. The *Social Democrat* maintained the standpoint of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.”

A few lines before Trotsky informs us that the “differences” existing between the *Social Democrat* and the *Nashe Slovo*, considerable at first, “had diminished . . .” Not only Trotsky, but Martov, was at one time a member of the editorial staff of the *Nashe Slovo*; Martov, however, resigned his post later on account of the remorseless criticism exercised by Comrade Lenin, and of the increase of revolutionary Communist elements among the editors. After the paper had finally passed into the hands of the left-wing of the editorial staff, that is, into Trotsky’s hands, these three points of dispute remained; the question of defeatism, the question of civil war or peace, and

the question of the character of the impending Russian revolution.

Lenin stood for the defeat of the national bourgeoisie, he impressed upon the workers the necessity of the defeat of their "own" bourgeoisie—Trotsky was opposed to this!

Lenin stood for civil war—Trotsky opposed it!

Lenin stood for the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry—Trotsky opposed it! Here, as Lenin pointed out, he caused great confusion with his left phrase on "permanent revolution." In this last point Trotsky gave the impression of being more left than Lenin. He was not content with the mere dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, but demanded permanent revolution. Here we have merely a further example of what Lenin impressed upon us for so many years with regard to Trotsky: a right policy with regard to daily questions of actual practice, but skilfully disguised in the phraseology of the Left.

A fourth difference must, however, be added to these three, one not mentioned by Comrade Trotsky: the difference in the question of the Second and Third Internationals. Lenin, at the head of the Zimmerwald Left, stood for immediate rupture with the Second International and with Kautsky, and for the founding of the Third International. Trotsky, and the pro-Kautsky Centre were against this.

But only a few months after the existence of these differences had been definitely ascertained, Trotsky joined the Bolshevist Party.

"The March revolution," he writes, "has wiped out all these differences."

Truly? All of them? And how? Trotsky does not say. Yet the Party has a right to put this question, since Comrade Trotsky has obliged us to occupy ourselves with his history. Are we to understand the declaration that the revolution has erased all differences in such manner that we may assume Comrade Trotsky to have become convinced of his having been mistaken on all these important points? That he has adopted the viewpoint of the Bolsheviki? Comrade Martinov, one of the best of the Menshevist theoreticians, declared candidly: "I have served the working class for thirty years in the way which I held to be the best. To-day I see that I have been in the wrong. History confirms the correctness of Lenin's standpoint with regard to the Russian revolution, and I join Lenin." But Comrade Trotsky has given the Party no such answer.

Trotsky on Himself and Leninism.

Trotsky, in his book "1905" (pp. 4-5) writes as follows:

"In the period between 9th January and the strike in October, 1905, I formed those views of the character of the revolutionary development in Russia which have received the designation of 'permanent revolution. . .' Despite the interval of twelve years, this estimate has been fully confirmed." (This was written in the year 1922!—L.K.)

But during the whole of these twelve years this theory was opposed by another theory, Lenin's theory, expressed in the formula: "Revolutionary

democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry."

"This idea"—so wrote Comrade Trotsky in 1918, and wrote it again in 1922 without the slightest reservation—"this idea has been repeated unwearingly by Lenin since 1904. But that does not make it correct."

In this book ("1905") Trotsky describes Lenin's fundamental idea as an empty abstraction, and writes that the Bolsheviki "arrive at the idea of a bourgeois-democratic self-limitation of the proletariat possessing state power."

He continues: "Whilst the anti-revolutionary features of Menshevism are already visible to their full extent, the *anti-revolutionary features of Bolshevism* (I italicise these words on account of their importance—L.K.) threaten to appear as a mighty danger only in the case of a revolutionary victory."

Comrade Trotsky, who caused this phrase on the dangers of the anti-revolutionary features of Bolshevism to be re-published and confirmed in the year of 1922, adds the following:

"As is already well known, this did not happen, for Bolshevism, under Comrade Lenin's leadership, changed its ideological equipment in this most important question in the spring of 1917, that is, before the conquest of power." (Trotsky: "1905," Russian edition, p. 285.)

Trotsky's idea is now clear. The standpoint held by Lenin and by the Bolshevik Party on the character of the revolution, as developed between 1904 and the spring of 1917, had not only been wrong, but even counter-revolutionary with respect to the socialist revolution. Lenin and the Bolsheviki were thus obliged to "change their equipment"

in the spring of 1917, before the conquest of power, for the purpose of accomplishing the conquest of power. That is, they found themselves obliged to substitute the counter-revolutionary equipment of Bolshevism by the really revolutionary equipment which Trotsky had kept ready on hand for twelve years. It is Trotsky's conviction that Lenin came over to Trotsky after first building up the Party for fifteen years on "anti-revolutionary" ideas.

Trotsky has proved to be in the right during the whole course of his intellectual conflicts with Bolshevism and with Lenin up to the year 1917—that is the import of all Trotsky's latest books ("1905" and "1917.")

But if this is so, then we must state it openly. If Bolshevism contains anti-revolutionary features, if we have to change our equipment before a decisive battle, then what right have we to teach uncorrected Bolshevism to our proletariat and to the proletariats of all countries? Why do we not say anywhere, not in one single text book read by the proletariat of our country and of the whole world: Comrades, we teach you Bolshevism, but do not forget that Bolshevism contains anti-revolutionary features, and as soon as the fight begins, then you will not be able to manage with the equipment of Bolshevism, but will have to replace it by another, the equipment of Trotskyism.

We must either teach Bolshevism, Leninism, as it is, without correction, as the real theory of proletarian revolution, or, if there is anyone who believes that this theory is not the true theory of proletarian revolution, but that it has to be supplemented by Trotskyism in order to become such, then he must state openly and straightforwardly what alterations he thinks should be made. Is

there really something anti-revolutionary in the teachings of Bolshevism on the revolution? Then the works issued by Lenin before the spring of 1917 must not be made the scientific authority on proletarian struggle and proletarian strategy against the bourgeoisie. Or we must at least say: But the art of realising proletarian revolution is not to be learnt from Lenin's works up to 1917, but from Trotsky's works since 1905.

The October revolution was either accomplished beneath the banner of uncorrected Leninism, or it was accomplished beneath the banner of Trotskyism and its correction of Leninism. Here we are at a parting of the ways.

It was to be expected that Comrade Trotsky, in order to grant a certain amount of satisfaction to the Party which he has thus benefitted, should willingly admit that he has committed certain organisatory errors in the past. What does such an acknowledgment cost, when it serves as a cloak for the unpunished assertion that Bolshevism, Leninism, contains anti-revolutionary features? Paris is worth a mass. If one can appropriate the role of intellectual and theoretical leader of Bolshevism and the October revolution, it is worth while to admit to even considerable errors in the past.

Trotsky, in his "Lessons of October" actually does make such a confession to the Party. "I have acknowledged my real and great organisatory mistakes," he writes. But was the fifteen years' conflict between Lenin and the Bolsheviks on the one side, and Trotskyism on the other, concerned with organisatory questions? This is nonsense, an endeavour to distract from the point. The conflict was directly concerned with the fundamental

questions of the revolution, with the mutual relations of the different classes during the revolution with the question of "permanent revolution" or Comrade Lenin's theory and this is the question of the role played by the peasantry in the revolution, the question of the paths leading to socialism in an agrarian country, the question of the methods and conditions for the realisation of the proletarian dictatorship in a country in which the peasant population preponderates. This is no contention on abstract formulas. The theory of permanent revolution is based upon a complete underestimation of the role played by the peasantry; it replies to one question only: it tells us how power cannot be seized or maintained under these conditions.

Trotsky's viewpoint, summed up from a study of the "Lessons of October," may be expressed as follows: "On the eve of the events of 1905, Lenin imparted a peculiar character to the Russian revolution by the formula: Democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. But, as later developments showed, this formula had only significance for one stage on the way." This is followed by a literary dissertation to the effect that this stage was a stage on the way to Trotsky's formula. And this is the actual intellectual kernel of all Trotsky's latest writings. Trotsky shuffles his Trotskyism beneath Leninism with the whole of the literary art and talent peculiar to him. This last book of his is not written for the whole Party, but for the younger generation now growing up, for the youth who within a year or two will have to determine the destiny of the Party.

The aim of Trotsky's book "1917" is to take revenge for the twelve years in which Lenin exposed Trotsky's wretched policy, to prove that the revolution confirms his (Trotsky's) theory, and to poison the minds of the future leaders of the Party, now studying in the Communist universities, workers' faculties, colleges, etc., by this shuffling of Trotskyism into Leninism. We cannot permit this aim to be realised.

In this book ("1917") Trotsky inveighs against Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, and others, I shall deal further with this, and with my own errors, but am of the opinion that the reproaches made in this book are not intended for us only. The names of Kamenev and Zinoviev are given, but Lenin is meant. The question of the fate of Bolshevism may be put in the following form: Lenin had an excellent theory, but the disciples of Lenin did not know how to apply it, they did not recognise the needs of the concrete situation. The formula was right, but it has been badly carried out by this or that Bolshevik. It is possible to put the question in this manner, but it can also be stated as follows: If we draw all the logical conclusions from the Leninist formula, we are bound to land in a bog. The formula itself is wrong, and this wrong formula has been employed logically correctly. In the first case we have a justification of the Bolshevik theory and an indication of the errors of individual Bolsheviks, but in the second case, if we are told that Lenin's nearest disciples accepted his formula and landed in a bog through applying it literally, then we see—enlightened as we already are by Trotsky's assertion as to the anti-revolutionary features of Leninism and by his statement that Trotsky's theory, and not Lenin's,

has been "completely confirmed"—then we see that the blows struck are not directed against Kamenev and Zinoviev alone, but through them at Lenin's main formula.

Lenin in April, 1917.

Is it true that Bolshevism, in order to solve the problems of the revolution, was obliged to withdraw from its past? Is it true that the theory of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry proved inadequate? What were the actual facts and how were these regarded by Lenin?

What really happened—as seen by Lenin as well as by us—was that the Bolshevik idea of the "revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" was fully and completely realised in the Russian revolution, and, after its realisation, began to develop into the Bolshevik idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

I here take the opportunity of referring to one of the works in which Lenin laid down his principles at that time: "Letters on Tactics," in which he comments on and explains to the Party his famous theses of 4th April. Lenin writes:

"The revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry has already been realised in the Russian revolution. . . The workers' and soldiers' Soviets are the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry as realised in actual life. We are still in the minority; we recognise the necessity of gaining the majority (in these organs of the dictatorship)." (Complete Works, Russian edition, vol. xiv/1, p. 29.)

If our theory has been realised, we must stride forward. How? In such manner that we gather together the proletarian elements of town and country against the petty-bourgeois elements, on the basis of the realised dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. This means the mustering and organisation of the proletarian elements on the basis of this dictatorship, in order to proceed from the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry to the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the purely socialist revolution. For this reason Lenin invariably adapted his tactics to the development of the mass movement in the peasantry, and he studied the "peculiarity" of the realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, which consisted of the fact that the latter, at the given stage of the revolution (April, 1917) retained their confidence in the bourgeois government in the form of "defence of native country." After describing the views of the Bolsheviki contending against him (I was one of these), and after a sharp attack upon us, Lenin writes :

"A Marxist must never quit the firm ground of analysis of class relations. The bourgeoisie is in power. And is the mass of the peasantry not another bourgeoisie belonging to another stratum, of another description and character? Does it follow that this stratum may not seize power by the "consummation" of bourgeois democratic revolution? Why should this not be possible? Old Bolsheviki frequently judge in this manner."

I replied : "This is perfectly possible. . . it is possible that the peasantry seizes the whole of the land and at the same time the whole power. . ."

Lenin continues: "If the peasantry ceases to support the government in the social revolutionary and Menshevist Soviets, if the peasantry, having deserted the bourgeoisie, seize the land and power in spite of the bourgeoisie, then we shall have a new stage in the bourgeois democratic revolution, and one which will occupy us greatly."

This is much more complicated than Trotsky's theory, straight as the line which the crow flies. For Trotsky, with his slogan of: "Off with the Tsar and on with the labour government," the matter was much simple. He simply ignored the whole peasantry and the conditions pre-requisite to the realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in a capitalistically backward agrarian country.

The greatness of Lenin lies in the fact that he began to carry out the dictatorship of the proletariat under the given conditions of a given agrarian country, and actually did carry this out by means of constantly keeping in sight those real elements upon whose foundation this dictatorship can not only be proclaimed, but built up.

As a matter of fact, even in April it was not possible to judge whether there might not be a moment in the Russian revolution in which the peasantry would leave the social revolutionary and Menshevist Soviets in the lurch and turn against the Provisional Government, before it could attain to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin, as real politician and mass leader, knowing that we pursued the policy of the proletariat under the peculiar conditions of an agrarian country, arranged his tactics for both possibilities.

Lenin would not have been Lenin, that is, he would not have been the practical leader of millions in class war, if he had really taken over Trotsky's equipment, for Trotsky's theory would have inevitably led to the breakdown of the proletariat, and of the peasantry as well. In its pure form, the line taken by Trotsky is simply the ignoring of the peasantry, the ignoring of that transition stage during which the peasantry still places its confidence in the ruling bourgeoisie at first, is disappointed and turns against the bourgeoisie, but still does not join the proletariat; this transitional stage which ends by the proletariat taking over the leadership of the peasantry in the form of peasant's risings, realising the dictatorship, and endeavouring to bring about an alliance between workers and peasants in various and changing forms.

Lenin, in the same pamphlet in which he wrote against the old Bolsheviks, states :

"In my theses I have secured myself against any leaps over agrarian or petty bourgeois movements which have not yet been overcome, against any playing with 'seizure of power' by a labour government . . . 'Trotskyism, down with the Tsar, up with the labour government'—is wrong. The petty bourgeoisie (that is, the peasantry—L.K.) exists, and cannot be ignored."

Is this not the literal repetition, in the heat of revolution, of all that Lenin had long warned the Party against? In 1910 Lenin had already said that : "Trotsky's fundamental error . . . is the lack of the smallest thought about the question of the transition from this (the bourgeois) revolution to a socialist revolution."

Trotsky's "original" theory takes from the Bolsheviks the demand for decisive revolutionary struggle on the part of the proletariat and the demand for the seizure of political power, from the Mensheviks, it takes the "denial" of the role played by the peasantry . . . Trotsky did not, however, reflect that when the proletariat induces the non-proletarian masses of the peasantry to confiscate the land of the landowners and to overthrow the monarchy, the "national bourgeois revolution" in Russia is achieved and that this becomes a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

Lenin criticised severely those comrades (including me) who had not observed that the revolution had already passed from one phase to another. He feared most that progress would be hindered by the Party's falling into the rut of Trotsky's abstract theory, and again he accuses it of wanting to spring over the peasants' movement before this was in our hands.

There was no need for Lenin to change his equipment. The old Leninist theory, the old Leninist, Bolshevik conception of the character of the Russian revolution, and of the relations between proletariat and peasantry, were seen by Lenin to have proved fully correct. And now we had to advance further on the same lines. But the greatest care must be taken, in this advance, not to fall into Trotsky's mistaken footsteps. Twelve years before 1917 Lenin had prophesied that, after the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry had been realised, we should have to advance to the dictatorship of the proletariat, but that this advance must

take the peasantry into consideration, and must create conditions under which the peasantry cooperate with the proletariat, without simply ignoring the peasantry as Trotsky proposes. Bolshevism does not need to borrow weapons from the arsenal of Trotskyism.

At the same time, there were some Bolsheviks who did not advance so rapidly from stage to stage as was required by the tremendous acceleration of the revolution caused by the enormous pressure of the war. But this does not in the least signify that Bolshevism was on the wrong track, that it led into a bog instead of to victory or that it had to be altered during the revolution. And this is just what Trotsky is trying to prove.

Trotsky has never grasped the essentials of the Leninist theory on the relations between the working class and the peasantry in the Russian revolution. Even after October he did not grasp it, and he did not grasp it when our Party applied it in fresh ways, or when our Party successfully manoeuvred for the realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat without separation from the peasantry. His own theory, which in his opinion has proved entirely right, has prevented him from grasping the Bolshevik position. If Trotsky's theory had proved correct, this would signify that the Soviet power would long since have ceased to exist. This theory of "permanent revolution," which does not trouble about the peasantry or provide any solution for the question of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, renders the labour government in Russia absolutely dependent upon the immediate proletarian revolution in the West. According to this theory the

proletariat, after having taken over power, is plunged into the most hopeless contradictions. Its power is limited by objective social difficulties :

“Their solution is prevented by the economic backwardness of the country. Within the confines of a national revolution there is no means of escape from this contradiction.” (Trotsky, “1905,” Russian edition, p. 286.)

Under such conditions a delay or postponement of the proletarian world revolution would have inevitably caused the immediate collapse of the workers’ dictatorship in Russia. Thus the adherents of the “permanent revolution” are bound to pass through stages of despair and profoundest pessimism to attempts at overcoming the economic backwardness of the country by force, with the aid of military commands.

Real Bolshevik policy, as pursued by Lenin from February to October, has nothing in common with either this policy or this psychology.

How did matters really stand in October and immediately afterwards? Seen from the standpoint of Marxism, from the standpoint of the analysis of the class forces of the revolution, was not the acceptance of the social revolutionary decree on landed property, the supplementation of the Soviet government by the left S.R., the designation of the government created by the October revolution as “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government,” all proposals of Lenin, was all this not a growing development of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry into a system whose actual essence was already the dictatorship of the proletariat?

It is possible to omit some of these facts of the October revolution; but then we do not arrive at any scientific analysis of Lenin's policy. And what about the transition from war Communism to the new economic policy, from the committees for the impoverished peasantry to Lenin's speech on the "medium farmers?" How can this be brought into harmony with that theory of permanent revolution which has proved so "perfectly correct?"

In 1916 Lenin wrote that life was already a decade ahead of Trotsky's magnificent theory. Now we can add another eight years. Does the circumstance that life has passed Trotsky's theory by for eight years justify Trotsky in claiming to be able to correct Leninism by Trotskyism?

Since life has passed Trotsky's theory by Trotsky attempts in his books to not only correct Leninism, but life as well, and to prove by every art of which he is master that life follows Trotsky after all.

It is incumbent on the Party to show precisely the contrary, and to prove to not only Trotsky, but every new member the necessity of "Bolshevizing Trotsky." How far has the Party succeeded in this?

III.

TROTSKY IN THE PARTY. OUR ERRORS. OCTOBER ACCORDING TO TROTSKY

We must differentiate between two aspects of Trotsky's activity. The one aspect is Comrade Trotsky as he carried out the instructions of the Party strictly and accurately, leaning with the other members of the Party on the totality of common political experience in the Party and on the

whole Party mass organisation, and carrying out this or that task or command of the Party. At this time Comrade Trotsky's deeds were splendid, and added many brilliant pages to his own history, and that of the Party. But since Comrade Trotsky has come forward as an individualist, believing that he and not the Party is in the right in the fundamental questions of revolution, and that Leninism must be improved by Trotskyism, we are obliged to see that other aspect of Comrade Trotsky which shows him to be no Bolshevik.

*Four Attempts made by Comrade Trotsky at
Improving the Party.*

The Party remembers four occasions upon which Comrade Trotsky has tried to instruct the Party, and to force upon it his own Trotskyist deviations. The first occasion was a few months after Comrade Trotsky entered the Party. It was at the time of Brest-Litovsk. The Party is adequately and accurately informed as to Comrade Trotsky's attitude at that time. He under-estimated the role played by the peasantry, and covered this over by revolutionary phraseology. This was the road to the defeat of the proletariat and the revolution. If we recollect the evidence brought at this time against Comrade Trotsky by Comrade Lenin, we see that Comrade Lenin brought no other evidence than the substantiation with which he had rejected Comrade Trotsky's general attitude during the course of the preceding decade.

Comrade Lenin reproached him with two political sins: Lack of comprehension for the relations between proletariat and peasantry, and liability to be carried away by apparently Left, apparently

revolutionary phrases. These two errors, typical of Comrade Trotsky whilst outside of our Party, were repeated by him within it.

Then came the civil war, the epoch of war communism. Comrade Trotsky executed the task allotted to him. His participation in the direction of the general policy of the Party was less than before. But now the revolution reached a fresh turning point. The relations between the classes shifted. The Party anticipated, in the form of a discussion on trade unions, the question submitted a few weeks later at Cronstadt; the question of the transition from war Communism to the new economic policy. What was Comrade Lenin seeking for at that time? He was seeking new forms for an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, new forms for leading the working masses by means of gaining their convinced adherence rather than by force.

To what did Comrade Trotsky look for salvation at that time? He advised us to tighten the screws of war Communism. This was again and again an under-estimate of the peasantry, the liability to be carried away by externals, by methods of "pressure" and "administration from above."

And comrade Trotsky's further attempts—even during Comrade Lenin's lifetime—the question of the "plan" according to his peculiar conception, his "formulas" on the "dictatorship of industry," were not these again attempts to force petty bourgeois mentality upon us from above with bonds of iron, did they not once more show that lack of comprehension of those concrete conditions under which it is alone possible to realise

a dictatorship in an agrarian country with undermined industries at a time when the international revolution is retarded?

Beneath Comrade Trotsky's effective formulas we can here easily distinguish the feelings inevitably involved by his original theory: On the one hand despair, pessimism, disbelief, and on the other hand exaggerated hopes in the methods of supreme administration (a term of Lenin's), in the competent subjection of economic difficulties from above.

The last discussion is still fresh in our memories. It gave the Party a graphic survey of the totality of Comrade Trotsky's errors, as dealt with above. But it also showed with special clearness another error, another feature of Trotskyism, and one far from being new. This is the attempt to undermine and weaken the main framework of the dictatorship, the Party. The same object was aimed at by the discrediting of the "cadres" of the Party, by the resurrected Menshevik conception of the Party as a collection of "groups and currents," and the essentially liquidatory undermining of the authority of the leading institutions ("they are leading the country to destruction"). And has it not been under Comrade Trotsky's banner that the idea of greater freedom from Party influence for extra-Party organisations has flourished? Has not all this, taken together, led to a weakening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and has it not all been based upon an under-estimation of the conditions under which we—in an agrarian country—have to realise the dictatorship? Is it not a petty bourgeois deviation?

So long as the Party is perfectly sound and

everything goes well, Comrade Trotsky quietly performs every task which falls to him: but as soon as the Party encounters any obstacle, as soon as it has to adjust its rudder, then Comrade Trotsky at once springs forward in the role of saviour and teacher of the Party, but invariably points out the wrong way, since he has not absorbed the principles of Bolshevism.

Our Errors.

Comrade Trotsky has another trump in his hand against Bolshevism. This trump consists of certain errors committed by some few Bolsheviki (above all by me and Zinoviev, then those of Rykov and Nogin) in October, 1917. The errors of the Bolsheviki are naturally invariably exploited by our enemies. Comrade Trotsky did not resort to this trump so long as he hoped to induce the Party to deviate to the path of Trotskyism by means of the discussion of this or that practical question. But after four attempts—Brest, trade unions, discussion on the economic plan, and the last discussion—had shown him that he cannot persuade the Bolshevik Party to deviate from its path, after he had learnt from the Party at the Thirteenth Party Conference that we, the Leninists, do not require our theory to be corrected by Trotskyism, then he brought forward this last trump.

He is of course not the first to do this. These errors have been exploited often enough already by our enemies, but both errors and exploitation were simply buried beneath the thunders of the proletarian revolution. At the time neither the errors themselves nor their being made use of by hostile quarters resulted in any practical conse-

quences. It is only since then that these errors have been raked up again maliciously by those who had deserted Communism: Levi, Frossard, Balabanova. Levi and Frossard are now being followed by Trotsky.

Vacillations were unallowable. Lenin armed himself against them with all the power and passion of a leader who sees that his co-workers are liable to carry confusion into their own ranks by vacillation at decisive moments. He exposed every vacillation relentlessly, and in critical and decisive moments he did not shrink from the severest words or propositions. And he was right, right to the end, without reservation.

But when the moment for calm discussion arrived, the moment for the avoidance of the repetition of similar errors in other Communist Parties, then Lenin characterised these errors very accurately. When Serrati attempted to cloak his withdrawal from Communism by these errors of Zinoviev and Kamenev, Comrade Lenin wrote: "Before the October revolution in Russia, and immediately after it, a number of excellent Communists committed errors which we do not like to remember now. Why do we not like to remember them? Because it is wrong to call to mind errors which have been made perfectly good, unless there is some special reason for doing so."

Special attention must be accorded to the manner in which Lenin formulated our errors: "In the period of which I speak they vacillated, fearing that the Bolsheviki were isolating themselves, were rushing too recklessly into a rising, were too unwilling to meet the advances of a certain section of the "Mensheviki" and "social revolutionists." The conflict went so far that the

comrades named resigned demonstratively from all responsible positions both in the party and in Soviet work, to the great joy of the enemies of the Soviet revolution. The affair culminated in a very severe criticism in the press, on the part of the C.C. of our Party, against the resigning comrades. And after a few weeks, at latest after a few months, all these comrades recognised their error and returned to their responsible Party and Soviet positions."

Is this description of Lenin in any way similar to the malicious attempt made by Trotsky—ridiculous in its malice—to twist this "right" wing into an actually "Menshevist" wing in the Bolshevik Party? But this appears to be Comrade Trotsky's fate: In order to attain his objects he is invariably obliged to "overcome" Lenin, Leninism and the Leninists.

Trotsky Writes again about Himself and Lenin.

Were we the only ones, in Trotsky's opinion, who made mistakes at the time of the October revolution? No, we were not the only ones. This book contains many sensations. But the most sensational sentence in the book is one referring to the October revolution. On page 50 of his "Lessons" Trotsky writes: "The rising on the 25th of October was of supplementary character only." There are probably many here present who took part in the October events, and these will be surprised to learn, eight years after the 25th October, 1917, that the rising on the 25th October was merely of a "supplementary character." What did it supplement? We learn that it "supplemented" the events which had taken place on 9th October.

The main data of the revolution are familiar to us. But when I mention events which occurred on 9th October, many will ask what happened on that date to which the October rising was nothing more than a supplement. On 9th October, says Comrade Trotsky's book, a resolution was passed in the Petrograd Soviet, on the motion of Comrade Trotsky, ending with the sentence: "The Petrograd Workers' and Soldiers' Soviet cannot be responsible to the army for such strategy on the part of the Provisional Government, and especially for the removal of troops from Petrograd."

It need not be said that this was an important resolution; it united the garrison, which did not want to go to the front, with the Petrograd Soviet. But listen to how Trotsky describes and estimates this event on the 9th October: "From this moment (9th October), onwards we were actually in a state of armed insurrection. . . . The issue of the rising on the 25th October was already three-parts pre-determined at this moment. . . . In all essentials an armed insurrection had already been brought about. . . . Here we had a "quiet" and "almost" legal "armed insurrection, one which was two-thirds, if not nine-tenths, an accomplished fact. . . . From this moment onwards we had a victorious rising in the capital City."

Thus it appears that the 25th October was not more than a slight supplement to the great 9th. But now the question arises: If the "victorious" insurrection was already an accomplished fact to the extent of nine-tenths on the 9th October, what are we to think of the mental capacity of those who sat in the Bolshevik C.C. and decided in a heated debate, on 10th October, whether we should proceed to an insurrection or not, and if so, what

then? What are we to think of people who on 15th October gathered together as Plenary Session of the C.C. together with the functionaries and co-workers from the military organisations, and still deliberated on the prospects of the insurrection, on the forces of the insurrection, and on the date of the insurrection. Had it not been all arranged on the 9th quietly and legally? So quietly that neither the Party nor the C.C. heard anything about it.

But this is merely a side issue. What is the Party, what is the Petrograd Committee, or the C.C. when Trotsky writes a history of the October revolution? In this history neither the C.C. nor the Party exist at all as real living powers, as collective organisers of the mass movement. And there is not a word to be learnt from the "Lessons of October" with regard to what took place in Moscow, that not only in Petrograd, but in Moscow and Ivanovo Vosnessensk there was a proletariat which was also doing something. And with reference to Lenin the book informs us: "Lenin who was not in Petrograd, did not fully estimate the importance of this fact. . . Lenin, living illegally, had no possibility of estimating the thorough upheaval," etc. We see that not one of us really knew anything about the October revolution. We had thought that it was precisely Lenin who led the October revolution, and that the C.C., the Party, and the military organisations of the Party organised it. But it appears that they did not appear on the scene at all.

In order to throw even more light on the part played by Lenin, Trotsky reports as follows: "If the insurrection had begun in Moscow (in accordance with Lenin's advice—L.K.), before the re-

volution in Petrograd, it would inevitably have dragged much more and the issue would have been very doubtful) and a failure in Moscow would have had a very severe effect upon Petrograd."

Whilst Lenin is engaged in imparting such "advice" Trotsky, with his "quiet" but "victorious insurrection" already in his pocket, is executing "an extensive manœuvre." "We succeeded" he writes triumphantly, "in luring our enemies into the trap of Soviet legality." Lenin, calculating much more upon the workers, sailors and soldiers than upon Comrade Trotsky's "manœuvres," wrote at this time: "It is a crime to hesitate, it is a piece of childishness and formality to wait for the Soviet Congress, a betrayal of the revolution." But Trotsky refutes Lenin's words with an air of victory at the close of his description of the roles played by him and by Lenin in October. "It is one thing to organise an armed insurrection under the bare slogan of seizure of power by the Party," Trotsky instructs Lenin, "but it is something very different to prepare and realise an insurrection under the slogan of the defence of the rights of the Soviet Congress."

Here the figures are shifted from their actual positions. Lenin is illegal, unable to make a correct estimate of the situation, omits to observe that nine-tenths of the insurrection has already been accomplished, advises that the rising be commenced in Moscow, although this obviously condemns the revolution to failure. Trotsky, on the other hand, brings about a "victorious insurrection" by the 9th October, carries out a definite but cautious manœuvre by which he "lured the enemy into a trap," and "prepares and realises the victory" under a slogan comprehensible to

the broad masses, the slogan of "defence of the rights of the Soviet Congress."

What do these "Lessons of October" endeavour to teach us? That in the spring Lenin was obliged to alter his attitude, to abandon his old theory, and to borrow weapons from Trotsky's equipment. And that in October Lenin endeavoured unsuccessfully to lead the insurrection which Comrade Trotsky was destined to lead to victory.

We have to choose what we are to learn and to teach. Either this history of October, this history of Trotsky's or the history as given in the works of Lenin.

In the question of the Constituent Assembly, Comrade Trotsky quotes my and Zinoviev's letter of 11th October, in which we wrote: "The Constituent Assembly will be able to lean upon the Soviets only for aid in its revolutionary work. The Constituent Assembly and the Soviet form the combined type of state institutions towards which we are advancing."

Trotsky comments as follows: "It is extremely interesting for the characterisation of the whole line adopted by the Right to note that the theory of "combined" state institutions uniting the Constituent Assembly with the Soviets, is one which was repeated one or two years later in Germany by Rudolf Hilferding, an opponent of seizure of power by the proletariat."

Zinoviev's and my letter was written on 11th October; and I take Lenin's article written on 6th October. Lenin writes as follows: "During the transition from old to new combined types are possible at times (as the *Workers' Path* rightly

pointed out a few days ago), for instance Soviet Republic and Constituent Assembly."

What does this imply? It implies that in the case before us Lenin resembled Hilferding. Historical truth is of little importance to Trotsky. The alteration of tactics at moments when the situation alters from day to day is of no interest to him; what interests him is to discredit Bolshevism by every possible means.

A final example, again in two words. In this same letter of October, 1917 we wrote: "These masses of the soldiery are not supporting us for the sake of the slogan of war, but for the slogan of peace. . . Should we find ourselves in a position, after seizing power, in which the international situation obliges us to resort to a revolutionary war, the soldiery will turn away from us. The best of the youth among the soldiers will remain true to us, but the great mass will leave us." The historian may judge in how far this estimate was justified. But what does Comrade Trotsky do? He writes: "Here we see fundamental arguments in favour of the signing of the Brest-Litovsk peace."

Thus it appears that the Brest-Litovsk peace, signed by the Party on the urging and iron pressure of Lenin, against Trotsky, was substantiated by "fundamental arguments" supplied by us, the "Right," the followers of Hilferding. It is not to be wondered at when our enemies, who have a very fine feeling for anything wrong, comment on such books about Lenin by remarking that it is difficult to distinguish whether they have been written by a co-worker or a rival of Lenin.

Leninism against Trotskyism.

The results may now be summed up. We are the monopoly Party in our country. We gather together in our ranks every organised worker in the country; but we must not forget for a moment that we are surrounded by elements foreign to our class, and that these elementary forces do not diminish, but will multiply and become politically more enlightened. They do not possess the form of legal organisation. Petty bourgeois intelligence will also grow on the soil provided by the development of industry, of the works and factories, and of trade. All these petty bourgeois elements, finding no open means of expression in any social organisation, are naturally endeavouring to further their aims through the medium of our Party itself. The petty bourgeois elements, in exercising this pressure upon our Party, naturally seek the weakest link in the chain, and as naturally they find this weakest link where people have entered the Party without being assimilated to it, and are possessed by a secret conviction, leaving them no peace, that they are more in the right than the Party, and that it is mere narrow-mindedness on the part of the Party, mere conservatism, tradition and adherence to this or that clique in leading positions, which prevents the Party from learning from its real saviours, such as Comrade Trotsky.

It is with great regret that I state this, and the whole Party will echo this regret, but it has to be said: Comrade Trotsky has become the channel through which the elementary forces of the petty bourgeoisie find their way into our Party. The whole character of his advances, and his whole his-

torical past, show this to be the case. In his contentions against the Party he has already become a symbol, all over the country, for everything directed against our Party. This is a fact which it is most important for Comrade Trotsky to grasp. If he will grasp this and draw the necessary conclusions, then everything can be made good again. Whether he wants it or not (and assuredly he does *not* want it) he has become, for all who regard Communism as their greatest enemy, a symbol for emancipation from the thrall of the Communist Party. This is the regrettable but perfectly inevitable conclusion of all who are accustomed to judge political events from the standpoint of actual analysis of class relations, and not from the standpoint of mere words.

I am aware that in Moscow, a city particularly receptive for all manner of rumours, "perfectly reliable" information is already being spread abroad to the effect that, firstly, Comrade Trotsky's book has been prohibited, and secondly, that Trotsky's exclusion from the Party is contemplated and Trotsky himself is no longer in Moscow. All this is naturally mere gossip. It has not occurred to anybody to prohibit Comrade Trotsky's book; no single member of the C.C. has raised the question of any reprisals against Comrade Trotsky. Reprisals, expulsion, and the like would not enlighten anybody, but would on the contrary render enlightenment more difficult and at the same time give opportunities to those brewers of confusion who would like to sow the seeds of schism in the Party, and prevent the real fundamentals of Bolshevism being explained in their differentiation from Trotskyism; and it is

this explanation which is of fundamental importance at present.

It must be perfectly clear to every conscious member of the Party that for us, the Bolsheviki, and for the international proletariat marching forward to victory. Leninism is sufficient, and that it is not necessary to substitute or improve Leninism by Trotskyism. (Enthusiastic applause.)



HOW SHOULD THE HISTORY OF OCTOBER BE TREATED?

By G. SOKOLNIKOV

The number of historical works, memoirs, collections, documents, about the year 1917, and the October revolution is rapidly increasing. Nevertheless, the year 1917 is still awaiting its historian. We must admit, that Comrade Trotsky is right when he says "up to now we have no single work that gives us a general picture of the October revolution which would bring the most important factors in its politics and organisation into prominence." Comrade Trotsky is also right in saying that October should be studied with greater intensity.

We cannot, however, in any way agree with the methods Comrade Trotsky applies to the "study of October," nor with the conclusions he draws from the study. Just because the history of the preparations for October and the history of the October revolution only exist in fragments, just because the documents are not collected nor arranged, just because a series of most important facts have never been definitely recorded in black and white, it is the duty of everyone who writes about the events of 1917, to select and test with the utmost care the facts on which he founds his communications.

Comrade Trotsky has not written the history of October in this way, and with that we must reproach him. Indeed, by the fact that, with a certain "deliberateness" he focusses his work on the differences of opinion in the leading groups of the Bolsheviki in 1917, he descends from the stand-

point of an apparently objective "chronicler" and "pedagogue" to that of a passionate public prosecutor, who fabricates according to his instruction, a malicious indictment; he descends to the standpoint of a "revealer" who approaches the history of the Party "from without."

The "study" of October has suffered considerably from this attitude of a public prosecutor and revealer, as a public prosecutor cannot resist the temptation to try and prove his case with the help of thought reading, circumstantial evidence, and making use of "reliable" witnesses, who, however, are no longer able to speak themselves. Thus he resorts to measures which rather complicate the question than clear it up.

Let us begin with an example which clearly shows how Comrade Trotsky distorts the history of the October revolution. The history of the April demonstration is an example of this kind.

"Lenin's speech at the 'Finland railway station' on the socialist character of the Russian revolution had the effect of a bomb on many of the Party leaders. The polemic between Lenin and the partisans of the "Completion of the Democratic Revolution" began on the first day. The armed April demonstration, in which the slogan 'Down with the Provisional Government' was given, was the object of violent disputes. This circumstance served the individual representatives of the right-wing as an excuse for accusing Lenin of blanquism; the fall of the Provisional Government which had at that time the support of the majority of the Soviets was said only to have been possible by deluding the majority of the working people.

As regards its form, this reproach may not be without some power of conviction, but in essentials Lenin showed in his April policy no vestige of blanquism. . . . The April demonstration which took a direction more to the left than had been planned, was only a trial balloon to test the mood of the masses, and the Soviets. After this test, Lenin withdrew the slogan of the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government."

Thus writes Comrade Trotsky.

According to this exposition (1) the armed April demonstration is the object of violent disputes between Lenin and several leaders of the Party; (2) Lenin is in favour of the armed April demonstration which under the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government" took a direction more to the "left" than after this test, after Lenin had withdrawn this slogan; (3) Lenin's attitude to the April demonstration gave the "right-wing" the excuse for accusing him of blanquism.

Let us glance at the documents. There is Lenin's article in the *Pravda* of April 23rd, 1917, on the "Lessons of the Crisis." Lenin closes his article with the following words :

"Fellow-workmen, the lesson is plain. Time will not wait. Other crises will follow the first. Dedicate all your powers to the enlightenment of the backward. . . . dedicate all your powers to closing your own ranks. . . . Refuse to be led astray by the petty bourgeois opportunists and the capitalist defenders of their country, the partisans of the "policy of support," or by the individuals who tend to be in too great a hurry and to raise the cry, 'Down with the Provisional Government,' before

the majority of the people is firmly united. The crisis cannot be overcome by individuals employing force against others or by the isolated action of small armed groups, by blanquist attempts “to seize power,” “to arrest the Provisional Government,” etc. (The italics are mine—G.S.). The slogan for the day is : more exact, clear, broad enlightenment as to the line of the proletariat and as to its way of putting an end to the war . . . Rally round your Soviets, try to gather the majority of them round you by friendly persuasion and by electing new members.”

In the same number of the *Pravda*, Lenin, in an article called : “How to make a plain question complicated,” ridicules the misrepresentation of the true point of view of the Bolsheviki in the bankers’ journal *Denj* (The Day). He writes :

“The attempt to seize power would be an adventure or blanquism (the *Pravda* pointed out the danger clearly, exactly, plainly and unequivocally), as long as it is not supported by the majority of the people. In Russia the state of freedom to-day is such that the will of the majority can be ascertained by the composition of the workers’ and soldiers’ Soviets, that is to say that the Party, if it wishes seriously, not by blanquism, to obtain power, must first for influence within the Soviets.”

Finally Lenin writes on the 25th of April the article “Malicious Rejoicing.” In this article he says :

“*The Rabotschaja Gazeta* (“The Workers’ Journal,’ Menshevist paper) dances with malicious joy over the last resolution of the C.C. which brings to light certain differences of opinion within our Party (as a matter of fact in combination with

the already published declaration of the representatives of the Bolshevik Soviet fraction*). Let the Mensheviki dance with malicious joy."

"This does not confuse us . . . Is it in any way convincing if those who have no organisation and no Party, dance and jump with joy at the mistakes they discover in an organisation with which they are not connected. . . We have no reason to fear the truth . . . The crisis revealed very feeble attempts to take a course slightly more to the left than that of our C.C. Our C.C. did not agree to this and we do not doubt for a moment that the unity of our Party will quickly be restored, a voluntary, conscious, complete unity."

Thus Lenin was in April, (1) against those in-

* This declaration was published in the *Pravda*, No. 39, with an editorial comment. We quote it verbatim :

Comrades Langewitsch (Laschewitsch?—G.S.), Krimow and Mawrij, representatives of the Bolshevik fraction of the workers' and soldiers' soviets ask us to explain how it was possible that the great majority of the workers who took part in the demonstrations of April 20th and 21st and carried placards with the inscription "Down with the Provisional Government," interpreted this slogan exclusively as meaning that the whole power must pass into the hands of the soviets, and that the workers will only take over the power when they have gained the majority in the workers' and soldiers' soviets. The present composition of the Soviets does not give full power of expression to the will of the majority of the workers' and soldiers' Soviets.

The Bolshevik fraction is, therefore, of the opinion that the resolution of the C.C. of April 22nd does not sufficiently well characterise the situation at the present moment.

Editor's Comment (of the *Pravda*): The resolution of the C.C. was, of course, not directed against the organisers of the mass demonstrations, and naturally such an interpretation of the slogan excludes any thought of irresponsibility or adventure. In any case the said comrades, as representatives of the organisers of the demonstration should be given the greatest credit for its peaceful and impressive mass character. They alone gave the bourgeoisie, which was demonstrating for its Provisional Government, the rebuff it deserved."

dividual comrades who tended to be in too great a hurry and wanted to raise the cry "Down with the Provisional Government," before the majority of the people were firmly united; (2) against the blanquist attempts and individual action of small groups of armed people; (3) against the very feeble attempts to take a course slightly more to the left than the C.C. He stigmatises as "senseless malevolent joy" the exaggeration of these slight differences within the Party by the Mensheviki. With whom then did he have the exaggerated enigmatic—"violent disputes" about the April demonstration referred to by Comrade Trotsky? He had them—in contradiction of Trotsky's statements—not with the "right wing" of the leaders of the Party, but with a small group of Petrograd functionaries, with Comrade Bogdatjew, the secretary of the C.C. at that time. These comrades took a course slightly more to the left than the C.C., and it was precisely these who were condemned in the resolution of the C.C. and in Lenin's article, in which their action was disavowed as a blanquist attempt "to seize power" and to "arrest" the Provisional Government.

Thus Comrade Trotsky who claims to have made a "profound" analysis, has made a thorough muddle; (1) the April demonstration did not give rise to violent disputes, nor indeed to any between Lenin and other members of the C.C.; (2) Lenin was not in favour of the demonstration taking a direction more to the "left" than the line of the C.C.; (3) Lenin was not accused by the "right-wing" of blanquism in connection with the April demonstration, but it was he who, provoked by the mistakes made by a small group in the April demonstration, deprecated the blanquist tactics.

How could Comrade Trotsky make such a mistake which is true to "history"—as it appeared in the newspaper *Denj* and as written by the Menshevik Suchanov—but which contradicts the true history of our Party. This was possible for the very reason that he allows himself to be carried away by a premeditated aim through his methods of a public prosecutor in adjudging the proofs, because, instead of making an exact analysis of the differences, vacillations and faults, instead of revealing their actual limits, instead of bringing them into connection with the course of development of Lenin's line, as a digression to one side or the other, but as digressions which in spite of all the sharp differences of opinion always clung at one end to the mid-rib of Bolshevism, he tries to represent the history of Bolshevism before October as a fight between two parties within one party.

This is the reason why Comrade Trotsky, in contradiction to historic truth, had to maintain that the "arrangement of figures," in the October insurrection had been planned some months beforehand; by the "arrangement of figures" during the April campaign of Comrade Bogdatjew and the "individualist" Linde against the Maria palace. It was absolutely necessary for Comrade Trotsky to "prove" the whole "lawfulness" of the differences of opinion of October. That is why with him, "April" anticipates "October." In this mistake of Comrade Trotsky—and this is very important—all the specific features of his "research" find expression: his great lack of correct information, his intense "joy over the discomfiture of others" and the methods of campaign of an inimical "unveiler."

Let us turn now to the period September-October. In his representation of Lenin's point of view, and the point of view of the C.C. from the time of the Democratic Conference to the day of the insurrection, Comrade Trotsky "artificially" divides the disputes which took place between Lenin and the C.C. into two categories: in the first category he places those disputes in which Trotsky shared Lenin's point of view—in these cases, according to Comrade Trotsky's present representation, the C.C. diverged towards the point of view of a right wing and lapsed into Menshevism. In the second category, are placed those disputes in which Comrade Trotsky shares the point of view of the C.C., and is opposed to Lenin—in these cases Comrade Trotsky is prepared to "justify" the C.C. Thus, for instance, with regard to the protest of the Petrograd Soviets against Kerensky's command to send part of the garrison to the front, Comrade Trotsky remarks:

"Lenin, who was not in Petrograd, did not understand the full significance of this fact."

And further:

"He (Lenin) had no possibility of appreciating from his illegal hiding place that complete change which had already become evident, not only in the attitude, but also in the whole military subordination and hierarchy within the organised groups after the "silent" revolution of the garrison of the capital in the middle of October."

The artificial manœuvring with the differences of opinion between the C.C. and Lenin, through which the question is represented in such a way that the C.C. is right when it is of the same opinion as

Comrade Trotsky, and Comrade Lenin is wrong when he is not of the same opinion as Comrade Trotsky, pursues the aim of representing the C.C. of the Party as it existed before as an institution which was completely under the influence of the right-wing, and had only "accepted" the insurrection after a "persistent, indefatigable, continuous pressure" from Lenin. This is no representation but a misrepresentation of the history of October.

Of course, the "persistent, indefatigable, continuous pressure" exercised by Lenin in September-October fanned the energies of the C.C. and did not allow it to forget for a moment the duty of insurrection; he literally electrified the C.C., and the Party organisations. Thus did and thus alone Lenin work. But the C.C., as the immediate organiser of the insurrection had, in order to ensure its victory, to choose on the estimate of the situation, the form, time and place of the insurrection, without coming into conflict for a single moment with the instructions. And the participation in the Democratic Conference and in the Preliminary Parliament has, chiefly thanks to Lenin's warning against the possibility of dangerous divergences, been carried out in such a way that it did not produce those negative results which, of course, were possible and which Comrade Lenin justly feared, but made it possible for the Bolsheviks to organise the insurrection and prepare for it politically.

The historian is the very person whose duty it is now to state this calmly and dispassionately. Even though Comrade Lenin condemned the participation in the Democratic Conference and in the Preliminary

ary Parliament, he characterised the policy of the C.C. from the end of November to the day of the insurrection still more sharply with regard to the linking up of the insurrection with the summoning of a Soviet Congress, which seemed to him an unnecessary "postponement policy."*

Comrade Trotsky quotes the following remark of Lenin :

"There is in our C.C. and among the leaders of the Party"—writes Lenin on the 29th of September—"a current or opinion in favour of waiting for the Soviet Congress to take place, against the immediate seizure of power, against the immediate insurrection. This current or opinion must be combatted."

At the beginning of October, Lenin writes :

* Apropos the Democratic Conference, Comrade Lenin writes in the *Rabotschi Putj* ("The Workers' Path") of September 24th, under the title "The Heroes of Deception" as follows :

"The participation of the Bolsheviks in this despicable deception, in this farce, has the same justification as our participation in the third Duma: our cause must be defended even in the stable, material for the enlightenment of the people can be produced even out of the 'stable.'"

In a letter dated September 22nd, which, however, was obviously written later than the article, he expresses a different opinion as to the participation :

"The Democratic Conference ought to have been boycotted, we all made a mistake in not doing this, but we had no evil intention. We shall make good this mistake, if we honestly intend to take our stand for the revolutionary mass fight."

These were the two different readings. Lenin made of the participation in the Democratic Conference. This, however, does not hinder the inconsiderate writer of the remarks on Trotsky's book from making the following statement: "In the question of the participation in the Democratic Conference and of the boycott of the Preliminary Parliament, Lenin supported the boycottists in a most categorical way."

"Hesitation is a crime, waiting for the Soviet Congress is a childish playing with formality, a stupid playing with formality, treachery against the revolution." (The italics are mine—G.S.)

Lenin says in the theses for the Petrograd conference of October 8th :

"The constitutional illusions and the hopes placed in the Soviet Congress must be combatted . . ."

But what does Comrade Trotsky say about this characterisation of the preparation of the Soviet Congress? Comrade Trotsky clings with "malicious joy," to every angry remark of Lenin's against any of the Bolsheviki, if he can exaggerate it to serve the purpose of calling attention to a "Party crisis."

What value does he place on Lenin's estimate of the C.C.'s plan with which Comrade Trotsky was also in agreement? In this case Comrade Trotsky does not grab at impressive proofs that the "treachery against the revolution" and the "constitutional illusions" lead straight to bourgeois parliamentarism, etc. Comrade Trotsky is in no hurry to cling with hair-splitting arguments to the letter of Lenin's sentence and thus to represent himself as a Social Democrat.

In other cases he finds this method "superfluous." He begins with a modest remark: "All these letters, every sentence of which was hammered on the anvil of the revolution, are of extraordinary interest in characterising both Lenin and the situation." He then proves with great care that the concrete plan of insurrection of the C.C. was not at all bad. As a matter of fact, Comrade

Trotsky without doubt exaggerates when he pictures the fatal effects which might have resulted from the plan of beginning the revolution in Moscow, of which Lenin spoke. In vain, quite in vain, does Comrade Trotsky represent the matter as though Lenin by his unsuccessful plan to fix on Moscow for the beginning of the revolution, had endangered almost the whole success of the insurrection. Why? Is there any sense in imagining now how Comrade Lenin would have directed the preparations for the insurrection, if he had not had to hide from Kerensky's spies. Is there any sense in disputing about the question whether, had the revolt taken place a month earlier, it would have been successful or not?*

* Here also Comrade Trotsky gives a wrong report of Lenin's way of putting the question as to the delay of the insurrection. Comrade Trotsky writes: "In September, in the days of the Democratic Conference, Lenin demanded that the insurrection should take place at once." No, Lenin formulated his "demand" much more carefully. How does Lenin actually close his famous paragraph on the surrounding of the 'Alexandrijka,' on the occupation of the Peter Paul fortress, the arrest of the General Staff and the Government, etc., in his letter which he addressed to the C.C. in the days of the Democratic Conference. Lenin closes his "practical programme for the insurrection with the following sentence":

"All this is, of course, only an example and serves to illustrate the fact that in the present situation we cannot remain true to Marxism without regarding the insurrection as an art."

In another letter of the C.C., which dated from the same days, Lenin says quite clearly: "It is not a case of the 'day' nor of the 'moment' of the insurrection in the exact sense of the word. That can only be decided by united voice of those who are in touch with the workers and soldiers, with the masses. . . What is necessary is that the party should become clear as to the task before it: on the agenda are: the insurrection in Petrograd, in Moscow, the seizure of power, the overthrow of the Government. Consider in what way agitation should be made without expressing it openly in the Press."

Only one thing is certain : Lenin's criticism of the participation of the Bolsheviks in the Democratic Conference and the Preliminary Parliament is absolutely bound up with the plan he evolved of a revolution which was to have been carried out independently of the Soviet Congress. The tactics of the central committee towards the Democratic Conference and less towards "entering," than towards passing through the Preliminary Parliament was bound up with the plan to proclaim the Soviet power at the Soviet congress and at the same time to secure this power by an armed overthrow of the Kerenski Government. At that time Comrade Trotsky steered a middle course between these two readings of the strategy of revolution which, of course represent purely material but not fundamental contracts. Comrade Trotsky now tries to reap the harvest having steered a middle course by representing both the C.C. and Lenin in an ambiguous way. As a matter of fact, however, it was precisely the co-operation of Lenin's leadership as far as principles were concerned, with the concrete leadership of the C.C. in the preparations for the revolution and of the Petrograd and Moscow Committee which ensured the October victory, in spite of the mistakes of prominent Bolsheviks.

One more : the C.C. and Lenin were in agreement ; the hairsplitting attempts to represent them as in opposition, are ridiculous. The C.C. had no other "line" but Lenin's. It was, however, precisely this deep harmony in which the concord between Lenin and the Party was expressed, which made it possible for the C.C. to regard Lenin as not being an authority in opposition to the C.C.,

whose every "instruction" must be obeyed to the letter.

It was just on the strength of the unity and co-operation of the C.C. that Lenin's political leadership could amalgamate with the practical work of the Party. No practical unity would have been possible without this co-operation within the C.C. between Comrade Lenin and the other members of the C.C. (among them also Comrade Trotsky who at that time knew how to work as a member of a collective body).

For the sake of history and the right characterisation of the relationship between the C.C. and Lenin, it is desirable once more to describe clearly a series of "differences" between Lenin and the C.C. which existed in the period from July to October. After the July days, Lenin proposed to withdraw the slogan: "All Power to the Soviets," until power had been seized and then to create new Soviets: Lenin's proposal was not accepted in this categorical form. Kornilov's conspiracy which again made it possible for the Bolsheviki successfully to resume the work of winning over the majority of the Soviets, proves that the careful line of action taken by the C.C. to which Lenin also later on subscribed, was right. In connection with this there was still another difference of opinion: Lenin advised making the Party apparatus illegal, and making arrangements for the publication of an illegal newspaper; he did not believe it possible that the legal organ of the C.C. in Petrograd could be kept up any longer. On the other hand, the C.C. resolved to keep up the open organisations and the legal Press, combining, of course, wherever it was necessary "legality" with "conspiracy." It

was possible shortly after the June days to hold the 6th Party Session in Petrograd with a minimum of conspiratory precautions. The counter-revolution was not yet well enough organised and united to be able to suppress our Press, and organisation effectively. The organ of the C.C. was forbidden, but it soon re-appeared under another name, etc. In the days of the Kornilov adventure, Lenin wrote an article "On Compromises." The editor of the central organ was opposed to the publication of the article on the grounds that in his opinion the situation was not such as to give a motive for a "suggestion for compromise." Lenin insisted on the publication of the article—it appeared two days later in the *Rabotschi Putj*. On this occasion, right was, of course, on the side of Lenin, and not of the editor of the central organ, which wished to take a course "slightly more to the left" than Lenin.

Of what had the compromise consisted which Lenin had suggested with certain limitations? Lenin wrote :

"The compromise consisted therein that the Bolsheviki, without laying claim to participation in the Government, *refrained from demanding the immediate transference of power into the hands of the proletariat and of the poor peasantry and from the revolutionary methods of battle for enforcing this demand.* (My italics—G.S.). A condition which would have been a matter of course and by no means new to the Mensheviki and the S.R. would have been absolute right to agitate for the summoning of the Constituent Assembly without further delay or even with shortened notice."

That was Lenin's proposal. He took this tactical step on September 3rd, 1917. There is not a syllable about all this in Trotsky. Anyone, however, who wishes to give the true picture of Bolshevism before October and during the October days, cannot overlook the article "On Compromises." If this article is neglected, it is impossible to form any picture of Lenin's tactics, if it is neglected, the true character of Zinoviev's and Kamenev's vacillations and Lenin's attitude to the Party and to the vacillations of these comrades are incomprehensible. Anyone wishing for confusion rather than elucidation must indeed pass over Lenin's article "On Compromises" in silence. Unfortunately this was Comrade Trotsky's method.

These superficial remarks naturally raise no claim to throw light on the "complete picture of the October revolution." They are only intended to indicate the absolute invention of Comrade Trotsky's "Schemata" and to state the actual conditions in the Party before October as they were.

In actual practice things were quite different: Lenin manœuvred in co-operation with the Bolshevik picked troops in the extremely complicated situation which often changed quite suddenly. Both Lenin and the other comrades sometimes made mistakes, they sometimes groped their way, and acknowledged when they had been in the wrong. At sharp curves some got left behind, others went too far forward, but the front was always dressed again within a short time. No single political party could have traversed the way from February to October, without differ-

ences of opinion, deviations, mistakes. The Bolshevik Party passed along this way in much closer formation than any other Party could have done. The Party was, of course, not acting in an air-tight space, it had to resist the pressure of the middle classes. To a certain extent it had to reckon with these groups and adapt its tactics to them. It made great efforts however, to bring these groups under its leadership. When should it yield, when and how should it wait, up to what limits should concessions be made? These questions do exist, and their existence is only ignored by those who imagine that in politics as in geometry a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. Lenin, in contrast to such politicians, manœuvred, avoided many a rock, retreated—and then attacked ferociously. The differences of opinion between the Bolsheviki in 1917 can be regarded as a fight of two Parties within a Party only by anyone approaching the subject with a certain amount of prejudice. And that is only natural in such “historians” who judge the Party “from the outside.”

Were Comrade Trotsky right with regard to the differences of opinion among the Bolsheviki, had there really been two Parties within a Party, the differences of opinion would inevitably have led to a crisis within the Party, i.e., to such a crisis in which the organisations would have split up or would have separated from the C.C. But this did not happen in 1917. The difference of opinion in the spring of 1918 consequent on the Brest Peace shook the Party much more severely than the differences of opinion on October which only stirred the surface. If Com-

rade Trotsky now makes the mistakes committed by a few Bolsheviki in October, the centre-point of his "Lessons of October," he by that himself dooms his "Lessons" to be a complete failure.

What then is the "moral" which Comrade Trotsky drew from the lessons of October? Oh, he formed no conclusions! Why? Because these conclusions are of such a nature that it would be unpleasant to the author himself to express them. Therefore everything culminates in insinuations as to the necessity of a "leadership of such a nature, that it does not "run off the rails," further in an intensified attack with "poisoned gas" on the present leadership of the Party from the cover of the white flag of the "Lessons of October." This, however, is no new doctrine, it is only "a repetition of what has already been learned," a repetition of what we learned from last year's "discussion." And as these lessons are still fresh in the memory of every comrade, and no one has any desire to con these well learned lessons over again, Comrade Trotsky gives himself up in vain to that "unknown power" which drives him again and again to the "dreary coasts" of the currents of discussion.

A MISLEADING DESCRIPTION OF THE "GERMAN OCTOBER."

BY O. W. KUUSINEN

"During the second half of last year we had here (in Germany) a classic demonstration of how the opportunity of a uniquely revolutionary situation of world historical significance may be missed." (Trotsky, September, 1924, in his "Lessons of October.")

"If the (German) Party had proclaimed insurrection in October last year, as proposed by the Berlin comrades, it would now be lying prone with a broken neck." (From the draft of theses, by Trotsky and Radek, January, 1924.)

Both in September, 1923 and in January, 1924, I had much opportunity, in my capacity as secretary, to take part in the commissions on the German question appointed by the Executive of the Comintern; I am thus not only familiar with the standpoint of the Executive as a whole, but also with a standpoint of the separation leading comrades with regard to the events in Germany in October. I was thus exceedingly astonished to see the light in which these events are viewed by Trotsky in the preface to his book "1917" ("The Lessons of October"). I was much surprised that such recent events—events really not lying in any remote past can be so misrepresented. As the facts are not yet generally known, we must oppose Comrade Trotsky's description by a statement of the actual position.

The Accusation.

Comrade Trotsky devotes his "Lessons of October" to the exposition and delineation of the following theme: The experiences of the Russian

October and the experiences of many European countries, especially the experience—as he expresses it “of the German October which did not take place,” all go to show one and the same thing. In Germany, authoritative comrades in our own ranks opposed the insurrection at the decisive moment. In Russia, thanks to the pressure exercised by Comrade Lenin, and thanks to the cooperation of Comrade Trotsky, the insurrection was set in action and the victory won. But in the “German October” the insurrection was not begun, although in Comrade’s Trotsky’s opinion “every pre-requisite for revolution was given, with the exception of far-seeing and energetic leaders.”

The existence of this revolutionary situation was not recognised in time, and no comrade arose and put pressure upon the Central, striving to prevent the insurrection. For this reason we had neither insurrection nor seizure of power. The German October did not take place, we gained nothing more than a “classic example of how the opportunity of a uniquely revolutionary situation of world historical significance may be missed.”

This drama of the German October was played for Comrade Trotsky against the background of the history of the Russian October. He describes in detail the energy with which he himself took action in 1917, and in even greater detail the manner in which various other comrades attempted to “retreat before the battle.” These comrades—“opponents of the insurrection”—had extraordinarily overestimated the forces of the enemy only two weeks before the bloodless victory of the Bolsheviks in Petrograd (“even Lenin was of the opinion that the enemy had still considerable

forces in Petrograd"). According to Comrade Trotsky, the leaders of the German C.P. committed this same error of over-estimating the forces of our adversaries in October last year.

"They confidently accepted all figures calculated by the bourgeoisie as to their armed forces, added these carefully to the forces of the police and militia, then rounded up the result to half a million and more, and thus assumed a compact force, armed to the teeth, and fully able to paralyse their endeavours. It is an incontestable fact that the German counter-revolution possessed forces which were better organised and better trained than the whole and half elements of the Kornilov forces. But the active forces of the German revolution were again different from ours. In Germany the proletariat represents the overwhelming majority of the population. In our case the revolutionary question was decided, at least, at first, by Petrograd and Moscow. In Germany the insurrection would have had ten mighty strongholds at once. If we take all this into consideration, then the armed forces of the enemy were in reality by no means so dangerous as represented by the statistical calculation, with figures rounded up to numbers beyond the truth." ("Lessons of October," Russian edition, p. 11.)

This is the only place in which Comrade Trotsky mentions any difference in the objective premises of the Russian and German Octobers. According to his description, the conditions for the seizure of power in 1923 in Germany were not in the least less favourable than in Russia in 1917.

"It is not possible to imagine conditions more

favourable, or more suitable and matured for the seizure of power."

He does not make the very slightest mention, not even a superficial indication of any reasons, however insignificant, which might justify the retreat at the time of the "German October." No, no, in his opinion the insurrection was the unconditional duty of the Party at this juncture. To him it is a misfortune that during the "German October" the opponents of the insurrection were able to "drag the Party back."

Thus (according to Comrade Trotsky) the German revolution fell through. After this defeat the guilty comrades came forward with their "biassed calculations," for the purpose of "justifying the policy which had led to defeat." And Comrade Trotsky adds:

"It is easy to imagine how history would have been written if those comrades in the C.C. (of the Russian C.P.) who inclined in 1917 to the tactics of retreat before the battle, had had their way. The semi-official writers of history would have had no difficulty in maintaining that an insurrection in the year 1917 would have been utter nonsense." (p. 41.)

Thanks to Comrade Trotsky's dramatic art, his representation of the German October conjures up the figure of the one chiefly guilty of the German defeat. It is true that Comrade Trotsky does not give his name, but his figure is easily recognisable among the others. Everything that is said of him shows plainly that the figure is not that of a German; the unnamed German accused take a secondary place. The chief of the accused is obviously responsible for the appearance of the Germans in the dock at all.

Why did he not appoint better leaders in the Central of the German Party? Why did he not exercise proper pressure on the German leaders? This was his first duty. . .

Or, was anything else to be expected of him after the "experiences of October?" What more was to be expected of him in the future?

"Of late"—writes Trotsky—"much has been written and spoken about the necessity of "Bolshevising" the Comintern. . . What does the Bolshevising of the Communist Parties mean? It means that these parties are to be so schooled, and their leaders so chosen, that they do not leave the track when their October arrives. This is the true import of Hegel, and of all the wisdom of our books and philosophies." (p. 64.)

Thus Comrade Trotsky in September, 1924.

Two Different Roles.

Comrade Trotsky spoke differently to this in January, 1924.

At that time the Executive of the Comintern, with the collaboration of leading German comrades representing all three tendencies, had drawn the balance of the unhappy German revolution. It is true that Comrade Trotsky did not participate personally in these sessions, but Comrade Radek submitted theses drafted, according to his official declaration, "by Comrades Trotsky and Piatakov, and by me (Radek)."

This thesis draft from the Right minority was rejected by the Executive of the Comintern, and has not been published to this day. In one part of these theses we read :

“The Executive decidedly rejects the demand made by the leaders of the Berlin organisation, to the effect that the retreat made by the Party in October is to be regarded as unjustified and even traitorous. If the Party had proclaimed the insurrection in October, as proposed by the Berlin comrades, it would now be lying prone with a broken neck. The Party committed grave errors during the retreat, and these errors are the object of our present criticism. But the retreat itself corresponded to the objective situation, and is approved by the Executive.”

We thus see that in January of this year, Comrade Trotsky was seriously of the opinion that the retreat was right during the German October, and was in accordance with the objective situation. The leaders of the Berlin organisation considered this retreat “entirely unjustified and even traitorous.” But Comrade Trotsky protested most decidedly against this view of the matter. He demanded together with Radek, Piatakov and the chairman of the German Party Central, Brandler, that the Executive should approve the retreat.

How are we to understand this?

In order to understand this, the reader must know that the tactics of “retreat before the battle,” proposed by the right wing of the Central of the German C.P. in October, 1923, were adopted with the immediate co-operation of Comrade Radek. In all essentials Comrade Trotsky has always been in agreement with this right-wing of the German C.P. (Brandler, etc.); and this was again the case in January after the defeat.

“The experience gained in the European struggles during the last few years, and especially the experience of the German struggle, show us that there are two types of leader who have the tendency to drag the Party back just at the moment when it should leap forward.” (p. 14.)

Comrade Trotsky writes this in September in his book, “The Lessons of October.” He stigmatises these “types” most thoroughly, and declares further.

“At decisive moments these two types work hand in hand, and oppose insurrection.” (p. 64.)

In October, 1923, this was really the case in Germany. And three months later—in January—Trotsky expresses the opinion that these “types” had acted perfectly rightly in Germany, that they had taken the course of action which had to be taken, that the objective situation demanded precisely this course of action, and that the Party was bound to make this retreat. An insurrection would have been utter nonsense, and the Party would have broken its neck.

The “types” thus accused naturally submitted their “biassed calculation” to the Executive in January “for the purpose of justifying the policy leading to the defeat.” The Executive rejected these calculations decisively enough. But Comrade Trotsky defended them.

Such was his lack of “boldness,” just three months after the German October.

In spite of the “Lessons of October.”

And in spite of the main rule for all the revolutions in the world: “Not to leave the track when their own October comes.”

This was in January of this year. But by September, as we have seen, Comrade Trotsky had assumed quite another role. We do not hear a single word about the justification of the retreat, nor is there a trace to be found of the "types." No, now Comrade Trotsky appeals for the insurrection, and condemns those opposed to it.

"The decisive turning point is the moment when the Party of the proletariat passes from the stage of preparation, propaganda, organisation and agitation, to the stage of actual struggle for power, to armed insurrection against the bourgeoisie. Every irresolute, sceptical, opportunist, and pro-capitalist element still remaining in the Party will oppose insurrection at this moment, will seek theoretical formulas for this opposition, and find them among the opponents of the day before, the opportunists." (p. ixiv.)

Thus : Down with the opportunists ! Down with the heroes of capitulation ! Down with Brandler and the sharers of his views !

A thousand times : Hurrah for insurrection !

But—as someone among the audience might ask diffidently—what about the broken neck ?

We have here two distinct views of the German October. Which of them corresponds to the actual truth ?

In my opinion, neither of them. Both are wrong.

Correct and Timely Estimate of the Situation.

In an article written by Comrade Trotsky in May ("East and West") and referred to in the "Lessons of October" (p. 69), he states that "some

comrades" (here Comrade Zineviev is chiefly meant) had declared, after the German defeat: "We have over-estimated the situation, the revolution is not yet mature." Comrade Trotsky is ironical about this "we" (we, Zinoviev), and declares:

"'Our' error did not lie in the fact that 'we' over-estimated the pre-requisites of revolution, but in that 'we' under-estimated them, and did not recognise at the right moment the necessity of the application of energetic and courageous tactics: the necessity for the struggle to gain the masses for the fight for power."

What do the facts tell us?

Even in the theses drawn up by Comrades Trotsky and Radek in January, 1924, the following is acknowledged:

"From the very beginning the Comintern and the German C.P. regarded the Ruhr struggles as a period of revolutionary development in Germany." . . . "The appeal issued by the Leipsic Party Conference of the German C.P., the decisions of the Frankfort Conference, the resolution passed by the delegation of the German C.P. in the spring conference with the Comintern, all go to prove that both the German C.P. and the Comintern have grasped the fact that the German proletariat stands at a parting of the ways, that, after the Party has carried out its united front tactics, after it has accomplished much patient work among the Social-Democratic masses and among the non-partisan workers, and after it has gathered around it broad masses of the proletariat, it will find itself confronted by the task of not merely winning over the overwhelming majority of the proletariat, but of leading the proletariat into battle as a revolutionary

Party working for the concrete aim of seizing political power, and regarding this as the sole means of escape from the situation in which the German people is placed."

These lines are an excellent characterisation of the view-point of the Executive. But it is above all the viewpoint represented by Comrade Zinoviev's proposals. But as to the viewpoint of the German C.P., this is somewhat embellished by Comrades Radek and Trotsky. At that time, during the autumn and winter of 1923, the Central had but a very dim idea of the revolutionary tasks facing the Party.

There was a great deal more clarity contained in various propositions made by the left opposition, but these were rejected by the Party.

If Comrade Trotsky had been desirous of describing the matter in strict accordance with actuality, he would have had to express himself somewhat as follows: With reference to the Executive and the Left opposition, these should least of all be exposed to the reproach of not having recognised the necessity for an energetic change of tactics, since they did actually recognise this necessity and exercised pressure upon the German C.P.

Yes, Comrade Trotsky may reply, but the pressure exercised by the Executive upon the German Party at that time was not "strong enough." The January theses drawn up by Comrades Trotsky and Radek did actually contain this reproach. But they should have made their reproach "at the right time," in the summer or autumn of 1923. If they had done so, it is possible that the Executive would have followed their advice and increased pressure. But three months after October, in January,

1924, this wise discovery was a very cheap and entirely useless argument.

The second point of the January theses of Comrades Trotsky and Radek, subjected to the criticism of the Comintern, is to be taken more seriously. They assert that the questions relating to the Ruhr struggle were discussed, even in the Enlarged Executive (middle of June, 1923) "much more from the standpoint of propaganda than from the standpoint of organisation for an immediate struggle."

The task of organising the immediate struggle with the object of seizing power had not been concretely formulated, it is true, by June. The Executive did not adopt the "October course" until August, two months later.

In June the situation in Germany was still such that no person of any commonsense could have thought of regarding the organisation of armed insurrection as the next task. Before such an important step as this can be taken, the existence of symptomatic phenomena proclaiming the rise of a wave of revolution, in however slight degree, is an absolutely imperative preliminary condition. In June no such symptoms were observable.

At the beginning of August an abrupt change took place in Germany. The general situation became revolutionary. Of this we have proof in the mighty mass movement leading to the overthrow of the Cuno government. Had the German C.P. foreseen this movement, it should have entered courageously into the struggle in July, and have taken over the initiative and leadership of the movement. As a matter of fact, the German Central issued a courageous proclamation on 12th July, calling upon the proletariat to take part in street demonstrations on Anti-Fascist Day (29th July).

The government prohibited this demonstration. The Left opposition of the Party demanded "the conquest of the street."

At this time Comrades Zinoviev and Bucharin, as also Comrade Trotsky, were in Caucasia. The first two informed us, during the discussion already begun on the subject, that they were in favour of the street demonstration. Comrade Radek and I, who were in Moscow, were opposed to it. To us it appeared to be running a useless risk. Comrade Radek, who often evinces a high degree of sensitiveness for changes in the political atmosphere, did not on this occasion feel the approach of something great (nor did I), and, therefore, we could not see any valid reason for such hazardous action on the part of the German C.P. This was a mistake on our part. The view taken by Comrades Zinoviev and Bucharin was expressed in the following words :

"It is only by such methods as the appeal issued on 12th July that the German C.P. can become, in the eyes of the whole of the workers, the generally acknowledged champion and the united centre of the whole proletariat in the struggle against Fascism. Without this, the sad experience suffered by Italy and Bulgaria will be repeated. In the German Central there are more than enough retarding elements, and elements standing for prudence and caution."

To this Radek replied that he regarded this forcing of the struggle in Germany as "steering towards a defeat in July for fear of a repetition of the Bulgarian events" and opposed these tactics most decidedly. Comrade Trotsky, however, informed us that he had formed no opinion of his own upon the subject, not being sufficiently informed.

The two points of view which had thus been formed among the members of the Executive were communicated to the Central of the C.P. of Germany. In all probability Comrade Brandler acted entirely independently of both points of view; in other words, he had probably never taken the idea of a street demonstration seriously for a moment.

Immediately after this, the broad mass movement set in. Under the pressure of this movement, the Cuno government resigned on 12th August. Comrade Zinoviev, in Caucasia, received only the scanty information provided by the Rosta on this movement; a mighty revolutionary wave is rising.

He raised the alarm.

By 15th August his most important theses: "The situation in Germany and our first tasks" were already prepared. He has scarcely ever written anything better than this. A clearly defined October course runs like a scarlet thread through the whole.

After we had received these theses from Zinoviev from Caucasia, we—Radek and I—realised that in Germany the revolution was knocking at the door. This is the fact of the matter.

The following are a few sentences from the theses:

"The crisis is approaching, decisive events are at the gate. A new and decisive chapter is beginning in the activity of the German C.P., and with this in the whole Comintern. The C.P. of Germany shapes its course rapidly and decisively in view of the impending decisive revolutionary crisis.

"The crisis is approaching. Enormous interests are at stake. The moment is coming nearer and

nearer in which we shall need courage, courage, and again courage."

Almost at the same time as we received these theses, Comrades Zinoviev and Bucharin arrived at Moscow. Comrade Trotsky, too, came back. Zinoviev's theses were acknowledged to be right, and were accepted by the Executive. The representatives of the C.P. of Germany were at once invited to come to Moscow, but the Central replied that its representatives "could not come at present." Although the *bel-esprits* among the German comrades (not the Left, these had already ceased to be *bel-esprits*) were already up to the ears in the revolutionary movement, they had no clear idea of the significance and graveness of the movement.

This circumstance is the best proof of the acumen with which Comrade Zinoviev grasped the import of the German movement. But Comrade Trotsky appears to have forgotten Zinoviev's estimate of the situation, though made "at the right time."

In the September Commission.

Comrade Zinoviev defended his standpoint for three weeks. The representatives of the Central of the German C.P. did not appear in Moscow till the middle of September. They had no choice but to acknowledge that the latest events had fully confirmed the diagnosis and revolutionary prognosis made by Zinoviev a month before, although they themselves, the representatives of the German Central, had not grasped this immediately.

Comrade Brandler succumbed to fantastic revolutionary visions. The seizure of power now appeared to him as an easy and certain matter. He greatly exaggerated the readiness to fight and the military

preparedness of the German C.P., and rendered it more difficult for the Executive to form a correct idea of the immediate difficulties and requirements of the German movement.

At the September Commission of the Comintern Comrade Trotsky declared himself to be in agreement with Comrade Zinoviev and other comrades with reference to the general estimate of the situation. But in the question of the workers' Soviets slogan there was a grave difference of opinion. Comrade Zinoviev and other comrades considered it necessary for the German C.P. not to limit itself to the propaganda of the idea of the Soviets only, but to proceed to the actual formation of workers' councils, especially in districts where the conditions were most favourable for this.

Comrades Trotsky and Brandler protested energetically against this. As the other German comrades shared their opinion, Comrade Zinoviev and the others in agreement with him did not deem it possible to insist upon the acceptance of their propositions at all costs. The final decision on this question was thus unanimously accepted by the Commission.

I am not of the opinion that this decision proved to be right. I believe that a most important slogan for the mobilisation and organisation of revolutionary forces was here abandoned. Comrade Trotsky in his "Lessons of October" seeks to defend this decision. To me his defence is inadequate, but I think it unnecessary to dwell upon this vexed question within the confines of this article, as such discussion would lead to too many side-tracks. With regard to this point the decision was based upon Comrade Trotsky's standpoint and not on Comrade Zinoviev's. The articles written by Comrade

Zinoviev at the time show plainly that he submitted loyally to the decision and wrote accordingly. No person of sound commonsense can thus maintain that Comrade Zinoviev's proposition could have contributed even in the slightest degree to the defeat of the German revolution.

But enough of that!

An exceedingly strange and unsubstantiated accusation against Comrade Zinoviev is contained in the following words of Comrade Trotsky's :

"Our error lies in the fact that 'we' kept on repeating for weeks the old platitudes about the impossibility of 'fixing a definite time for the revolution,' resulting in every chance being neglected." ("East and West," p. 59.)

Where was the question discussed "for weeks"?

In the Commission there was not one single day wasted in the discussion of the question of whether it would be possible to fix a certain time for the revolution or not. It is true that, in the course of the debate on questions of greater importance, a similar point was touched upon. The one-sided inclination shown by Comrade Trotsky to carry out the revolution strictly according to the almanac appeared to almost all the comrades present as a narrowly organisatory and somewhat un-Marxist manner of dealing with the subject. It is very possible that some comrade expressed this opinion aloud.

Serious differences of opinion arose in the Commission with reference to the "choice of leading persons." Not that Comrade Trotsky was anxious to remove any of the opportunist members of the Central. No, he had nothing to say against those members of the Central who, later on in October,

retreated before the battle. On the contrary, he wanted to remove from the Central one of the leading forces of the left-wing, Comrade Ruth Fischer. He proposed that the Executive of the Comintern should retain her in Moscow, so that she could not "disturb" the revolutionary work of the Brandler Central Committee.

Comrade Zinoviev was entirely opposed to this proposal of Comrade Trotsky's, and it was with much pains and trouble that he finally succeeded in gaining a weak majority in the Commission for the rejection of this proposition.

I cannot remember for which of the two propositions I voted. It is very possible that I voted for Comrade Trotsky's motion. At that time I still regarded Comrade Brandler as a steadfast revolutionist. I have no right, personally, to reproach any other comrades for having made mistakes in the question of the selection of members of the German Central. But as Comrade Trotsky is anxious to impart instructions to the Executive on the "choice of leading persons," without saying a single word about his own errors, then I cannot but observe that in this respect Comrade Trotsky has not set us any very good example.

It is possible to agree with him when he says, referring to the German Central:

"To ignore such lessons (as that of last year—O.K.), and to fail to draw from them the necessary conclusions with regard to the choice of persons signifies to invite inevitable defeat." (p. lxiii.)

But here it must not be forgotten to add the really instructive episode of Ruth Fischer, in the September Commission.

No differences of opinion arose in the Commission on the other questions submitted, many of them of great practical importance.

The sister Parties of the most important neighbouring countries were mobilised by the Executive and prepared, as far as possible, for the possibilities of the German revolution.

The German October as it was in Reality.

Events in Germany took a different course to that desired by us. The revolutionary proletariat suffered a severe defeat. The causes of this defeat lay partly in the objective difficulties of the situation, partly in the deficient leadership of the Party.

It cannot be maintained that the estimate of the situation as made by the Executive in August and September, was wrong in any essential. Nothing of the kind! The possibility of victory really existed. It is true that in September (but not in August) this possibility was over-estimated. The elementary mass movement ebbed more rapidly than we had foreseen. The Social-Democrats proved in many respects to be even stronger pillars of capitalism than we had concluded from the words of our German comrades. The representatives of the German C.P. in the German commission exaggerated the Communist strength.

It is naturally a fantastic exaggeration when Comrade Trotsky writes in "East and West" (p. 120):

"With regard to all the pre-requisites of revolution, we were in the most favourable position that can be imagined."

No, in September our estimate of the situation was not so exaggeratedly favourable. Comrade

Trotsky, in his victorious self-confidence, omits to consider the great difference between the objective pre-requisites of the German revolution of 1923 and the Russian of 1917, and forgets the points in which the Russian revolution was more favourably placed, for instance the fact that in Russia we had an armed army of many millions, the overwhelming majority of which stood for the proletarian revolution in the autumn of 1917. We had nothing to compare with this in Germany in 1923, and Comrade Trotsky, when writing history, omits such trifles.

The general situation in Germany was, however, not unfavourable. At the Fifth Congress, after it was possible to form a clear idea of events, Comrade Zinoviev was quite right in saying :

“Should the revolutionary situation of October, 1923 be repeated, we should again insist upon the open acknowledgment of the fact that the revolution is knocking at the door. . . I repeat, should such a situation occur again, then we shall examine the figures, calculate our forces more accurately, but again stake everything upon the card of revolution.”

The actually existing possibility of victory was not taken advantage of by the German Party in October. The Party equipped itself for the battle, but did not enter into it. This was the greatest disappointment to us.

The Brandler Central is chiefly to blame. Brandler maintained that the incredible diffi-

culties rendered the retreat inevitable. As we have seen, Comrade Trotsky agreed with this assertion by January. And a number of other comrades, including Comrade Zinoviev (and the writer of these lines) were at first—in November and December—of the same opinion, as a result of the information received chiefly through Radek and the Central of the German C.P. This opinion was partially shaken during the January conference, thanks to the information received from the Left. The Executive was not able to state with certainty in its resolution, whether the retreat had really been unavoidable or not. The Executive declined to accede to the demand of the Right (Radek, Trotsky, Brandler, etc.) and to “approve” the retreat.

But this or that solution of this historical question was no longer of any actual political significance. The leaders of the Party, apart from this or that answer to this question, exposed themselves to the severest criticism in October. The necessity of the retreat itself, had it really been a necessity, could not serve as justification for the utter incompetence evinced by the Central of the German C.P.

In class warfare, as in all warfare, the conditions determine the forms and aims of the strategy employed. Attacks and retreats are decided by the conditions of the struggle. But whatever these conditions, and however unfavourable they may be, they can never be such as to justify passivity in a revolution. Capitulation is not a form of fighting. It is a renunciation of the fight.

Comrade Zinoviev's speech at the Fifth World Congress contained the following words :

“We do not reproach Brandler for not having won a victory. No. We are fully aware that defeats are often met with in war. We reproach him with something quite different : we do not ask him : why are you not victorious : we ask him : why did you not fight, why did you not do your utmost to gain the victory?”

The Central of the German C.P. did not fight, it capitulated without fighting.

It need not be said that Brandler's actions were not based on any conscious, that is, treacherous reasoning. No; if Comrade Trotsky's present assertions (with regard to the alleged brilliant prospects of victory and the absolute impossibility of allowing the retreat) were really in accordance with the facts, then we could only conclude that Brandler and all his co-workers were traitors. But in reality this is not the case. Brandler and his adherents are incontestably Communists, but they are Communists who have committed a number of opportunist errors. They wanted to fight, but went “off the tracks.” In Saxony, they played at being ministers, instead of bringing the masses into the streets. They “prepared themselves” for revolution, but did nothing to develop the revolutionary forces of the masses. They even issued directions that all mass action should be abstained from until the “decisive struggle.” These directions were carried out everywhere, with the exception of Hamburg. And this was all. The fears and warnings expressed by Comrade Zinoviev in summer last year with respect to the possibility of a repetition of the Bulgarian events in Germany, were thus substantiated. In his August theses he gave a

special warning against precisely the mistake which had such disastrous results in October.

“It is impossible to save up powder until the decisive moment.

“It would be doctrinary theory, and a gigantic political error to postpone all action until the decisive struggle.”

But the German Central took precisely the wrong road. It committed precisely the “gigantic political error” against which the Executive had issued an equivocal and decided warning.

When the Left Hand does not Know what the Right is Doing.

It is scarcely necessary to state that after the October experience fundamental changes took place in the Central of the German C.P. In January the Executive undertook an energetic renewal of this Central. The right-wing was removed.

Later, in May, Comrade Trotsky wrote :

“It is proper that the German C.P. has fundamentally reformed its leading organ.”

We take note of this delayed acknowledgment. But it would have been better if Comrade Trotsky had lent his support to this reform earlier, in January. But at that time he was opposed to it. In the draft of theses by Comrades Trotsky and Radek, already referred to, we read that the “demand for a reform in the Central implies a panic, threatening the very existence of the Party.”

Comrade Trotsky thus supported the German Right until the last minute, whilst the Executive, and above all Comrade Zinoviev, combated the Right. We had a similar example in the September Commission in the Ruth Fischer case.

But the readers of the "Lessons of October" receive an exactly contrary impression. Thus, for instance, Comrade Trotsky writes as follows with reference to the importance of the "choice of leading persons" :

"Here ample experience was gained through that German October which failed to take place. The choice of leaders must be made from the viewpoint of revolutionary action. In Germany there were sufficient opportunities of testing the leading Party members in moments of immediate struggle." (p. lxiii.)

This is true, and it is just for this reason that Right leaders have frequently been excluded from the German Central (Levi, Friesland, Geyer, etc.) These have later proved to be renegades. On the other hand, the Executive has frequently supplemented the Party Central by representatives of the Left. But this has not been done on any single occasion on the initiative of Comrade Trotsky. The initiative has generally been Comrade Zinoviev's, and has generally encountered resistance on the part of Comrade Trotsky.

This is no accidental phenomenon. When the Russian debate has been discussed in the sections of the Comintern, the few adherents of Comrade Trotsky have generally belonged to the extreme

Right-wing of the Party. And this cannot be regarded as pure accident.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the Russian questions, or on the international questions now belonging more to the past. It is, however, worth while to devote some attention to the prospects of the international situation as seen by Comrade Trotsky. In face of all the facts of the present moment, of all the proofs to the contrary, he still speaks of a continued democratic pacifist "era." This proves the strength of his trend towards the Right.

But this is not the whole truth. No one can understand Trotsky who sees in him nothing more than an ordinary opportunist. Comrade Trotsky is not a one-handed man. He has a right hand and a left hand. We already had the opportunity of seeing him in two roles in his interpretation of the "German October."

And with Comrade Trotsky this does not happen by accident: it is a general rule. In actual practice he always represents two different "types" so to speak. One type deviates to the right, the other to the left. A superficial observer might conclude that Comrade Trotsky vacillates constantly between the two types. But this only appears to be the case. Comrade Trotsky is not a vacillating man. He generally adopts a definite—but wrong—course.

In reality the case is this: In his actions he deviates towards the Right, but he describes these actions in Left, very Left, terms. The Right type is the type of the man of action who speaks little, who does his work and says nothing about it. The Left type is a man anxious to play a prominent

public role, a man who talks a great deal and does very little, and knows little about work except to describe it. But the descriptions given by the Left type differ entirely from the work actually done by the Right type.

Comrade Trotsky is not simply an ordinary opportunist. He possesses a finely developed sense of the æsthetic. He feels the æsthetic defects of the external form of opportunist policy. The external forms of politics please him more and more in proportion to their deviation to the Left. In art this may be very good, even excellent, and the Bible praises those whose right hand knoweth not what their left hand doeth; but in politics every inconsistency between form and contents, between description and actuality, between theory and practice, is invariably detrimental.

This is most clearly evidenced by the question of the German October. Comrade Trotsky, in his "Lessons of October" states that nobody "has attempted to give any other argumentation" of the events in Germany than the argumentation afforded by his May article and his speech of June.

Pardon me, Comrade Trotsky, but this is an error. The Comintern made the attempt. The German C.P. made it also. A number of articles were published. The attempt led to the holding of a number of speeches and the passing of a number of resolutions in various countries. The E.C.C.I. even published a number of pamphlets on the subject: "The Lessons of the German Events."

It is to be regretted that Comrade Trotsky did not take the trouble to acquaint himself with at

least a part of these works and with the ample supply of facts and material which they afford, before he built up his new scheme. Had he done this, he would not have so misrepresented matters. By May he had entirely forgotten the actuality of the past year (and even of January, 1924). It would seem that the comparatively advantageous results of the election had the effect of making him regard the situation of the year before as having been most favourable. And he entirely reversed the direction taken by his imagination.

Trotsky is, however, no master of the tactical and strategic mathematics of Leninism. Here it is the C.C. of the Russian C.P. which is seated firmly in the saddle, and not he. Frequently he views a situation with amazing onesidedness. In politics he often permits himself to be influenced by feelings or is led astray from the straight path by externals. by personal antipathy or sympathy for instance. This was never the case with Lenin, and should never occur in any member of Lenin's Party.

Thus he permitted himself to be led astray by the criticism of the October defeat, and made use of this defeat as the basis for a charge against the chairman of the Comintern.

This is the evil tendency of his interpretation of historical events. He himself denies that he possesses any such tendency, but it is perfectly obvious to others. All this is not particularly "æsthetic." Trotsky himself says: "this would be too lamentable." Yes, it is lamentable and false.

This tendency of Trotsky's is not only directed against certain persons, but involves a politically

detrimental trend towards the Right. In attacking the person of Comrade Zinoviev, he strikes an indirect blow against the leadership of the Communist International and against the line taken by its Executive. This flank attack is condemned in advance to utter defeat. The line pursued by the Executive was and is right. The course pursued by Comrade Trotsky was and is such that events prove him to have no right to assume the role of infallible judge.

Two Words about the Civil War in Finland.

In conclusion, a few words about the lessons taught by events in Finland. In Comrade Trotsky's preface we find the following :

"In the year 1917, the course of events in Finland was as follows: The revolutionary movement developed under exceedingly favourable conditions, under the protection and with the immediate military support of revolutionary Russia. But in the Finnish Party the majority of the leaders proved to be Social-Democrats, and these led the revolution to defeat." (p. xl.)

This is not entirely correct.

It is true that in 1917 we in Finland actually missed an opportunity offered by the favourable revolutionary situation during the general strike, in the first place because we were Social-Democrats at that time, and in the second place because we were almost entirely without weapons. It is, however, not true that at that time our revolution had the protection and immediate military support of revolutionary Russia. Our general strike took place at exactly the same time as the street fighting in

Moscow for the seizure of power. At that time red Petrograd was not in a position to afford us any help. As to the garrisons and fleets still in Finland at that time, the men were partly on our side, but so sick of war that we could not expect them—especially in a foreign country—to come to our help.

Trotsky might say to us: "You have gone off the rails," and we should not protest against this judgment. We said this ourselves in 1918, by which time we were able to subject ourselves to a severe self-criticism.

But we learnt something from the experience, and that with considerable rapidity. Two months later we took up the fight again.

This time we were able to claim the protection and military support of revolutionary Russia. But in March the Finnish White Guards were reinforced by German soldiery, and this decided the fate of the conflict. Our workers' front could not hold out against regular German troops.

This was the main cause of our defeat.

No doubt there was a second cause as well: that we did not fight so well as we might have fought. But at that time we were not Communists, but Social-Democrats, and we were almost entirely lacking in Bolshevist experience. But whether our Party fought well or badly, at least it *fought*.

Thus the German comrades need not take it as a self-praise on our part if I have blamed them for capitulating without a struggle six years after the Russian revolution, and after the experience won during four years of Bolshevist leadership in the Comintern.

We Finnish Communists have no reason to praise ourselves, but we have as little reason to fear the smoke from the powder of October.

I forgot to mention a third cause of the defeat of our revolution in 1918: this was the well known theatrical gesture made by Comrade Trotsky at the first Peace negotiations with the representatives of the German Government at Brest-Litovsk (January/February). The peace conditions proposed at that time by the German government were much more favourable than those dictated later, both for Soviet Russia and for the Finnish workers' government. Before Comrade Trotsky left for Brest-Litovsk for the last time (at the end of January), Comrade Lenin told him that he should sign the peace treaty at once on receipt of the German ultimatum. Comrade Zinoviev, as Comrade Trotsky himself testifies, declared that "we only worsen the peace conditions by further delay, and must, therefore, sign at once." (Minutes of the Seventh Party Conference, p. 79.)

Had peace come about between Germany and Russia at that time, then it is highly probable that the German government would have sent no troops to Finland. This conclusion of ours is based upon the memoirs of German generals, published after the war.

But on 10th February, Comrade Trotsky refused to accept the conditions of peace offered by the Germans. A valuable month passed before the peace treaty was accepted, and during this time Soviet Russia was obliged to abandon Reval and other cities at our (Finland's) back to the Germans. And during the same time the German troops struck their blow at us.

THE LESSONS OF OCTOBER.

By N. KRUPSKAYA.

Two years ago, Vladimir Ilyitch, speaking at a plenary meeting of the Moscow Soviet, said that now we were treading the path of practical work, that we were no longer treating Socialism as an ikon merely to be described in glowing colours. "We must take the right road," he said, "it is necessary to submit everything to the test; the masses and the whole population must test our methods, and say: 'Yes, this order of things is better than the old one.' " This is the task which we have set ourselves.

Our Party, a small group in comparison to the total population, took up this task. This small group undertook to change everything, and it did change everything. That this is no Utopia, but a reality in which we live, has been demonstrated. We have all seen that it has been done. We had to do it in such a way that the great majority of working proletarians and peasants had to admit: "It is not you who praise yourselves, but we who praise you. We tell you that you have attained so much better results that no reasonable human being would ever think of returning to the old order."

The Party works continually and unwearyingly. In 1924 the fact of the Lenin Recruitment showed us that the working masses regard the C.P. as their Party. This is an important point. This is a real and permanent achievement, and in itself no small praise. Out in the country we are praised already for many things, though these things are as yet but little. Our Party devotes

much attention to the peasantry, and not only to the whole peasantry, but to the poorer and middle strata. The Party is working for the improvement of the subordinate Soviet apparatus; it aids the village nuclei in their work, and hopes to attain much. The Party accomplishes a large amount of practical work of every description, comprising an enormous field of activity, and guides the carriage of history along the road pointed out by Lenin.

The Party has devoted itself seriously to the accomplishment of practical work. Under our conditions this is an extremely difficult task, and for this reason the Party is so hostile to any discussion. For this reason Comrade Trotsky's speech on the last barricade seemed so strange to the Thirteenth Party Conference. And for this reason great indignation has been aroused by Comrade Trotsky's latest "literary" efforts.

I do not know whether Comrade Trotsky has actually committed all the deadly sins of which he is accused—the exaggerations of controversy are inevitable. Comrade Trotsky need not complain about this. He did not come into the world yesterday, and he knows that an article written in the tone of the "Lessons of October" is bound to call forth the same tone in the ensuing controversy. But this is not the question. The question is that Comrade Trotsky calls upon us to study the "Lessons of October," but does not lay down the right lines for this study. He proposes that we study the role played by this or that person in October, the role played by this or that tendency in the Central Committee, etc. But this is what we must not study.

The first thing which we must study is the international situation as it existed in October, and the relations of class forces in Russian at that time.

Does Comrade Trotsky call upon us to study this? No. And yet the victory would have been impossible without a profound analysis of the historical moment, without a calculation of the actual relations of forces. The application of the revolutionary dialectics of Marxism to the concrete conditions of a given moment, the correct estimation of this moment, not only from the standpoint of the given country, but on an international scale, is the most important feature of Leninism. The international experience of the last decade is the best confirmation of the correctness of this Leninist process. This is what we must teach the Communist Parties of all countries, and this is what our youth must learn from the study of October.

But Comrade Trotsky overlooks this question. When he speaks of Bulgaria or Germany, he occupies himself but little with the correct estimation of the moment. If we regard events through Comrade Trotsky's spectacles, it appears exceedingly simple to guide events. Marxist analysis was never Comrade Trotsky's strong point.

This is the reason why he so under-estimates the role played by the peasantry. Much has already been said about this.

We must further study the Party during October. Trotsky says a great deal about the Party, but for him the Party is the staff of leaders, the heads. But those who really wish to study October, must study the Party as it was in October. The Party was a living organism, in which the

C.C. ("the staff") was not cut off from the Party, in which the members of the lowest Party organisations were in daily contact with the members of the C.C. Comrades Sverdlov and Stalin knew perfectly well what was going on in every district in Petrograd, in every province, and in the army. And Lenin knew all this as well, though living illegally. He was kept well informed and received letters about everything which occurred in the life of the organisation. And Lenin did not only know how to listen, he also knew very well how to read between the lines. The victory was made possible by precisely the fact that there was a close contact between the C.C. and the collective organisation.

A Party whose upper stratum had lost contact with the organisation would never have been victorious. All Communist Parties must impress this upon themselves, and organise themselves accordingly.

Where the Party is so organised, where the staff knows the will of the collective organisation—and not merely from the resolutions—and works in harmony with this will, the vacillations or errors of individual members of the staff do not possess the decisive significance ascribed to them by Comrade Trotsky. When history confronts the Party with an entirely new and hitherto unexampled emergency, it is only natural that the situation is not uniformly estimated by everyone, and then it is the task of the organisation to find the right common line.

Lenin invariably attached enormous importance to the collective organisation of the Party. His re-

lations to the Party Conferences were based upon this. At every Party Conference he brought forward everything which he had thought out since the last Party Conference. He held himself to be chiefly responsible to the Party Conference, to the organisation as a whole. In cases of differences of opinion he appealed to the Party Conference (for instance in the question of the Brest Peace).

Trotsky does not recognise the part played by the Party as a whole, as an organisation cast in one piece. For him the Party is synonymous with the staff. Let us take an example: "What is the Bolshevisation of the Communist Party?"—he asks in the "Lessons of October." It consists in so educating the Parties, and so choosing their leaders that they do not go off the tracks when their October comes.

This is a purely "administrative" and utterly superficial standpoint. Yes, the personalities of the leaders is a point of the utmost importance. Yes, it is necessary that the most gifted, the best, the firmest in character of our members are selected for our staff: but it is not merely a question of their personal capacities, but a question of whether the staff is closely bound up with the whole organisation.

There is another factor thanks to which we have accomplished our victory in October, and that is the correct estimation of the role and importance of the masses. If you will read all that Lenin wrote on the role played by the masses in the revolution and in the development of Socialism, you will see that Lenin's estimation of the part played by the masses is one of the corner-stones of Lenin.

ism. For Lenin the masses are never a means, but the decisive factor. If the Party is to lead millions, it must be in close contact with these millions, it must be able to comprehend the life, the sorrows, and aspirations of the masses. Bela Kun relates that when he began to speak to Lenin about a revolutionary war against Germany, Lenin replied: "I know that you are not a mere chatterbox—take a journey to the front to-morrow and see whether the soldiers are ready for a revolutionary war." Bela Kun took the journey to the front, and saw that Lenin was in the right.

We do not find any appeal for the study of this side of the October revolution in the "Lessons of October." On the contrary. When forming his estimate of the German events, Comrade Trotsky under-estimates the passivity of the masses.

A certain Syrkin has put a very foolish interpretation on John Reed's book. Many people are of the opinion that we should not put John Reed's book into the hands of young people. It contains inaccuracies and legends. The history of the Party is not to be learnt from Reed. Why then did Lenin recommend this book so warmly? Because in the case of John Reed's book this question is not the main point. The book gives us an excellent and artistic description of the psychology and trends of feeling among the masses of the soldiery and the workers who accomplished the October revolution, and of the clumsiness of the bourgeoisie and its servants. John Reed enables even the youngest Communist to grasp the spirit of revolution much more rapidly than the perusal of dozens of protocols and resolutions. It does not suffice for our

youth to merely know the history of the Party, it is of equal importance that they feel the pulse of the October revolution. How can our youth become Communists if they know nothing more than Party conditions in their narrower import, and do not feel what war and revolution have been?

Comrade Trotsky approaches the study of October from the wrong side. The incorrect estimate of October is only one step removed from a wrong estimate of actuality and from the wrong estimates of a number of phenomena of immense significance. The wrong estimate of actuality leads to wrong decisions and actions. Anyone can comprehend this. What has happened cannot be undone. Since the "Lessons of October" have seen the light of day, they must be fully discussed in the press and in the Party organisation. This must be done in a form accessible to every member of the Party.

Our Party has now greatly increased in numbers. Broad masses of workers are joining the Party, and these workers are insufficiently enlightened on the questions raised by Comrade Trotsky. Things perfectly clear to an old Bolshevist, who has fought determinedly for the Leninist line, are not clear to the young Party member. The Leninist must learn, above all, not to say that: "The discussion of this question disturbs us in our learning." On the contrary, the discussion of this question will enable us to gain an even profounder comprehension of Leninism.

Comrade Trotsky devoted the whole of his powers to the fight for the Soviet power during the decisive years of the revolution. He held out

heroically in his difficult and responsible position. He worked with unexampled energy and accomplished wonders in the interests of the safeguarding of the victory of the revolution. The Party will not forget this.

But the achievements of October have not yet been fully consummated. We must continue to work determinedly for their fulfilment. And here it would be dangerous and disastrous to deviate from the historically tested path of Leninism. And when such a comrade as Trotsky treads, even unconsciously, the path of revision of Leninism, then the Party must make a pronouncement.



THE LETTER OF COMRADE TROTSKY TO THE PLENUM OF THE CENTRAL COM- MITTEE OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

(The following is the full official text of the report of the decision of the Plenum of the C.P. of Russia regarding the attitude of Comrade Trotsky as well as the letter addressed by the latter to the Plenum.—Ed.)

Dear Comrades,

The first item on the agenda of the forthcoming Plenum of the Central Committee is the question of the resolutions from local organisations on Trotsky's "conduct." Owing to my state of health, I will not be able to take part in the work of the Plenum, but I think I can contribute towards the elucidation of this question, by making the following remarks :

1. I considered and consider now that I could, in the discussion, bring forward a sufficient number of weighty objections on principle and in fact against the charge brought against me, that I am aiming to "revise Leninism" or "minimise" the role of Lenin. I refrained, however, from doing so, not only because of the state of my health, but also because *in the atmosphere of the present discussion*, every statement I made on this question, irrespective of its content, character and tone, would but serve as an impetus to intensify the controversy, to turn it from a one-sided to a two-sided controversy, and give it a more acute character.

Even now, weighing up the whole progress of the discussion, and in spite of the fact that throughout it, many untrue and even monstrous charges

have been brought forward against me, I think that my silence was correct from the standpoint of the general interests of the Party.

2. However, under no circumstances can I admit the charge that I am advocating a special policy ("Trotskyism") and that I am striving to revise Leninism. The conviction that is ascribed to me, to the effect that, not I came to Bolshevism, but Bolshevism came to me, is simply monstrous. In my introduction to "Lessons of October," I frankly stated (p. 62), that Bolshevism prepared for its role in the revolution by its irreconcilable struggle, not only against the Narodniki and the Mensheviks, but against the "reconcilers," *i.e.*, to the tendency to which I belonged. Never at any time during the past eight years has it entered my head to regard any question from the point of view of "Trotskyism" which I have considered and consider now to have been politically liquidated long ago. Quite apart from whether I was right or wrong concerning any other questions that came before our Party, I always endeavoured to solve them in accordance with the general theoretical and practical experiences of our Party. Throughout all this time, no one ever told me that any of my thoughts or proposals indicated a special tendency, *i.e.*, "Trotskyism." Quite unexpectedly for me this expression came out during the course of the discussion of my book on "1917."

3. The question of the estimation of the peasantry in this connection is of the greatest political importance. I absolutely deny that the formula "permanent revolution," which applies wholly to the past, in any way caused me to adopt a careless attitude towards the peasantry in the conditions

of the Soviet Revolution. If at any time after October, I had occasion for private reasons to revert to the formula, "permanent revolution," it was only a reference to Party history, *i.e.*, to the past, and had no reference to the question of present-day political tasks. To my mind, the attempt to construct an irreconcilable contradiction in this matter is not justified either by the 8 years' experience of the revolution, through which we have gone together, or by the tasks of the future.

Equally I refute the statements and reference to my alleged "pessimistic" attitude towards the progress of our work of Socialist construction in the face of the retarded process of the revolution in the West. In spite of all the difficulties arising out of our capitalistic environment, the economic and political resources of the Soviet dictatorship are very great. I have repeatedly developed and argued this idea on the instructions of the Party, particularly at international congresses, and I consider that this idea preserves all its force for the present period of historical development.

4. I have not spoken once on the controversial questions settled by the Thirteenth Congress of the Party, either on the Central Committee or on the Council of Labour and Defence, and I certainly have not, outside of leading Party and Soviet institutions, ever made any proposal that would directly or indirectly raise questions that have already been decided. After the Thirteenth Congress, new problems arose, or to speak more clearly defined themselves of an economic, soviet and international character. The solution of these problems represented an exceptional difficulty. The attempt to put forward any kind of "platform" as against

the work of the Central Committee in solving these questions, was absolutely alien to my thoughts, for the comrades who were present at the meetings of the Politbureau, the Plenum of the Central Committee, of the Council of Labour and Defence or of the Revolutionary Council of the U.S.S.R., this assertion requires no proof. The controversial questions settled at the Thirteenth Congress were again raised in the course of the last discussion, not only in no connection with my work, but as far as I can judge at the moment, with no connection with the practical questions of Party policy.

5. In so far as my introduction to my book "1917" has served as the formal ground for the recent discussion, I consider it necessary first of all to repudiate the charge that I published my book, as it were, behind the back of the Central Committee. As a matter of fact, my book was published (while I was undergoing treatment in the Caucasus) on exactly the same terms and conditions that all other books, mine or of other members of the Central Committee, or of members of the Party generally are published. Of course, it is the business of the Central Committee to establish some form of control over Party publications, but I have in no way and not in the slightest degree violated the forms of control which have been established up till now, and, of course, I had no reason to violate them.

6. The introduction to "Lessons of October" represents a further development of the ideas which I have frequently expressed in the past and particularly during the past year. Here I enumerate only the following lectures and articles: "On the Road to European Revolution" (Tiflis, April 11th,

1924), "Prospect and Problems in the East" (April 21st), "The First of May in the West and in the East" (April 29th), "A New Turning Point" (introduction to "Five Years of the Comintern"), "Through What Stage are we Passing?" (June 21st), "Fundamental Questions of Civil War."

All the lectures enumerated above were prompted by the defeat of the German revolution in the autumn of 1923, and were printed in the *Pravda*, *Isvestia* and other publications. Not a single member of the Central Committee, nor indeed of the Politbureau ever pointed out to me anything wrong in these lectures, nor did the editor of *Pravda* make any comment on these lectures or make any attempt to point out to me anything with which he did not agree in them.

Of course, I never regarded my analysis of October in connection with the German events as a "platform" and never believed that anybody would regard it as a "platform" which it never was and never could be.

7. In view of the fact that in the charges brought against me, are several of my books including several of which have been published in several editions, I consider it necessary to state that, not only did not the Politbureau as a whole, nor any single member of the Central Committee ever indicate that any of my articles or books could be interpreted as "revision" of Leninism. Particularly does this apply to my "1905" which was published during the lifetime of Comrade Lenin, went through several editions, was warmly recommended by the Party press, was translated by the Comintern into foreign languages, and is now being used

as the principle evidence in the charge of revising Leninism.

8. The purpose I pursue in putting forward these views, as I stated in the beginning of this letter, is but one, viz., to assist the Plenum to settle the question standing as the first item on the agenda.

With regard to the statement which has been repeated in the discussion to the effect that I am aiming to secure "a special position" in the Party, that I do not submit to discipline, that I refuse to perform work given me by the Central Committee, etc., etc., I categorically declare, without going into an investigation of the value of these statements, that I am ready to perform *any* work entrusted to me by the Central Committee in *any* post *without any* post and, of course, under *any* form of Party control.

There is no necessity, therefore, particularly to point out that after the recent discussion, the interests of our cause demands my speedy release from the duties of the Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council.

In conclusion, I think it necessary to add that I will not leave Moscow prior to the Plenum, so that if necessary it will be possible for me to reply to any questions or give any explanation that may be required.

(Signed) L. TROTSKY.

January, 15th, 1925.

Certified correct, BALASHOV.

Kremlin.

RESOLUTION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF
THE R.C.P.

on the action of Comrade Trotsky passed at the Joint Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (two against) and the Central Control Commission (one abstained from voting).

The fundamental basis of all the successes of the Bolshevik Party has always been the steel-like unity and iron discipline, genuine unanimity of views on the basis of Leninism. Comrade Trotsky's unceasing attacks against Bolshevism confronts the Party with the necessity either to abandon this fundamental condition or once and for all to put an end to these attacks.

On an international scale, Comrade Trotsky's attacks against the Party are regarded by the bourgeoisie and the Social-Democrats as a precursor of a split in the Russian Communist Party and, therefore, of the collapse of the proletarian dictatorship generally. It is from this partly that international imperialism draws its practical conclusions with regard to the U.S.S.R. in spite of the fact that the objective position of the U.S.S.R. is stronger now than it has even been before.

Within the country, Comrade Trotsky's opposition is regarded by all anti-soviet and wavering elements as a signal to combine against the policy of the Party for the purpose of influencing the regime of the proletarian dictatorship towards making concessions to bourgeois democracy.

The anti-proletarian elements in the State apparatus are striving to "emancipate" themselves from Party guidance and see in Comrade Trotsky's

fight against the Central Committee of the Party their hope. The dictatorship of the proletariat and particularly one of the most important teachings of Comrade Lenin concerning the necessity of transforming the whole of the State apparatus in the spirit of a workers' and peasants' government, is being threatened by enormous damage.

In the Party and around the Party, Comrade Trotsky's opposition has made his name the banner around which are rallying all the non-Bolshevist, non-Communist, anti-proletarian deviations and groupings.

In the most general form Comrade Trotsky's actions against the Party as a whole can now be described as an attempt to convert the ideology of the Russian Communist Party into a sort of "modernised" (by Comrade Trotsky) "Bolshevism" without Leninism. This is not Bolshevism. This is a revision of Bolshevism. This is an attempt to substitute Leninism by Trotskyism, *i.e.*, an attempt to substitute for the Leninist theory and tactics of international proletarian revolution that variety of Menshevism which the old Trotskyism represented and which is represented to-day by the resurrected "modern" Trotskyism. Essentially, modern Trotskyism is a counterfeit of Communism approaching the "European" model of pseudo-Marxism, *i.e.*, in the last resort, to "European" social-democracy.

During the course of the few years that Comrade Trotsky has been in the Russian Communist Party, our Party has had to conduct against him four discussions on a national scale not including less important controversies on extremely important questions.

The first discussion was that over the Brest Peace. Comrade Trotsky failed to understand that the peasantry did not wish to fight any more, and he conducted a policy which nearly cost the revolution its head. It required the threat on the part of Comrade Lenin to leave the Government, it required an intense struggle at the Seventh Congress of the Party to rectify the error and secure—although on worse terms—the Brest “respite.”

The second discussion was on the Trade Unions. As a matter of fact, this was a discussion concerning the attitude towards the peasantry raised against war-Communism, concerning the attitude towards the non-party masses of the workers and generally concerning the Party's approach to the masses in the period when the civil war had come to an end. An acute controversy over the whole country, an intense campaign conducted by the whole nucleus of the Party, headed by Comrade Lenin against the “feverish heights” of Trotskyism were required in order to save the Party from mistakes which threatened all the gains of the revolution.

The third discussion was over the “Party apparatus” plan, over the alleged “inclination towards the peasantry” on the part of the Central Committee, over “the conflict between two generations,” etc. As a matter of fact, this too was a question of the economic alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry; the question of the policy of prices, of currency reform, of the necessity for steering the policy of the Party by the workers' compass of maintaining the leadership of the Party in the economic and State apparatus, concerning the fight against “freedom” to form

fractions and groupings within the Party, the maintenance of the leadership in the hands of the Bolshevik cadres of the Party, in a word, of keeping to the Leninist policy of the Party in the period of NEP. In this discussion, Comrade Trotsky became the mouthpiece of petty bourgeois deviations. Again he urged the Party to adopt the policy which might have led to the collapse of the revolution, for this policy would have crushed the economic successes of the Party in their embryo.

The petty bourgeois opposition, headed by Comrade Trotsky, forced themselves into a position, in which, refusing to admit their radical errors, they were compelled to adopt the attitude of "the worst the better," i.e., to stake their case on the failure of the Party and of the Soviet Government.

It was necessary to put up an intense fight to resist this petty bourgeois attack upon the fortress of Bolshevism. It is now clear to all that the Trotskyist talk of the "ruin of the country" in the autumn of 1923, was merely an expression of petty bourgeois fear, of lack of confidence in the forces of our revolution, and complete failure to understand our economics. The reform of the currency in opposition to which Comrade Trotsky proposed his "plan" and the failure of which was prophesied, restored the economic position and proved a tremendous step forward on the road towards the economic revival of the country. Industry is reviving in spite of the bad harvest in 1924. The economic conditions of the workers are improving. The Party emerged from the trial, stronger than ever. The Lenin enrolment strengthened the Party by infusing fresh proletarian forces into it. But had not the Bolshevik Party so sharply and

unanimously resisted the semi-Menshevist relapse of Comrade Trotsky, the genuine dangers for the country, for the working class and for our Party would indeed be innumerable.

All the actions of Comrade Trotsky against the general Party policy from 1918 to 1924 in their last resort, had their source in the semi-Menshevist failure to understand the role of the proletariat in relation to the non-proletarian and semi-proletarian sections of the working class, in minimising the role of the Party in the revolution and in Socialist construction, and the failure to understand that the Bolshevist Party can fulfil its historic mission only if it is really unanimous in opinions and monolithic in character.

The Fourth and present discussion still more revealed the serious and all-embracing differences between Comrade Trotsky and the Bolshevist Party. The matter now stands clearly as two fundamentally opposite systems of politics and tactics. In the present discussion, Comrade Trotsky commenced a direct attack upon the basis of Bolshevist philosophy. Comrade Trotsky (1) completely denies the doctrine of the driving forces of the Russian revolution outlined by Comrade Lenin in 1904, and upon which has been based the tactics of Bolshevism in the course of three Russian revolutions: (2) puts forward against the Bolshevist estimation of the driving forces of the Russian revolution and against the Leninist doctrine of the world proletarian revolution his old "theory of permanent revolution," which was utterly discredited in three Russian revolutions (and also in Poland and in Germany) and was described by

Comrade Lenin more than once as an eclectic attempt to combine petty bourgeois Menshevik opportunism with "left" phrases and as an attempt to leap over the peasantry; (3) tries to convince the Party that before Bolshevism adopted the path of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it was obliged "intellectually to re-arm itself," *i.e.*, it was obliged to abandon Leninism and adopt Trotskyism; (4) advocates the theory of "bisecting" Bolshevism, *viz.*, (a) Bolshevism prior to the October Revolution of 1917, which is alleged to be of secondary importance and; (b) Bolshevism, commencing from October, 1917, which it is alleged, had to grow into Trotskyism before it could fulfil its historic mission; (5) "interprets" the history of October in such a manner that the role of the Bolshevik Party disappears altogether and first place is taken by the personality of Comrade Trotsky himself, according to the formula of "the hero in the crowd" and his version of the "peaceful revolt" which is alleged to have taken place on the 10th of October, 1917, had nothing in common with the Bolshevik views concerning armed uprising; (6) describes the role of Comrade Lenin in the October Revolution very ambiguously. Lenin is made to appear as if advocating the seizure of power by conspirative methods behind the back of the Soviets, and that the practical proposals made by Comrade Lenin arose from his failure to understand the conditions prevailing; (7) radically distorts the relations between Comrade Lenin and the Central Committee of the Party and represents them as an unceasing war between two "powers." Comrade Trotsky endeavours to convince his readers of the truth of his "version" by publishing (without the consent of the Central Committee)

extracts from certain documents presented in a false light and in a connection distorting the truth ; (8) describes the role of the whole of the Central Committee which led the revolt in such a light as to sow the most profound distrust towards the kernel of the present Party Staff ; (9) distorts the most important episodes of the revolution in the period between February and October, 1917 (the April and June demonstrations, the July days, the preliminary parliament, etc.) ; (10) distorts the tactics of the Executive Committee of the Comintern and endeavours to throw the responsibility for the failures in Germany, Bulgaria, etc., upon the kernel of the E.C.C.I., thus sowing distrust towards the Central Committee of the R.C.P. and the E.C.C.I.

Thus the differences that divide Comrade Trotsky from the Bolshevik Party from year to year and lately from month to month, increase. These differences concern not only questions of the past ; the past is being "reviewed" in order to "prepare" a platform for the present real political difficulties. The retrospective exposure of the "Right-wing" in the old Bolshevik Party is necessary for Comrade Trotsky to use as a screen under cover of which to win for himself the right to form a right-wing in the Russian Communist Party and the Comintern are in evidence.

The "revision" of Leninism on the question of the driving forces of the revolution, *i.e.*, principally the question of the relations between the proletariat and the peasantry is the "justification" of Comrade Trotsky's non-bolshevik views concerning the present policy of the Party with regard to the peas-

antry. The incorrect anti-Leninist estimation of the role of the peasantry in the revolution made by Comrade Trotsky, is the subject to which the discussion between the Party and Comrade Trotsky brings us back again and again. Mistakes on this question become particularly dangerous at this time when the Party, carrying out the slogan of "face the village," is working intensely to strengthen the ties between the city industry and peasant agriculture, to enlist the broad masses of the peasantry into the work of Soviet administration, to revive the Soviets, etc., and when the future success or failure of the revolution is being determined precisely by the correct or incorrect relations between the proletariat and the peasantry.

On fundamental questions of international politics (the role of fascism and social-democracy, the role of America in Europe, the length and character of the "democratic-pacifist" era, in the estimation of which his views in many ways coincided with the Social-Democratic "centre," etc.), Comrade Trotsky occupied a different position from that of the Russian Communist Party and the whole of the Comintern without troubling first of all, to explain his point of view to the Central Committee or to the E.C.C.I. The Delegation of the Russian Communist Party at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, in complete agreement with the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party proposed to Comrade Trotsky that he explain his views on international questions to the Congress of the Communist International. Comrade Trotsky refused to do this at the Congress, but considered it expedient to do so a little while after at a gathering of veterinary surgeons over the heads of the Comin-

tern and the R.C.P. In recent times, there has not been a single important question upon which Comrade Trotsky has acted with the Party, but more frequently has acted against the views of the Party.

The Party is confronted by a most important and immediate political task, viz., to take a determined course towards overcoming the elements, dividing the town from the country, *i.e.*, to take up in its full scope the question of further lowering prices on manufactures, to create conditions for a real revival in agriculture (land re-distribution and land utilisation) to devote concentrated attention upon developing agricultural co-operation (genuine voluntary membership, election of officers, credit) bring up and solve the question of easing the burden of taxation for the peasantry and reforming the system of taxation and also to exert all the efforts of the Party towards the solution of the question of improving political conditions in the villages (proper conduct of elections, enlisting non-party peasants, etc.).

This policy alone, in the main outlined by Comrade Lenin, can lead to the real consolidation of State industry, secure further development and lead to the growth and concentration of the social power of the industrial proletariat, *i.e.*, not in mere words, but in fact, to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat under the existence of the NEP.

The primary condition enabling this policy to be carried out is the absolute maintenance of the leading role of our Party in State and economic

organs, and genuine unity of the Party on the basis of Leninism.

It is precisely this decisive (in the present circumstances) relation between the Party, the working class and the peasantry that Comrade Trotsky fails to understand.

This situation inevitably led to all the non-Bolshevist and anti-Bolshevist elements in the country and outside of the country placing their own construction upon the position taken up by Comrade Trotsky, and to their supporting Comrade Trotsky precisely because he was being condemned by the R.C.P. and the Comintern. A party leading the dictatorship of the proletariat in circumstances in which all anti-proletarian parties and groups are deprived of "liberties" must inevitably make enemies. All these enemies, particularly the well-to-do petty bourgeois desire to see in the present Comrade Trotsky the individual who could shake the iron dictatorship of the proletariat, split the Party and divert the Soviet Government to other lines.

All the leaders of the Second International, the most dangerous lackeys of the bourgeoisie, strive to make use of Comrade Trotsky's intellectual "revolt" against the basis of Leninism, in order to discredit Leninism, the Russian revolution, and the Comintern in the eyes of the masses of Europe, and in this way to bind the social-democratic workers to be a chariot of capitalism. The renegade Paul Levi, published Comrade Trotsky's "Lessons of October" in German, with his own introduction, and German social-democracy has undertaken to

spread this book broadcast. It is widely advertising it as a book directed against Communism. Souvarine, who was expelled from the Comintern is trying to cause a split in the French Communist Party by spreading counter revolutionary lies about the Russian Communist Party. Balabanova, Hoeglund and other renegades from Communism act in a similar manner. The Italian social fascists of *Avanti*, the hirelings of German bourgeoisie from *Vorwaerts*, Renaudel and Grumbach of the *Quotidien*, etc., etc., all these elements endeavour to associate themselves with Comrade Trotsky, because of his opposition to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party and the E.C.C.I.

The non-Party workers who should see in this prominent Party worker a model of solidarity for the whole Party, as a matter of fact, for the last few years, have seen Comrade Trotsky shaking the unity of the Party with impunity. Such a situation undermines elementary class discipline without which victorious proletarian dictatorship is impossible.

The peasantry should be able to see that on the question of unity between the working class and the peasantry, there is not the slightest hesitation in the Russian Communist Party and that on this question the Party is more united than on any other. But the conduct of Comrade Trotsky causes the peasantry to believe the very opposite, and this important question becomes the subject of all kinds of legends. This represents extreme danger to the workers' and peasants' bloc. Our Party has to conduct the dictatorship of the pro-

letariat in a peasant country. To carry out this dictatorship while Comrade Trotsky continues to affront the peasantry is impossible.

The youth who formerly saw in Comrade Trotsky, one of the greatest leaders of the Party, now see that leader is dragging the youth into "a war between generations" on anti-Leninist lines.

The red army and the red fleet who should see in the leader of the army a model of Party discipline and of correct understanding of the relations between the proletariat and the peasantry (our army in the main is a peasant army) is now presented with a spectacle of the very opposite in Comrade Trotsky. Such a situation is pregnant with enormous dangers for the internal state of the army.

The whole Party is convinced that in such a state of affairs, there could be no talk of preserving a genuine, Bolshevik, monolithic Russian Communist Party and is coming to the conclusion that our Party would be faced by a tremendous intellectual and organisational danger if it permitted Comrade Trotsky to continue his fight against the Bolshevik Party. The Lenin enrolment which is sincerely striving to imbibe genuine Leninism is becoming convinced that Trotsky is striving to introduce Trotskyism in the place of Leninism and demand that the Party bring this to the light of day.

The whole Comintern observes how one of the most prominent members of the Russian Commun-

ist Party hampers the work of Bolshevising the sections of the Comintern and is in fact rendering intellectual political support to the enemies of Bolshevism in the camp of the Second International.

Under these circumstances the joint Plenum of the Central Committee and of the Central Control Committee is of the opinion that to leave things in a position when the Party decides on one thing and Comrade Trotsky continues to act against the Party would mean the beginning of the abandonment of the Bolshevik character of the Party and the beginning of its collapse. With the controversy over Trotskyism is closely connected the question as to what does the Russian Communist Party represent in 1925—a Bolshevik Party hewn out of a single piece and standing on the lasting foundation of Leninism, or a Party in which semi-Menshevik views may become a “Legitimate” shade of view.

Having read Comrade Trotsky’s declaration to the Central Committee, dated the 15th of January, 1925, the Plenum of the Central Committee, and the Central Control Committee notes Comrade Trotsky’s readiness to carry out any work entrusted to him by the Party, under the control of the Party and declares that Comrade Trotsky has not uttered a single word in his declaration indicating that he recognises his errors, but on the contrary, in fact strives to defend his anti-Bolshevik platform and limits himself merely to formal expressions of loyalty.

Following from what has been said above and particularly from the fact that in spite of the well-

known decisions of the Thirteenth Congress, Comrade Trotsky is again raising the question of the fundamental alteration of the leadership of the Party and is advocating views which have been categorically condemned by that Congress, the plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Committee.

RESOLVES.

1. Most categorically to warn Comrade Trotsky that membership of a Bolshevik Party demands real and not mere verbal subordination to Party discipline and complete and unreserved abandonment of opposition to Leninism in any form.

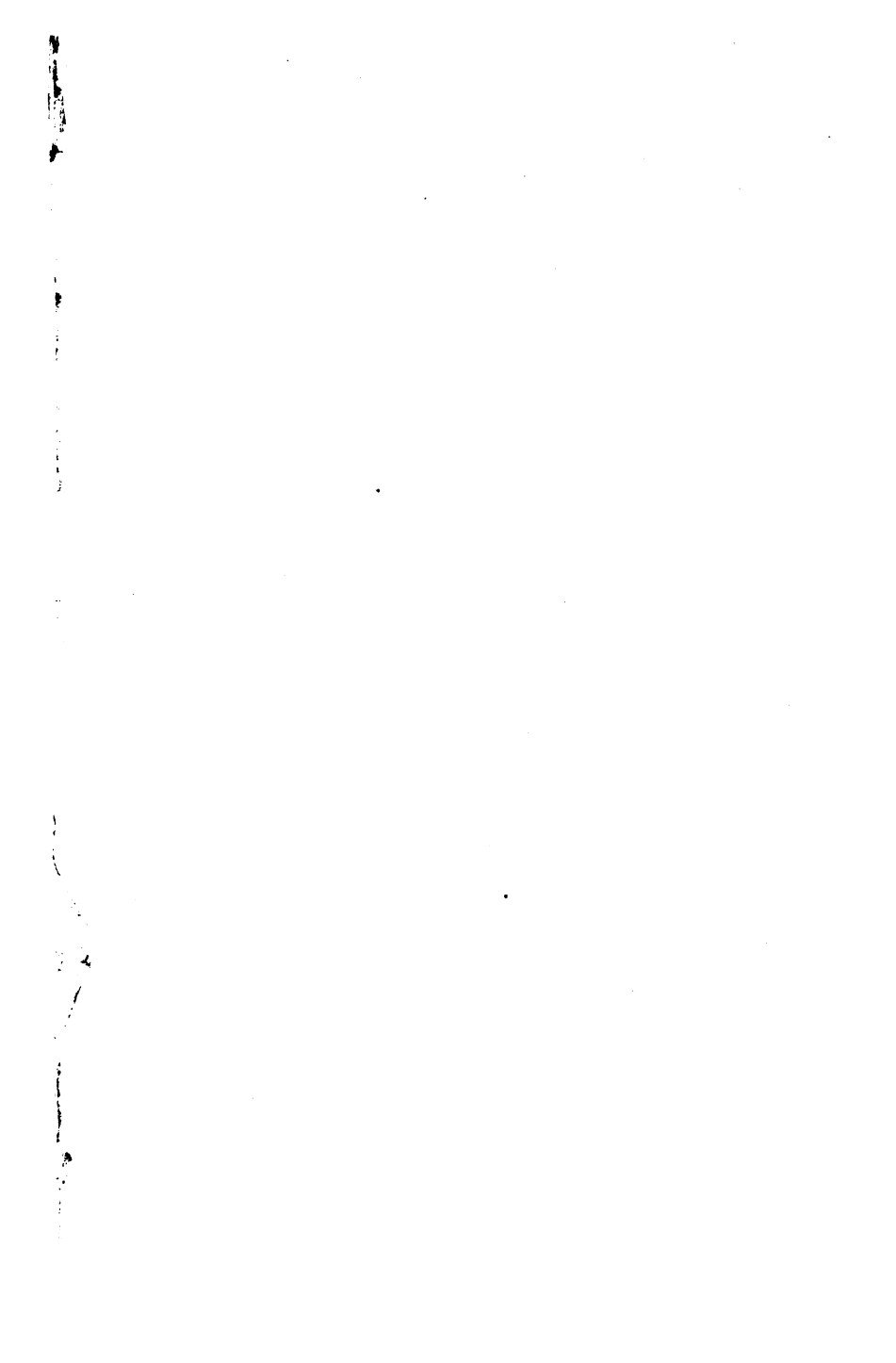
2. In view of the fact that leadership of the army is impossible unless the leadership is backed by the authority of the whole Party, that without this support, the danger of breaking the iron discipline in the army arises; in view of the fact that the Conference of political workers and the fraction of the Revolutionary Military Council of the U.S.S.R. have already passed resolutions calling for the removal of Comrade Trotsky from army work and in view of the fact that Comrade Trotsky himself in his declaration to the Central Committee dated 15th of January, 1925, admits that "The interests of the cause demands" his speedy release from the duties of the Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council—that Comrade Trotsky's continued work on the Revolutionary Military Council of the U.S.S.R. be regarded as impossible.

3. That the question of Comrade Trotsky's work in the future be postponed to the next Party Congress and that Comrade Trotsky be warned that in the event of any fresh attempt on his part to violate or refuse to carry out Party decisions, the Central Committee will be compelled, without waiting for the Congress to be convened, to deem it impossible for Comrade Trotsky to continue further on the Politbureau and will raise the question at the joint meeting of the Central Committee and the Central Control Committee of removing him from work in the Central Committee.

4. To regard the discussion as closed.

5. To continue and develop the work of the Party in explaining throughout all the ranks of the Party the anti-Bolshevik character of Trotskyism—from 1903 to "Lessons of October"—and instruct the Politbureau to convey to all the organs of propaganda (Party schools, etc.), proper instructions on this matter and to include in the programmes of political instruction an explanation of the petty bourgeois character of Trotskyism, etc.

6. Simultaneously with the explanatory propaganda conducted within the Party, and the Young Communist League, etc., it is necessary to explain in a popular manner to the non-Party masses of workers and peasants the meaning of the deviations of Trotskyism and reveal its false paths leading to the break-up of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry.



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