

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Editorial:

The Disruptionists
Prepare

The International
Situation
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Edinburgh
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The Disruptionists are Getting Ready

THE Twenty-fifth Congress of the All-Russian Communist Party will assemble in circumstances of extremely strained international relations, when the danger of intervention in U.S.S.R. and all the consequent economic calamities are becoming more and more imminent. It was fitting, therefore, that, when the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party fixed the limits of the discussion preliminary to the Congress, it should call to mind what Lenin said about discussions of a wide character. When Lenin was summing up the discussions at the Seventh Congress of the Party, in respect of the peace terms of Brest-Litovsk, he said :

“Our guarantee that we shall not come to grief in dealing with this problem is found in the fact that circumstances have compelled people to discover a different way of solving sectional differences. The old way meant an extraordinary amount of publication, debates and a great deal of dissension. The new way involves an attempt to verify everything by facts, by events, by what universal history has to teach.”

Similarly, at the Tenth Congress of the Party when he was evaluating the significance of the discussion, which had just closed, in relation to the trade unions, Lenin said :

“We are not a debating society. We can, and no doubt we shall, issue reports and special publications. But we are concerned, first of all, with the waging of a conflict under most adverse conditions. Hence we have to see to it that we are thoroughly welded together into one. Discussion to many of you will seem a very great luxury. . . . In my opinion such a thing is utterly inadmissible. We made a mistake in permitting the discussion, for we did not foresee how attention would be drawn away from the terrible problem which is so close to us.”

LENIN'S negative attitude to widespread discussion has the greater importance at the present moment, when the Opposition wants to bring before the judgment of the Party opinions which the Party has more than once considered and condemned. For reasons of policy, as well as for the formal consideration that no organisation of the Party, having a provincial or regional significance, has called for extensive discussion, and taking into consideration the fact that on the Central Committee there is a solid majority on every point of importance, regarding Party policy, the last joint plenary sitting of the Central Committee and of the Central Control Commission of the All-Russian Communist Party, passed the following resolution :

“The theses of the Central Committee, relating to questions on the agenda of the Congress of the Party, must be published, in accordance with the decision of the Tenth Party Congress, not later than a month prior to the Congress.

“When the theses of the Central Committee have been published they are to be discussed at meetings of the Party and in the press.

“In accordance with the decision of the Tenth Party Congress, to issue a discussion sheet, together with ‘Pravda,’ where counter-theses are to be printed, if the Opposition presents them.

“Controversy should be carried on in a purely comradesly and business-like manner, apart from any over-definition or exaggeration.”

This means that discussion taking place on the eve of the Congress is to be conducted in the way in which the Party usually deals with the subjects which are upon the agenda of the Congress.

But the Opposition is not satisfied with the ordinary limits which our Party has fixed in regard to the time, subject matter, and form of discussions taking place just before the Congress is held. This dissatisfaction was expressed at the plenary sitting of the Central Committee, and it is still being expressed. The Opposition is trying to destroy these limits even after the plenary session has taken place.

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WHAT is it that actuates the Opposition in trying to secure the opening up of a wide discussion, without any limitations, such as Ruth Fischer once demanded at the sixth plenary session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International? There is, in the first instance, a profound divergence of views. The Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party holds that the object of discussion prior to the Congress is to be *the verification* of the Party's line—fixed by previous congresses and conferences—by means of facts, events and the teaching of history. The Opposition, on the other hand, is seeking to carry through "the policy of the far-off goal." Its desire is to *destroy* the Party's line by means of discussion, and to substitute for it a different line. Maslov and Ruth Fischer declare in their little periodical that their line "cannot be reconciled" with the line which the Comintern is now pursuing. But when they have said this they ask to be taken back into the Comintern. That is, they are seeking to break it up from within. And if the Opposition succeeds in getting Ruth Fischer and Maslov back into the Comintern it will take the same course. The real object of it all is to change the Leninist line of the All-Russian Communist Party and of the Comintern for a Trotskyist line of the latest and worst type.

OUR opponents, of course, deny all this. As far as they are concerned "Trotskyism" belongs to the distant past. Comrade Trotsky himself, in his disavowal went even to the extent of declaring at the plenary session of the Central Committee:

"I haven't been a Menshevik since the middle of 1904. My view of the role of the classes in a revolution and those of Menshevism have never been the same."

But this is a gamble on the short memory and unteachableness of the masses of the Party. The latest expressions of the Opposition show that it has substituted Trotskyist liquidatorism for the line of Lenin. Again and again it has raised the question of the building up of Socialism in a single country. And once again it declares that the thesis concerning the possibility of building up Socialism in a single State—*i.e.*, the U.S.S.R.—is an anti-Leninist thesis. What *new* arguments, however, does it furnish in support of its statement?

COMRADE SAPRONOV states these arguments quite plainly, distinctly and unequivocally in his programme:

"The technical backwardness of our country, and the consequent lower level of labour productivity constitute an enormous obstacle in the path of building up Socialism. On account of this backwardness it is impossible for us to pass to a real Socialist organisation of production, apart from the assistance of the technically foremost countries, apart from a world social revolution."

Such is the thesis which is held in common by Sapronov and the whole of the most recent Opposition. And here are the arguments, the facts, by which the thesis is backed—arguments and facts distorted, untrue or infantile:

"The slow advance of the productive forces of the State's economy, the increase of the bourgeoisie, the growing process of class distinction in the village, the slow rate in which the number of workers in industry is increasing, the arrest in the material improvement of the life of the workers since the middle of 1925, and, together with all this, the growth of capitalist elements in the State's economy itself, as well as the increase of class differences and social inequalities—all of which, in the last reckoning, goes to prove that the rate of the increase of the capitalist elements among us has of late been greater than the rate at which the Socialist elements have increased."

So it goes on in perfect agreement with Dan-Abramovich-Sapronov's "Socialist Messenger." But a distinguished representative of the Trotskyist Opposition said the same thing, only more diplomatically and cautiously at the last plenary session of the Central Committee:

"Is there not a tendency in our economic and political development, and in the shades of opinion in the Party, which threaten the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Socialist economy, and the proletarian revolutionary character of our Party? No one will doubt that the elements of Socialist economy are growing amongst us. But does not the differentiation in the village grow quicker still?"

Comrade Piatakov said the self-same thing at the plenary session of the Central Committee:

"The only ground for apprehension in the increase of the number of the unemployed lies, on the one hand, in the fact that *in comparison with the general advance of the entire economy of the country, our industry, transport and municipal economy fall behind* [our italics], and, on the other hand, in the fact that our rural economy shows a backward tendency and the growth of class-differentiation, and, additionally, in the fact that our basic capital does not correspond to the requirements of the entire social system as a whole."

DO these speeches mean that in the U.S.S.R. the capitalist elements of economy are increasing more rapidly than the Socialist elements? What they mean is that the present epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. is an epoch wherein not Socialism but capitalism is developing. This pessimism, this profound unbelief in the economic powers of the Soviet Republic is the most characteristic feature of our Opposition, and is the best confirmation of its Trotskyist nature. This unbelief is in no sense gainsaid—rather is it confirmed—by the sparkling Left phrases of the Opposition and by the policy of sectarianism, adventures, and hysterical gestures which it advocates in the economic policy at home and in the international policy abroad. (For example, in matters of the Chinese revolution and of the Anglo-Russian Committee.) All this is merely a manifestation of the "courage" of despair.

The "Left" Social-Democrats who know how to hide the rotten opportunism of Left phraseology understand all this perfectly well. One fisherman smells another fisherman a good way off. Thus, for example,

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the "Leipziger Volkszeitung" fully concurs in the estimate of the economic and political position of the U.S.S.R. which the Opposition gave at the plenary session of the Central Committee, and merely blames it for not having the pluck to face the consequences. This is what the "Leipziger Volkszeitung" says, in its issue of August 15th, about the statements of our Opposition, at the August plenary session of the Central Committee :

"Thermidor, the liquidation of the revolutionary dictatorship, the conversion of the present personnel of the Communist State machine from plenipotentiaries of a proletarian government into servants of a peasant bourgeois government, based on a political regime which arises from a private capitalist economy—such, in the opinion of the Communist Opposition, seems to be the next stage of the Russian revolution. What the Opposition is aiming at is this—to direct, at the last moment, the development of the Russian revolution along different lines, to enable it to retain its Socialist-proletarian character. But in this case it is the Stalin majority which is right, and the Opposition which is wrong. If the revolution is on the threshold of Thermidor, if it is moving towards capitalism, then it is a bourgeois revolution, then the historic predictions of Menshevism prove to be right, and all that is left for the Communist Opposition to do is to make ready the way for the appearance of Social-Democracy, for the up-growth of new forms of the working-class movement on the ruins of the revolution. Such is the conclusion which must inevitably be drawn from the analysis which the Opposition has made of the social structure of the Soviet States."

WE see, therefore, in which direction the Opposition is tending. It has already reached the frontiers of Menshevism. The Opposition, through its sectional blindness, has got so far away from Leninism. Just because it has nothing much to lose is it asking for an unlimited discussion which can only disrupt the Party. The Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party, however, is opposed to such a discussion, because it stands as a sentry to guard the dictatorship of the proletariat, because under the banner of quarrels within the Party the Opposition is seeking to secure a platform for an ideology not only foreign but also inimical to our Party; because by means of discussion it wants to win an extensive vogue for views which have more than once been condemned as *petit bourgeois*, as a Social-Democratic deviation, at the Thirteenth Conference of the Party, at the Thirteenth Congress of the All-Russian Communist Party, at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International, at the Fourteenth Congress of the All-Russian Communist Party, at the Fifteenth Conference of the Party, and at two plenary sessions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

But the authority of Congress decisions has, apparently, no existence for the Opposition. The attitude of "lordly anarchism," of which comrade Lenin

once accused comrade Trotsky, has been the attitude it has taken up towards the Party and its Congresses.

What is a Party majority? From the standpoint of Leninism it is *the Party*. From the standpoint of the Trotskyist Opposition it is "the Stalin section." What do delegates to Party Congresses and Party Conferences signify? From Lenin's standpoint they represent the will of the Party, but from the standpoint of the Trotskyist Opposition they are the contemptible "Party machine men," "cribbers," who talk according to their crib and vote like a herd. To the Opposition a Party is a brace of leaders who can manipulate the masses of the Party just as they like. That's all.

Having taken up such a haughty and disdainful attitude towards the masses of the Party, and towards all the leaders of the Party, the task which the Opposition has set before itself becomes, in very deed, a simple affair. All that has to be done is to get into one's hands the Party's Central Executive. Then in two strokes, by some radical measure, it will be possible to change the Party's line and turn it from the path of "Thermidor" to the path of "revolution." Surely comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev, having taken umbrage at the Central Committee might have altered their attitude to Trotskyism at once and immediately brought about a change of 180 degrees.

NOW that comrade Zinoviev is asking for the return of the Maslov-Ruth Fischer group to the Comintern—so that the Communist Party of Germany might be saved—we call to mind his utterances about this group in the speech he made at the meeting of the German committee of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on August 13th, 1925 :

"This is a commonplace group. There isn't a party where this group is regarded seriously at the present time, because comrades are convinced that all the counsels of this group do not mean Communism but some stupid absurdity.

"This group had an idea that it was the real representative of revolutionary Marxism in Western Europe. *We in Russia were, so to speak, demoralised by Nep-ism. We were a peasant country* [our italics]. Lenin was dead, but Maslov lived. Maslov was the Lenin of Western Europe. . . .

"If Maslov and Ruth Fischer would quickly recognise their mistake it would be all right. But how do things stand? . . . He [Maslov] not only refuses to recognise that his policy would lead the workers to ruin, he says that Lenin led them to ruin.

"We gave them an opportunity to show what they could do, and they have shown it. They are capable of destroying the Comintern, of destroying the Communist Party. History has now given the proof of it. *Why, the very trick of poisoning the Party with the legend that we were moving to the right was a political betrayal of the Executive Committee of the Communist International . . . a political betrayal of the Comintern* [our italics].

"When people lose their head, and have no line of action, when they give themselves up to demagoguery, when they conceive themselves to be

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the Lenins of Western Europe and have not read Marx's 'Capital'—then, to speak quite frankly, they ought to go in for American advertising. I heard that Schueller has said here, in one of his speeches, that all this means the bankruptcy of the Left-wing. I do not think so. *It is the bankruptcy of a part of the ultra-left intellectuals—the bankruptcy of the prejudices, immature self-sufficiency of this small group of intellectuals, but not the bankruptcy of the Left-wing.*"

This is how two years ago comrade Zinoviev stigmatised the views of Ruth Fischer and Maslov. Now he is himself defending these views. "Times change and we change with time."

WHY should not the Party as a whole accomplish such an abrupt change if Trotsky were once more to stand at the helm? This, then, is the most pressing problem—namely, the seizure of the Central Executive of the Party and the expulsion of the present leaders from office. ("We shall drive out the Thermidorians in a trice," said Trotsky.) This problem, the Opposition thinks, ought to be decided by an extended discussion of the Party.

The task is not an easy one. The present membership of the All-Russian Communist Party amounts to 1,200,000, while the Opposition in its "petition campaign" has succeeded in getting together barely 2,000 signatures. This is a negligible percentage. Further, the claim that the Opposition somehow represents a "proletarian, Leninist Left-wing" is best refuted by the social status of the signatories. The All-Russian Communist Party has more than 56 per cent. of its members as workers, "others" engaged in employment number only 16.2 per cent., while in the Opposition, to judge from the list drawn up under the declaration of the signatories, the reverse proportion holds good—those in employment, other than workers, number 58 per cent., *i.e.*, almost four times as many as in the Party. The essential proletarian masses in no sense belong to the Opposition. Those who belong to it are chiefly intellectuals who have lost their way, Georgians who incline to the right, and such elements of the Party.

Hence to seize the control of our proletarian Party by the help of discussion is a job of purest phantasy. But the Opposition thinks otherwise. "At present our numbers are small. That means, we must make up for the small quantity in number by the quality of the attack. We must make a frantic onslaught on the Party, not heeding what means we use." It can be guessed from the recent conduct of the Opposition the kind of "discussion" it would not have hesitated to let loose on the eve of the Fifteenth Congress of the Party.

THE danger of military intervention threatens the Party and the Soviet Republic. To avert this danger the Party has to increase its activity tenfold, to use to the full every ounce of its energy, and to stand shoulder to shoulder in the closest possible way. But lo! when things are in such a state the Opposition wants a discussion which is to drag on from two to three months; so that for a period of two or three months the Party should lay aside its labours and plunge into discussions in the hope that at the last moment Trotsky

might ride, astride a horse, into the Politbureau, and by waving a magic wand put everything right—he who since 1923 has continuously troubled the Party, trying, without any success, to lead it away from the path of Lenin; he who since 1923 has been croaking continually that everything is going to rack and ruin and has as invariably been mistaken.

The menace of intervention hangs over the Party and over the Soviet Republic, yet at a moment like this Trotsky promises to follow the example of M. Clémenteau, who was leading an attack against the Government of France when the enemy was barely 80 kilometres from Paris.

To repulse the attack on the Soviet Republic, which the interventionists are preparing, the banner of the Soviet power must be raised aloft before the eyes of the international proletariat. Yet at a time like this, in spite of facts, in spite of figures, comrade Trotsky and his followers are croaking that in the Soviet Republic the capitalist elements are increasing more rapidly than the Socialist elements; at a time like this they bring forward the indictment of a "Thermidorian revival" against the Soviet Government, doing so in a consciously deceitful and slanderous manner. For, as the occasion demands, this indictment is brought forward, or softened down, or kept as a concealed weapon. Trotsky declares: "We shall oust the Thermidorians from office." Kamenev comments: "The Thermidorians are not in office, but they are in the country." A third one says: "Nobody has asserted such a thing, except Zalutzki." And the whole lot of them, when driven into a corner, unite in the equivocal formula: "We repudiate the notion that our Bolshevist Party, its Central Committee and its Central Control Commission have, so to say, become Thermidorians, but we demand that the Party control should offer a more careful and systematic resistance to such phenomena and their influence on certain connections of the Party." But on what "connections of the Party" has Thermidorianism had an influence? How far does the neglect of the Party control to resist Thermidorianism extend? The "final" formula gives no answer to these questions. It is easy to see why. For should the occasion make it necessary, it will be possible to interpret it to mean that the neglect has gone even so far as the Central Committee, and that its neglect to resist is almost tantamount to an encouragement.

TO repel the imminent menace of an intervention it is necessary to weld together all the forces of the Comintern, to raise in the sight of the world proletariat the authority of every part of it. Yet, at this time, the Opposition in the All-Russian Communist Party is forming a bloc with the renegades Maslov and Ruth Fischer—who have been excluded from the Communist Party of Germany—and is using their petty periodical as a megaphone for appealing to the masses against the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party, against the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany, and against the Executive Committee of the Communist International. However, it is not only with Maslov and Ruth Fischer, but also with Souvarine, that the Opposition is forming a bloc. Comrade Zinoviev demanded, indeed, that Souvarine should be received again into the Party and, by way of experiment, should be sent to the most responsible and most honoured post—namely, China.

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Nor have they withdrawn their patronage from Souvarine even after an avowal was made in his organ, that he is maintained by funds which Max Eastman obtained through the sale of "Lenin's Testament" to the capitalist press.

To repel the threatened onslaught on the Soviet Republic, Party discipline has to be increased tenfold, yet it is at such a moment that the Opposition sets up an illegal machine in the Party, carries on underground activity, tries systematically to discredit all the leaders, and has no scruples whatever in appealing against the Party to the masses outside the Party. This is not done under cover. That this will be done in the future has been proclaimed quite openly at the plenary session of the Central Committee. This is what was said at the time:

"The differences have simply become more acute. Driving them out from the Politbureau, you have succeeded in transferring them to the Central Committee.

"And now with the removal of two comrades from the Central Committee you will carry them into the Party. If, in the event of continuing to defend our views, we should be threatened with an expulsion from the Party, then it will mean that the quarrel will be carried to the workers outside the Party and to the peasant masses."

NOT only is the Opposition uttering threats, it is also beginning to appeal against the Party to the masses who are not in the Party. This is the beginning of an open split. Nor is this all. The Opposition is trying to get on ahead. Hitherto we have come across cases of sanatoria and rest-homes in the Soviet Republic named "Trotsky." We now learn that a "Union of Defenders of Democracy within the United Republics" named "Trotsky" has been organised in Georgia. So far we have had the Communist League of Youth under the name of Lenin, but now the Opposition is trying to organise a Communist League of Youth under Trotsky's name. All this is done deliberately, to show in an emphatic manner that Leninism must yield place to Trotskyism.

How are we to explain this present assumption of extraordinarily acute forms—well-nigh criminal offences against the Party—on the part of the Trotskyist Opposition of the All-Russian Communist Party? How are we to explain the present manifestation of the most negative aspects of Trotskyism itself—its Stolypin era of reaction, as it were—when Trotsky has passed from the position of "permanent revolution" to a bloc with the Right-wing Menshevik liquidators? Is it all accidental? By no means. This is an indirect manifestation of the partial stabilisation of capitalism, of the international situation becoming more acute, and of the consequent vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie within the U.S.S.R. which is exerting pressure on the unstable elements of the All-Russian Communist Party. It is

'Where Ignorance is Bliss . . .'

The old tag applies most truly to a recent much-advertised book entitled *Communism*, written by Professor Laski, a notorious Fabian. Evidently the learned Professor thought it 'folly to be wise' when dealing with the Communist movement. Militant workers will think otherwise. They will read the masterly and convincing study written by Ralph Fox as 'a Reply to H. J. Laski.' Bound in a striking coloured cover, 1/- (postage 1½d.)


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The Disruptionists are Getting Ready—contd.

not for nothing that the "Socialist Messenger," referring to the last plenary session of the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party, began to speak of an "active" interference of forces "outside the Party" in the Party's conflict, which has so far but feebly withstood their "elemental" impact.

THE worker masses are aware of all this. This is why they are increasingly agitating against the Opposition. This is why they are demanding that measures of a more drastic nature should be taken against the Opposition. Within the Party the Opposition has had no success whatever, but it has managed to obtain some sort of a success among certain circles of the petty bourgeoisie outside the Party. The class enemies of the Soviet Republic—those who do not hide their animosity—are speculating on the destructive activity of the Opposition. They are not speculating only. They are beginning to form connections with it. Suffice it to point out that an avowedly "Black Hundred" organisation of Siberia has made an attempt to come out under the flag of the Opposition. The Opposition, against its will, is making easier and bringing nearer the open attack of the imperialist counter-revolution on the Soviet Republic.

The Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party has been doing and is doing all that can be done to save the Opposition from the lamentable lot which it is preparing for itself. It brings to mind the great worth to the Party which comrades Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and others, possessed in bygone days, who at the present time are wasting their political capital in such an indiscreet fashion. The last plenary session of the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party laid down three minimum conditions before the Opposition for the purpose of restoring peace within the Party. Only when the plenary session had, in principle, accepted the resolution for the exclusion of comrades Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee, on account of their unprecedented violation of

Party discipline, did the Opposition give way and accept the conditions; but it kept a stone hidden somewhere, for it attached such reservations to every point of its declaration that anyone could make null, if he cared to do so, the obligations which had been undertaken. Notwithstanding these reservations the plenary session of the Central Committee withdrew the question concerning the exclusion of Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee. The plenary session of the Central Committee made another attempt—the last attempt—to save the Opposition from a final fall, and to restore its best elements to the fold of the Party. Is there any hope that this will come to pass? The Opposition is not acting with sincerity in relation to the Party. Its conduct may be permissible in relation to a strange or a hostile party. Once it has made a solemn promise (Declaration 16), but it has broken that promise in the grossest manner. And now, after the August plenary session, and after making a promise a second time, it is a second time breaking its promise. Documents which are not allowed to be published, continue to be printed in Maslov's petty periodical. Resolutions from Leningrad, Kharkov and other provincial Control Committees of the Party reveal the fact that sectional activity is proceeding as before.

IT seems that the Opposition takes the concession shown to it at the August plenary session of the Central Committee to be a sign of weakness. It is making a mistake, as all the avowed class foes of the Soviet Republic are making a mistake who are speculating upon the disruption of the Party.

Upon the death of Vladimir Ilyich, the response of the proletariat to that blow to the Party was to draw closer together under its flag, which resulted in 300,000 new members joining its ranks. If in the coming discussion, prior to the Congress, the Opposition attempts to infringe the limits fixed for the discussion by the Central Committee and in the sight of the great masses makes a fierce attack upon it, then it will meet with a unanimous, vigorous and crushing resistance from the worker-masses of our Party.



Edinburgh

A. J. Bennet

THE Trades Union Congress of Edinburgh will become historical. The black record of the betrayals of the "left" leaders of the General Council, which began at the time of last year's General Strike, was completed at this Congress. The capitalist press of Britain has of late felt uneasy about the Trades Union Congresses. The capitalist press rightly estimated the resolutions passed at these Congresses as signs of new stirrings in the midst of the trade union masses, which slowly and surely are making a way for themselves, and who sooner or later are bound to show a revolutionary influence on the policy of the trade unions. In this case, however, a contrary attitude was exhibited.

Before the Congress took place the capitalist press calmly and confidently expressed the hope that the Congress would occasion no ground for alarm or agitation. The attention of the capitalist press, as well as of the great masses of workers, was concentrated on one question, that is the question of the Anglo-Russian Committee. The capitalist press, which was well informed, "prophesied" that the Committee would be dissolved, and that thereby a *lamentable* page of trade union history would be concluded.

The prophecy came literally true. The Congress confirmed the opinion of the General Council that "no signs whatever exist of any intention on the part of the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions to observe those conditions, the fulfilment of which is an absolute necessity for the future existence of the Anglo-Russian Committee."

This very short formula, with 2,550,000 votes for it, 620,000 votes against it, and 800,000 abstentions, received ratification.

Why was the Anglo-Russian Committee Smashed

What is the political substance of this act? The "Daily Herald" has it, that the cause of the decision of the Congress to break up the Anglo-Russian Committee was the fact that "at the present moment Russian methods do not harmonize with the methods and traditions of the English trade union movement." The "Times" gives a more honest exposition of the idea of this *Æsop* reference to "harmony." It says: "The Anglo-Russian Committee undoubtedly influenced the increased activity of the English trade union movement during recent years." But even the statements of the "Times" lack proper fullness. We fail to see why "the increase of activity" should be such an unwelcome thing for a living movement. Hence it seems to us that if we want an explanation we had better turn to that full-blossomed reactionary paper of the English die-hards, the "Daily Mail."

This paper, which openly preaches Fascism, has the pluck to call things by their right names. It says that *the Congress*, under the chairmanship of that "left wing" rhetorician, George Hicks, who made so many empty-sounding phrases about the first Socialist State, *approved and supported the policy of the English Government in regard to the U.S.S.R.*

This explanation needs no commentary nor any corroboration. The rupture of the Anglo-Russian Committee—both as to form and substance—is a repetition and a continuation of the policy of the rupture of the diplomatic relations and of the trade agreement with the U.S.S.R. on the part of the Baldwin-Hicks Government.

It is not an accident that this same Congress which took upon itself the responsibility for the break-up of the Anglo-Russian Committee made a jumble of the proposition on the problem of China—when the part of defending British imperialism in China was taken by none other than Ben Tillett, who at the time of the imperialist war gained notoriety as a recruiting agent of the British Government—but in the course of time became a member of that delegation which had a share in creating the Anglo-Russian Committee.

We may add, at the same time, that the work of the Congress, in honour of the Empire, went hand-in-glove with a frenzied campaign of malice and hate against the English Communists and against the Minority Movement.

A Reactionary Constitution

The Congress of Edinburgh and its resolutions have to be examined in the light of those events which we have witnessed in England in the course of recent years.

The Congresses of the trade unions of England are conducted on the basis of the constitution which Mr. J. Mawdsley, a reactionary leader of British trade unionism, drew up in 1894. Mr. Mawdsley's object, in the first place, was to protect the Congress against the penetration of the new hopes and stirrings of the workers of England, and to make the Congress a reliable instrument in the hands of permanent officials, who had learned to serve in faith and truth the interests of the ruling classes. At particular times in the history of England the workers of England managed by the power of attack to break through the barbed wire fences of the reactionary constitution and bring their desires and their strivings upon the platform of the Congress. The most significant period of this character is the time between the Congress of Plymouth in 1923 and the Congress of Bournemouth in 1926.

The Congress of Plymouth called forth a general indignation in the trade union movement of Great Britain. Trade unions began to talk of the necessity of a radical reorganisation of trade unions in general and of Trades Union Congresses in particular. The Plymouth Congress became known—and with every justification—as a place for the washing of dirty linen. Trade unionists remarked that the position of the workers of England was quite lost sight of at the Congress, and all that was thought of were the contentions and conflicts between particular leaders of particular crafts of the trade unions, who were striving to enlarge the sphere of their influence.

The Congress of Plymouth coincided with the moment of an acute change in the feelings of the workers of England. At that time the English workers began to recover from the blows which came in the wake

Edinburgh—continued

of "Black Friday" in 1921. The Plymouth Congress, in essence, still continued under the rule of that bureaucratic gang, which took "Black Friday" to be the end of all manner of post-war disturbances and as the beginning of the return of English trade unionism to the old ways of reformism and Conservatism. Naturally, after the Congress of Plymouth, the struggle against the old officialdom became markedly more acute, and at the time of the Congress of Hull (1924) the old officials manifested an obvious bewilderment in the presence of the growing discontent on the part of great masses of workers.

The old officials for a short while took, as it were, a seat in the background. In the foreground appeared experienced jugglers and clever rhetoricians who, with the help of sounding phrases and fine slogans in various forms, tried to adapt themselves to the new attitude of the working classes.

The Triumph of Officialism

The same picture, only more finished, we see at the Congress of Scarborough. In the period which intervened between these two Congresses the Anglo-Russian Committee was formed.

The events which took place after the Congress of Scarborough created a new situation. The English bureaucrats succeeded once more in bringing about the "Black Friday" experience but on a larger scale. In April, 1921, the Thomases and the Williamses managed to avert the strike, and in that way to isolate the miners and doom them to defeat. In 1926 the General Strike became a fact, but it was betrayed in the most cruel and knavish way. After the betrayal the old officialdom began to consolidate itself again. It is striving once more to turn backwards the wheel of history, and make of the English trade unions a mere annexe of the institution of capitalist power.

The Congress of 1926, at Bournemouth, and the last Congress—the fifty-ninth—not long ago held at Edinburgh, which, so to speak, put the finishing touch on the policy of black treachery of the 12th of May, 1926, were both victories of the trade union bureaucrats. The consolidation of the reactionary officialism of 1926-27 greatly differs, however, from the consolidation which we saw in the years that followed "Black Friday."

The most important new factor in the English working-class movement is, incontestably the Minority Movement, which began to form soon after the Plymouth Congress, and which has by this time become a growing organisation, which unites and binds together—but, above all, which organises—the most capable, revolutionary elements of English trade unionism. At the last Congresses, both at Bournemouth and at Edinburgh, we saw not only the consolidation of reactionary bureaucracy, but also a clean-cut differentiation in the English Labour movement. The old trade union bureaucrats still hold the power tenaciously and firmly in their hands; they control all the machinery of trade unionism. Yet the ground is beginning to slip from under the feet of the old permanent bureaucracy. The main triumph, the essential achievement, of the Minority Movement,

consists in the fact that it has infringed the principle of the permanence of trade union officials. So far we have seen the beginning of the change of leaders only in the miners' union. But the English bureaucrats know quite well that here we have to do *not* with a casual and isolated movement, but with the beginning of a new process which threatens to throw them entirely overboard. This is just the reason why the struggle of the bureaucracy of the English trade unions at recent Congresses has been marked by such extraordinary tension. *Bureaucracy is fighting for its own hand, for its long-held seats, for its future existence.*

This animal instinct of self-preservation has pervaded all the expressions of the officials of English trade unionism, and all the activity of the General Council and its upholders from the 12th of May, 1926, up to the present day.

It is, of course, obvious that the General Council will even now have to manoeuvre and adapt itself to the attitude of the working classes. It is trying to represent the case in this way, viz., that the rupture of the Anglo-Russian Committee was provoked by the congratulatory telegram of the All-Russian Trades Union Council to the Edinburgh Congress, and by the answer of the president of the All-Russian Trades Union Council to the indictment of the General Council. There is no need to prove that these reasons were *an after-thought*. The break-up of the Anglo-Russian Committee was decided upon and anticipated long before the time when the president of the A.-R.T.U.C. began to compare the reply to the indictment of the General Council and the congratulatory telegram to the Edinburgh Congress.

The indictment itself, as far as the main point of the matter is concerned, was, so to say, the ideological preparation for the break-up. It was not an accident that that same General Council who so energetically protested against the publication of the correspondence on the part of the A.-R.T.U.C., should have thought it possible to publish its indictment against the A.-R.T.U.C. without waiting for a reply. The boldest reactionaries of the General Council did not at all shrink

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Analysis and Lessons of the International Sacco and Vanzetti Campaign

John Pepper

THE international protest against the infamous execution of Sacco and Vanzetti grew into a campaign of extraordinary world significance. For many years no campaign for international solidarity has grown to this gigantic extent.

The movement became really international in the literal sense of the word. It developed not only in the United States of America, but also in all the countries of Europe; embraced the whole territory of the Soviet Union, flooded Latin America—and reached even to Australia and to South Africa. Not only countries but whole continents were gripped by the movement.

The movement was of world significance also in its depth. Not only did it stir up the broadest strata of the proletariat, but it also took with it exceptionally broad sections of petty-bourgeoisie, intelligentsia, and even certain parts of the bourgeoisie.

The movement was of world significance in that it rose with an elementary spontaneity that showed clearly how, notwithstanding the stabilisation of capitalism, but coming from the very contradictions and antagonisms created in the process of this stabilisation, sudden events can disturb the whole capitalist world.

The movement was of world significance also because it did not stick at mere platonic protest resolutions, but culminated in tremendous mass actions. It grew from mass meetings into protest strikes, into great street demonstrations and General Strikes in some countries. Bloody clashes characterised its course not only in Boston and New York, but also in Paris, Leipzig, Geneva, Cherbourg and London. The Sacco-Vanzetti movement erected the first barricades seen on the streets of Paris since the days of the Commune. It gave into the hands of hundreds of thousands of workers in New York, for the first time, the weapon of the political strike. For the first time in many decades the masses of American workers became an integral part of an international proletarian movement. The best evidence of the revolutionary spirit of the masses are the hundreds of workers, black-listed, arrested, wounded and dead.

The International Movement

With respect to its international character, its geographical extent, its depth, its mass character, its spontaneity, and its strength in action, the Sacco-Vanzetti movement excels every other campaign for international solidarity of recent years. Neither the international acts of solidarity for the British miners' strike nor for the Chinese revolution were able to develop the same extent and spirit, although objectively they involved events of greater importance. A million workers were involved in the British miners' strike, and the outcome of the struggle had a direct effect upon the destiny of the mine-workers in other countries. The Chinese revolution, one of the most tremendous revolu-

tions in the history of the world, has an extraordinarily great bearing upon the whole future not only of other colonial countries, but also of the European proletariat. Compared with these tremendous world events, the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti was a much smaller affair, involving not millions of fighting masses but the fate of two individuals.

This inverse ratio between the objective importance of the events and the power and extent of the international movement to which they gave rise, compels careful consideration, and makes necessary an analysis of those factors which gave to the Sacco-Vanzetti movement a much greater international response than was met with by the British miners' strike or by the Chinese revolution.

A Class Analysis

We need a class analysis of the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign in order to find the explanation of this remarkable fact. Everywhere the chief protagonist of the campaign for the British miners' strike and for the Chinese revolution, was the *working class*, just as it constituted the chief driving force also of the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign. The following clear basic factors are before us:

1. *The general international situation* which, owing to the resentment latent everywhere among the masses, is inclined to give rise to outbreaks of mass passion and mass struggle on every important occasion.

2. *The leftward swing of broad strata of the working class* in a whole series of countries, upon the basis of which proletarian solidarity develops more and more strongly on a national as well as an international scale. The General Strike and the miners' strike in Britain, the July insurrection in Vienna, the tremendous mass demonstration of the Red Front Fighters League in Berlin, the new strike wave in Budapest are similar evidence of the leftward move of the toiling masses, as was the tremendous Sacco-Vanzetti campaign. When the leaders of the Russian Opposition argue to the contrary, and chatter about a move to the right of the international Labour movement, they turn reality upside down, and only prove that they are divorcing themselves at a constantly faster tempo not only from the toiling masses of the Soviet Union, but also from the international Labour movement.

3. *The growing influence of the Communist Parties*, which are more and more consciously and energetically taking into their hands the organising and leadership of demonstrations of international solidarity.

In the call for an extension of the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign all these factors played an extraordinarily important role—the fundamental role—but they alone can neither explain the extent nor the vigour of the campaign—since they were also functioning during the campaigns for the British miners' strike and for the Chinese revolution, to a less extent in these two campaigns, however, than in the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign.

Sacco and Vanzetti—continued

There is, therefore, the necessity of analysing also those other factors which were applicable to neither the British miners' strike nor to the Chinese revolution, but which played a great role in the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign. In advance, let us set forth here the difference between the international campaigns for the miners' strike and the Chinese revolution on the one hand, and the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign on the other. The first-mentioned campaigns appeared right from the start as proletarian campaigns. The Sacco-Vanzetti campaign, however, in its first phase bore a "general" character, in which there participated not only the proletariat but other classes—petty-bourgeoisie, intelligentsia and sections of the bourgeoisie. It was just this "general" character of the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign in its first phase which to a great extent contributed to its extension. But it must now be explained how it could happen that the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign—at least in its first phase—did not confine itself to the proletariat, but carried with it also large sections of the bourgeois world. It is surely something quite out of the ordinary for the bourgeois intelligentsia, and even the bourgeoisie, to participate in the defence of two common labourers, two unknown proletarians, who are in addition actually anarchists charged with robbery and murder, found guilty by all the legal authorities of the United States and condemned to death.

The "Humanitarian" Side of the Campaign

Let us try to enumerate the weightiest of those factors responsible for the participation of the non-proletarian elements in the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign. These factors are:

1. *The humanitarian, "mankind - in - general," "above-all-classes" character of the Sacco-Vanzetti affair.*—The Sacco-Vanzetti case did not appear on its face as a cause of the proletariat. They were not accused of a political crime at all. Their arrest had no connection with any sort of proletarian mass action, neither with a mass strike, nor with an uprising, *i.e.*, with no event which clearly and openly menaced the maintenance of capitalist exploitation of bourgeois political rule. Sacco and Vanzetti were not Communists, but declared themselves to be anarchists. The menace of anarchism, moreover, has long since lost its importance for the bourgeoisie. Anarchism is no mass movement. The bourgeoisie to-day fears Communism—the ideology of the revolutionary masses of workers—a thousand times more than it ever feared anarchism. To be an anarchist is to-day a much smaller crime in the eyes of the petty-bourgeoisie than to be a Communist.

From the beginning it was quite clear that neither Sacco nor Vanzetti had anything whatever to do with the robbery-and-murder charge, that they were absolutely innocent, that all the evidence against them had simply been manufactured by the police. Not only every worker but also every petty-bourgeois had the feeling that to-morrow or the day after the police and the courts might proceed against him also with the same venal means.

Drama

The specially "dramatic" circumstances of the Sacco-Vanzetti affair had a very strong influence upon the imagination of the petty-bourgeoisie and of the intelligentsia. For nearly seven years the two men sat face to face with death. From month to month, from year to year, their execution was postponed with a juridical pedantry, a brutality of which only the American bourgeoisie is capable.

The circumstances also that Sacco and Vanzetti were to be executed "legally," with all the formalities of "legal" murder had a particularly aggravating effect. For dozens to fall in a street battle does not arouse as much sympathy among petty-bourgeois elements as does a single "legal" consciously-prepared execution.

Even the technique of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, which to the non-American world was uncommon and extraordinary, played a big role in arousing petty-bourgeois sympathies. In the mind of the European masses the electric chair—the symbol of mechanised America—was looked upon as something abhorrent, accustomed as they are to the more "handicraft-like" methods of execution in Europe, *viz.*, gallows or axe. The effect of the uncustomary method of execution was more and more aggravating and repulsive. It could be noted, *e.g.*, that although the European and American petty-bourgeoisie received the execution of Chinese Communists with satisfaction and agreement, it was, nevertheless, offended at the "primitive barbarity" of the method of throttling with bare hands. The "technical progress" of the electric chair in America went just as strongly against the grain of the European petty-bourgeoisie as did the "technical backwardness" of the naked hands in China.

All these points which, in the last analysis, are related to the fact that the death sentence against Sacco and Vanzetti did not appear related to any important proletarian mass action, made it possible for broad strata of the petty-bourgeoisie and intelligentsia to look upon the Sacco-Vanzetti affair as a matter involving "humanity," and therefore to affiliate to the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign in its first phase. The participation of these strata in the campaign as a matter of course took on a pacifist character (the petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeois intelligentsia feel happiest when they can appear as representing no classes, but as speaking for "humanity," "mankind," etc.). It may even be noted that in certain strata of the proletariat, also where pacifist humanitarian illusions are still potent, these "dramatic" points played a big role.

American-European Enmity

2. *The antagonism between debtor Europe and creditor America.*—The growing indebtedness of the European countries to American imperialism increases not only Europe's dependence upon America, but also results in discontent and—even if for the time being still weak—signs of resentment on the part of Europe. Not only the petty-bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia but also certain parts of the bourgeoisie in many European countries are opposed to "Uncle Shylock," indignant at him for being so slow to advance his loans and so heavy in his demands for interest on his dollars.

Sacco and Vanzetti—continued

The Sacco-Vanzetti affair was exploited by the European bourgeoisie to give a bit of free rein to that discontent and rebellion against American finance capital which it dare not express openly. Especially in France, where, because of the war debts, bitterness is probably greatest against America, the indignation of the French bourgeoisie against the heartlessness of the American creditor became transformed into indignation against the heartless execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. The Sacco-Vanzetti campaign found a road to the "heart" of the European bourgeoisie through its safe deposits which are now menaced by America.

3. *The fiasco of the Geneva Disarmament Conference*.—The Anglo-American conflict was greatly intensified by the failure of the Geneva Conference for naval disarmaments. America exploited the collapse of the negotiations not only for an immediate increase in its naval armaments, but also for a venomous campaign against British imperialists, which it charged with responsibility for the failure of the conference and for the continuation of naval armaments. Then came the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign and British bourgeois public opinion—never at a loss when faced with an opportunity for a counter-attack—exploited the Sacco-Vanzetti affair in order to discredit the American bourgeoisie. The British bourgeoisie attempted to prove, to some extent, that the same America which was guilty of the inhuman destruction of Sacco and Vanzetti could not be innocent of the brutality of naval rivalry.

4. *Latin-American solidarity*.—Embitterment, hatred and indignation are of late rising to a truly obvious extent in the countries of Central and South America. The behaviour of American imperialism in Mexico, and especially its bloody intervention in Nicaragua, have made the American bourgeoisie the hated common enemy of all Latin-Americans. A direct resistance against the domination of American imperialism to-day would mean economic oppression and political destruction. The protest campaign against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti thus became resistance against the American bourgeoisie in an indirect and thus less dangerous form. Sacco and Vanzetti were, as is known, Italians, and in their presentation in the whole Latin-American press they appear as the victims of Anglo-Saxon arrogance and brutality, as symbols to a certain degree of the struggle of Latin-American nationalism against the imperialism of the United States.

Reason of Petty Bourgeois Participation

All these factors—the "general humanitarian" character of the Sacco-Vanzetti affair, the antagonism of debtor Europe to creditor America, the Anglo-American rivalry, the resistance of Latin America against American imperialism—furnish the explanation of how it could happen that broad masses of petty-bourgeoisie and intelligentsia could participate in the first phase of the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign, and that certain sections of the bourgeoisie in the beginning looked with favour upon this campaign or at least were neutral. Thus it could happen that in the first phase of the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign hundreds upon hundreds of bourgeois newspapers came out against the execution of Sacco and

Vanzetti, thus the unusual situation could arise that the international bourgeoisie showed itself divided in its verdict upon the execution of two revolutionary workers, that a real breach had been made in the dam of capitalist solidarity, usually so high and broad and impenetrable on questions of class justice. Usually, when the life or death of imprisoned revolutionaries is involved, the bourgeoisie tries to present the representatives of the proletariat as bloodhounds who have deserved a thousand deaths, or else simply to smother the whole affair in silence in order to make impossible a wide campaign for the defence. In the Sacco-Vanzetti affair, however, the condemned were depicted in the most sentimental colours, the most touching scenes from their family life were painted in word and picture, and the whole affair was given an unprecedentedly extensive publicity without precedent. Usually the bourgeoisie utilises its monopoly of the means of influencing public opinion (press, telegraph agencies, radio service) against the victims of bourgeois class justice, or else it simply bans all news. In comparison with the bourgeois press, the proletarian newspapers are weak and small, they can reach only a relatively small section of the masses. Very often if the masses of workers remain immovable in vital concerns of the proletarian struggle this happens only because they are under the terrific pressure of bourgeois press and public opinion, or because, owing to the exclusion of news by the bourgeois news monopoly, they can learn little or nothing about the events.

The Common Cause of "Justice"

The sympathy of broad petty-bourgeois circles and the good wishes or neutrality of certain sections of the bourgeoisie therefore made it possible in the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign to arouse much broader strata of the workers to indignation and participation in the campaign than was the case in former international movements which from the beginning had to face the undivided resistance of the whole bourgeois world. This (besides the already-mentioned basic factors: the general international situation, the leftward swing of the toiling masses, the growth of the Communist Parties) is the explanation for the uncommon breadth and depth of the international Sacco-Vanzetti campaign.

This analysis is valid, however, only for the first phase of the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign. The second phase presents a fundamentally different picture. When the workers, gripped by hatred and bitterness, went into action with ever sharper means of mass action, strikes and demonstrations on behalf of the lives of their proletarian class comrades, the picture quickly changed. The bourgeoisie of all countries immediately relegated to the rear all its differences with the American bourgeoisie and openly and defiantly became one with the executioner bourgeoisie of the United States of America. The same German, French and British bourgeoisie which had so sentimentally published resolutions, editorials and telegrams against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti immediately black-listed hundreds of striking workers and ordered the shooting down of the demonstrating masses with a brutality equal to that of their American prototypes. This same petty-bourgeois and capitalist who in the name of "humanity" had wailed

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Edinburgh—continued

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from revealing the fact that the break-up of the Anglo-Russian Committee was anticipated by them.

We have already remarked that the "Daily Mail" correctly formulated the essential aim and the essential design of the rupture of the Anglo-Russian Committee. It was all a matter of *helping the Conservative Government in the business of organising a war against the U.S.S.R.* No doubt there were also other reasons which forced the General Council to take this step.

Notwithstanding the purpose of the General Council, in spite of its continuous and stubborn sabotage, the Anglo-Russian Committee was an agency for bringing together the workers of England and of the U.S.S.R. This association was in open contradiction to the new course taken by the General Council. The General Council could not fail to see at the same time that the influence of the ideas and views which had protected the A.R.T.U.C. within the Anglo-Russian Committee would more and more meet with the sympathy of the great masses, and would at the same time weaken the position of the General Council.

The Edinburgh Congress is a confirmation of that policy which the Comintern took on the question of the Anglo-Russian Committee. The leaders of the Opposi-

tion (A.R.C.P.) tried to assure us at the plenary session of the Comintern in May that the Anglo-Russian Committee was a millstone round the neck of the workers of the U.S.S.R. All that comrade Trotsky has now to do, if he wishes to follow up the argument, is to publish an expression of gratitude to Thomas, Clynes and Hicks for the removal of this millstone from the neck of the Russian workers.

But the Opposition will scarcely do this. It will invent some kind of new sophism in order to justify its argument, that the Soviet workers ought on their own initiative, to have destroyed this agency which caused so much inconvenience to the ruling classes of England and to their lackeys.

But such sophisms have little interest for us. The work of the Edinburgh Congress show that *the struggle for the Anglo-Russian Committee was a struggle against the English reformists and their masters. The struggle against the Anglo-Russian Committee was, on the other hand, the business of the English Conservative Government and of its lieutenants among the General Council.*

The correct position which we have taken in this matter will result in the fact that the close contact between the workers of England and the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. will go on, and become stronger, in spite of all the endeavours of those General Council members who so faithfully and so despicably do the will of their capitalist masters.

Sacco and Vanzetti—continued

(Continued from p. 292.)

so much against the extinction of two human lives now instantaneously killed and wounded dozens upon dozens of workers solely because they no longer fought only with resolutions, but with revolutionary actions for the rescue of the two workers doomed to execution.

On the basis of the above analysis the following lessons are to be drawn from the international Sacco-Vanzetti campaign :

(1) In the atmosphere of present-day sharp class conflict the bitterness of the proletarian masses may lead unexpectedly to spontaneous revolutionary outbreaks over any more important event. The Communist Parties must not be caught unprepared.

(2) Every important event in the proletarian class struggle during the present period show a tendency to become an international event.

(3) It is of special importance to analyse carefully every split within the bourgeois classes, and exploit it to the limit. We must endeavour to win over the broadest possible strata of petty-bourgeoisie, peasantry and intelligentsia for the proletarian objects of the working class, or, at least, to neutralise them. At the same time, however, we must from the beginning be

clear in our own minds that these petty-bourgeois allies or fellow-travellers will always remain uncertain allies, who at the first sharpening of the situation will desert and go over into the enemy camp.

(4) For the purpose of mobilising the broadest masses we must strengthen our work in such united front organisations as the International Red Aid (I.C.W.P.A.).

(5) The forms and nuances of the powerful pacifist sentiment which, as was shown also in the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign, still prevail in broad strata of the proletariat, must be painstakingly studied and fought on the basis of our experiences in these campaigns.

(6) The news monopoly of the bourgeoisie must be broken through just as far as this is possible in capitalist society by the extension of the independent Labour press and the independent proletarian news service.

(7) And finally, the most important : that only the Communist Party is the sole reliable organiser of the revolutionary mass action of the proletariat. Even the most elementary, most spontaneous mass movement cannot effectively fight the capitalists or defeat capitalism if it is not organised and led through the Communist Party. It was a great victory for the Communist International that, in Europe as well as in America, the Communist Parties were equal to their tasks in the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign, and decisively and unhesitatingly put themselves at the head of the mass movements.

The International Situation

Stalin's Speech at the Plenum of the Soviet C.P.—August 1st, 1927

Opposition Attacks against Comintern Sections

COMRADES, I should like first of all to deal with the question of the attacks by comrades Kamenev, Zinoviev and Trotsky against sections of the Comintern—against the Polish section of the Comintern, against the Austrian, the British, and the Chinese sections. I should like to touch upon this question because they, the Oppositionists, have confused the issue here and throw dust into the eyes of the fraternal parties, whereas what we need here is clearness and not Opposition twaddle.

The Question of the Polish Party

Comrade Zinoviev has made here the bold assertion that if, in the Polish Party, there is a right-wing deviation represented by comrade Varsky, it is the Communist International, the existing leadership of the Comintern, that is to be blamed for it. He said that if at one time comrade Varsky stood upon the platform—and he did stand upon the platform—of supporting Pilsudski's troops, the Comintern must be blamed for it. Comrades, this is absolutely untrue, it is the very opposite to the truth. I should like to allude to facts, to passages in the stenographic record of the Plenum of the C.C. and C.C.C. of July last year that are familiar to you, to refer to and to cite the evidence of such a man as Djerzhinsky, who stated quite categorically that if there was a right wing deviation in the Polish Party, it had been cultivated by none other than comrade Zinoviev.

This happened during the days of the so-called Pilsudski revolt, when we, the members of the Polish Commission of the E.C.C.I. and the C.C. of our Party, among whom were Djerzhinsky, Unschlicht, myself, Zinoviev and others, were working out the policy for the Polish Communist Party. Comrade Zinoviev, as the President of the Comintern, submitted then his draft proposals in which he said, among other things, that at the given moment in Poland, when the struggle between the forces standing behind Pilsudski and those supporting the Witos government was in full swing, the policy of neutrality on the part of the Communist Party was inadmissible, and that in the meantime no sharp action ought to be taken against Pilsudski.

Some of us, including Djerzhinsky, objected there and then that this was a wrong policy, that would only confuse the Polish Communist Party. It should be stated that not only was the policy of neutrality inadmissible, but also that of supporting Pilsudski. After some objections that were neither strongly nor persistently urged, this policy was accepted, with our amendments. This means to say that it does not require any great courage to take Varsky to task, for he committed an error and has been properly reprimanded for it; but to shift the blame from the guilty to the innocent, to

shift the whole blame for cultivating the right wing deviation in the Polish Party—the blame of Zinoviev—on to the Comintern, is to commit a crime against the Comintern. In order to substantiate my statement, permit me to quote here the text of the evidence given by Djerzhinsky and Unschlicht:

Report of Comrades Unschlicht and Djerzhinsky.

At the Politbureau meeting on June 3rd, when the question of the English events was under discussion, comrade Molotov, in his speech, said among other things:

"I have before me the policy worked out by the Polish Commission, subsequently adopted by the Politbureau and by the Comintern. It begins as follows: 'The policy of neutrality for our Party would be inadmissible. It would be equally inadmissible to support Pilsudski.' Everything seems to be correctly stated. But bear in mind that the second sentence in the text was not inserted by comrade Zinoviev, and that in the original draft of comrade Zinoviev it was absent. Do you deny it, comrade Zinoviev?"—(Zinoviev: I do.)

As Secretary and member of the Commission on Polish affairs, I was present at the meeting on May 15th when the aforesaid policy for the C.C. of the C.P. of Poland was worked out, and I therefore wish to furnish the following testimony of the facts on the question touched upon by comrade Molotov.

The draft of the policy was written by comrade Zinoviev in his own hand. The original text began with the words: 'The policy of neutrality on the part of our Party would be inadmissible,' and it went on to say: 'In the meantime no sharp action ought to be taken against Pilsudski. . . .'

After an exchange of opinions, a number of amendments were incorporated in comrade Zinoviev's draft, notably after the first sentence were inserted the following words: 'It would be equally inadmissible to support Pilsudski.'

This amendment was incorporated in the draft of policy on the initiative of comrade Stalin.

UNSCHLICHT."

5th June, 1926.

Everything happened precisely as described above by comrade Unschlicht.

F. DJERZHINSKY."

You will say that this is a minor detail, and that I ought not to dwell upon it. But, comrades, this is not a minor detail. The struggle against the right wing deviation in the Polish Party goes on, and it will go on.

The International Situation—continued

Comrade Zinoviev has—let me see, how shall I put it mildly?—the boldness to assert that the right wing deviation is supported by the present leadership of the Comintern. But the Report of Djerzhinsky and Unschlicht says the opposite. It says that comrade Zinoviev is libelling the Comintern, when he shifts the blame from the guilty to the innocent. It is the usual thing for Zinoviev, and for him it is nothing new. Nevertheless, it is our duty always to expose this libellous trick of his.

Concerning Austria

Comrade Zinoviev said here that the Austrian Communist Party is weak, that it was unable to assume the leadership during the recent events in Vienna. This is both true and untrue. That the Austrian Communist Party is weak, is true. But to deny that it has acted properly, is to libel it. Yes, it is still weak; but its weakness is due, among other things, to the fact that there is still absent the profound revolutionary crisis of capitalism which aroused the masses, which disorganises the Social-Democracy and rapidly develops the chances of Communism; it is weak because it is young, because in Austria there has long since been established the domination of the Social-Democratic "left," which knows how to carry out right, opportunist actions, under the cover of left phrases; because it is impossible to smash the Social-Democracy with one blow. But what was the purport of comrade Zinoviev's argument? He hinted (not daring to speak out straight) that if the Communist Party in Austria was weak, the Comintern should be blamed. This is, apparently, what he wanted to convey. But he certainly missed the mark. It is a calumny. On the contrary, since comrade Zinoviev has ceased to be the President of the Comintern, the Austrian Communist Party has got rid of the wire-pulling, of the haphazard interference in its internal life, and was thus given the opportunity to develop. Does not the fact that it was able to take the most active part in the events in Vienna, that it gained for itself the sympathies of the masses of the workers—does not that show that the Austrian Communist Party is growing, that it is becoming transformed into a mass Party? How can such obvious facts be denied?

The Attack on the British Communist Party

It has been asserted by comrade Zinoviev that the British Communist Party did not gain anything from the General Strike and the coal strike, that it even emerged from the fight in a weaker state. This is absolutely wrong. It is wrong because the prestige of the British Communist Party is growing day by day. This can be denied only by the blind. This is demonstrated at least by the fact that whilst formerly it was practically ignored by the British bourgeoisie, now on the country, it is bitterly persecuted, and not only the bourgeoisie, but also the General Council and the Labour Party are organising a ruthless crusade against their own Communists. Why hitherto were the British Communists more or less tolerated? Because the Communist Party was weak, and its influence over the masses was weak. Why has it now ceased to be tolerated, why is it now so furiously attacked? Because the Commun-

ist Party is feared as a force, because the leaders of the Labour Party and the General Council fear it as their gravedigger. This is ignored by comrade Zinoviev.

I do not deny that generally the Western sections of the Comintern are still more or less weak. This cannot be denied. But what are the causes of this? The main causes are those of which I have just spoken: firstly, the absence of the profound revolutionary crisis which stirs the masses, arouses them and turns them abruptly in the direction of Communism; secondly, the fact that in all the countries in Western Europe the predominant force among the workers is still the Social-Democratic Parties, which are older than the Communist Parties, that have recently come into the world, and which cannot be expected to break up all the Social-Democratic parties with a single blow. And yet, is it not a fact that in spite of all these circumstances, the Communist Parties in the West are growing, that they are constantly gaining ground among the masses of the workers, that some of them have already become, and others are becoming, real mass Parties of the proletariat?

But there is yet another cause which hinders the rapid growth of the Communist Parties in the West. It is the splitting work of the Opposition, of the same Opposition that is present here, in this very hall. What is necessary for the Communist Parties to grow at a rapid pace? The iron discipline of the Comintern, the absence of a split in its sections. What does the Opposition do? It has created in Germany a second Party, the Party of Maslov and Ruth Fischer. It is trying to create similar groups in other European countries, too. It, our Opposition, has created a second Party in Germany, with a Central Committee, a central organ, and a parliamentary faction; it has organised a split in the Comintern, knowing full well that in this case the split would be bound to check the growth of the Communist Party—and yet it turns around and yells (winking at the Comintern) that the Communist Parties in the West are growing slowly. Here, indeed, is a case of unbounded impudence. . . .

Concerning the Chinese Communist Party

The Oppositionists scream about the Social-Democratic, Menshevist errors of the Chinese Communist Party, or rather of its leadership. This is correct. But they blame for this the Comintern leadership, and this is altogether wrong. On the contrary, the mistakes of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party were systematically corrected by the Comintern. This can be denied only by the blind. You know this from the press, from "Pravda," from the "Communist International"; you know it from the decisions of the Comintern, you know it from comrade Bukharin's reports. The Opposition has never been able, and never will be able to point to a single tactic or a single resolution of the Comintern that could foster a Menshevist deviation in the C.C. of the Chinese Communist Party, for such tactics and resolutions do not exist in nature. It is foolish to assume that the Comintern must invariably be blamed for any Menshevist deviation that might spring up in any Communist Party or in its C.C. Comrade Kameney demands, whence could Menshevist errors originate in the Chinese Communist Party? and he replies that they could only originate from the incorrect leadership of the Comintern. And I ask: whence did the

The International Situation—continued

Menshevist errors of the German Communist Party come during the revolution of 1923? Whence did Brandlerism come? Who supported it? Is it not a fact that the Menshevist errors of the C.C. of the Communist Party were supported by the present leader of the Opposition, comrade Trotsky? Why did not comrade Kamenev say then that the appearance of Brandlerism was due to the improper leadership of the Comintern? Kamenev and Trotsky have forgotten the lessons of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. They have forgotten that as the revolution unfolds itself, there are bound to appear in the Communist Parties a right and a left wing, of which the former does not wish to break with the past, and the latter does not wish to take stock of the present. They have forgotten that without these deviations there are no revolutions. What happened in our country in October, 1917, did we not have then in our Party a right and a left deviation? Have comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev really forgotten about it? Do you remember, comrades, the history of the Menshevik errors of Kamenev and Zinoviev in October? Whence came these errors? Who was to blame for it? Would it be reasonable to blame Lenin or the C.C. of the Leninist Party? How could the Opposition "forget" about these and similar facts? How could they "forget" that at the unfolding of the revolution there are always bound to appear in the Party a right and left deviation from Marxism? And what is the task of Marxians, the task of Leninists, in such circumstances? Their task is to strike out at both the left and right wings.

About China

Let us turn to the question of China. I am not going to enlarge upon the mistakes of the Opposition on the question of the character and the outlook of the Chinese revolution. I am not going to do so, because there has been said a good deal, and with sufficient conviction, so that it is not worth while to repeat all that has been said. Neither am I going to enlarge upon the fact that the Chinese revolution at its present stage appears to be a revolution for tariff autonomy (Trotsky). Nor is it worth while enlarging upon the fact that in China there appear to exist no survivals of feudalism, and that if they do exist, they are not of any serious importance, so that the agrarian revolution in China thus becomes quite incomprehensible (Trotsky and Radek). With these and similar errors of the Opposition on the Chinese question, you are probably familiar from our Party press.

Let us pass on to the question of the fundamental starting points of Leninism in the solution of questions relating to the revolutionary movement in the colonial and subject countries?

What is the starting point of the Comintern, and generally of the Communist Parties, in settling the questions relating to the revolutionary movement in the colonial and subject countries?

It consists in drawing a rigid distinction between the revolution in the imperialist countries, in the countries which oppress other peoples, and the revolution in the colonial and subject countries, in the countries which suffer from the imperialist yoke of other countries. The

revolution is one thing in the imperialist countries: there the bourgeoisie is the oppressor of other nations; there the bourgeoisie is counter-revolutionary through all the stages of the revolution; there the national aspect is lacking as a factor in the struggle for freedom. Quite a different thing is the revolution in the colonial and subject countries: there the imperialist yoke of other countries constitutes one of the factors of the revolution; there the yoke is bound to affect also the national bourgeoisie; there the national bourgeoisie may, at a certain stage and for a certain length of time, support the revolutionary movement of their country against imperialism; there the national aspect, as a factor in the struggle for freedom, becomes a factor of revolution. To ignore this distinction, to fail to see the difference, to identify the revolution in the imperialist countries with the revolution in the colonial countries, is to stray from the path of Marxism, from the path of Leninism, and to follow the path of the adherents of the Second International.

Lenin and the Colonial Question

Here is what Lenin said on this subject in his report on the national and colonial question at the Second Congress of the Comintern:

"What constitutes the *most important*, the *fundamental* idea of our theses? The *distinction* between the *oppressed* and the *oppressing* nations. We lay stress on this distinction, as against the position of the Second International and the bourgeois democracy."* (Vol. XVII., p. 274.†)

The fundamental error of the Opposition is that it fails to *appreciate* and to *recognise* this distinction between the revolution of one type and that of another type.

The fundamental mistake of the Opposition is that it *identifies* the revolution of 1905 in Russia, an imperialist country oppressing other nations, with the revolution in China, an oppressed, semi-colonial country, compelled to fight against the imperialistic oppression of other countries.

Here, in Russia, the revolution in 1905 went against the bourgeoisie, against the liberal bourgeoisie, despite the fact that it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Why? Because the liberal bourgeoisie of an imperialist country cannot help being counter-revolutionary. It was for this very reason that the Bolsheviks then could not even talk about temporary blocs and understandings with the liberal bourgeoisie. On these grounds it is asserted by the Opposition that the same policy should be pursued in China through all the stages of the revolutionary movement, that never and under no circumstances are temporary understandings and blocs with the national bourgeoisie admissible in China. But the Opposition forgets that such assertions can be made only by people who fail to understand and to recognise the difference between a revolution in the oppressed countries, and a revolution in the oppressing countries, by people who break away from Leninism, drifting into the fold of the Second International.

* The italics are mine.—J. Stalin.

† This, and all further references to Lenin's works, are from the Russian edition. This also applies to other documents quoted in this speech.

The International Situation—continued

Lenin on Temporary Blocs

Here is what Lenin said about the admissibility of temporary understandings and blocs with the bourgeois emancipation movement in the colonial countries:

"The Communist International should form *temporary understandings*, even *alliances*, with the bourgeois democracy of the colonies and the backward countries, but not merge with it, unconditionally preserving the independence of the proletarian movement, even in its most embryonic form." (Vol. XIX., p. 270). . . . "We, as Communists, must and will *support bourgeois emancipation** movements in the colonial countries only in those cases when these movements are really revolutionary, when their representatives will not hinder us in educating and organising the peasantry and the large masses of the exploited in the revolutionary spirit." (Vol. XVII., pp. 275-276.)

But could it "happen" that Lenin, who thundered against any understandings with the bourgeoisie in Russia, admitted such understandings and blocs in China? Perhaps, Lenin made a mistake? Perhaps he turned from revolutionary tactics to those of opportunism? Of course, not. It "happened" because Lenin understood the difference between a revolution in an oppressed country and a revolution in an oppressing country. It "happened" because Lenin understood that at a certain stage of development the national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries may support the revolutionary movement of their country against foreign imperialism. This the Opposition refuses to understand, and it does so because it breaks with the revolutionary tactics of Lenin, and with the revolutionary tactics of Leninism.

Did you notice that the Opposition leaders in their speeches have carefully evaded these points made by Lenin, although Bukharin in his report has confronted them with these points? Why do they evade these well-known points of policy given by Lenin in regard to colonial and subject countries? Why are they afraid of the truth. Because the policy of Lenin upset the whole political ideology of Trotskyism on questions of the Chinese revolution.

Changes in the Chinese Situation

As to the stages of the Chinese revolution. The Opposition has become so entangled that it now denies the existence of any stages whatsoever in the development of the Chinese revolution. But can there be a revolution without certain stages of development? Was our own revolution without its stages? Take the April theses of Lenin and you will see that Lenin recognised in our revolution two stages: the first stage, the bourgeois-democratic revolution with the agrarian movement as its principal axis, and the second stage, the October revolution with the capture of power by the proletariat as its principal axis. What are the stages of the Chinese revolution? To my mind, there ought to be three: the first stage, the revolution of the common national united front, the Canton period, when the revolution levelled its chief blow against foreign imperialism, whilst

the national bourgeoisie supported the revolutionary movement; the second stage, the bourgeois-democratic revolution, after the emergence of the national troops on the Yangtse river, when the national bourgeoisie turned its back on the revolution, whilst the agrarian movement grew into a mighty upheaval involving the teeming millions of the peasantry (just now the Chinese revolution is in the second stage of its development); the third stage, the Soviet revolution, which has not yet arrived, but which will come. He who fails to see that a revolution cannot but be without certain stages of development, he who fails to see the existence of three stages in the development of the Chinese revolution, is perfectly ignorant both of Marxism and of the Chinese question.

What is the characteristic feature of the first stage in the Chinese revolution? The characteristic feature of the first stage in the Chinese revolution is that, firstly, it was the revolution of the common national united front, and secondly, that it was chiefly directed against the yoke of foreign imperialism (the Hong Kong strike, etc.). Was Canton then the centre of the revolutionary movement in China? Decidedly, it was. This can now be denied only by the blind.

Is it true that the first stage of the colonial revolution must be precisely of such character? I believe it is. In the "Supplementary Theses" of the Second Congress of the Comintern dealing with the revolution in China and in India, it is explicitly stated that in those countries, "the foreign aggression has been obstructing the development of social life all along," that "therefore the *first step* of the revolution in the colonies should be the overthrow of foreign capitalism."* (See Second Congress of C.I., p. 605.)

The outstanding feature of the Chinese revolution consists in the fact that it has gone through this "first step," through the first stage of its development, that it has passed through the period of the revolution of the common national united front, and has entered into the second stage of development—into the period of agrarian revolution.

On the other hand, the outstanding feature, say, of the Turkish revolution (the Kemalists) consists in the fact that it got stranded on the "first step," on the first stage of the bourgeois liberation movement, making no attempt even to pass on to the second stage of its development, to that of the agrarian revolution.

Was it Right to Support the Kuomintang?

What did the Kuomintang and its government represent in the first stage of the revolution, during the Canton period? They represented then a bloc of workers, peasants, bourgeois intellectuals, and the national bourgeoisie. Was Canton then the centre of the revolutionary movement? Was it then the proper policy to support the Canton Kuomintang, as the government of the fight of emancipation against imperialism? Were we right then in extending aid to Canton in China, and, let us say, to Angora in Turkey, when Canton and Angora were waging a fight against imperialism? Yes, we were. We were right, and we followed then in the footsteps of Lenin, for the struggle of Canton and Angora was scattering the forces of imperialism, weakening

* The italics are mine.—J. Stalin.

* The italics are mine.—J. Stalin.

The International Situation—continued

and depriving imperialism of its glory, thereby facilitating the cause of the development of the centre of world revolution, the U.S.S.R. Is it true that the present Opposition leaders supported then, together with us, both Canton and Angora, rendering them a certain amount of assistance? Yes, it is. Let anybody try to question this.

But how is the united front with the national bourgeoisie during the first stage of the colonial revolution to be understood? Does it mean that the Communists should not accentuate the fight of the workers and peasants against the landowners and the national bourgeoisie, that the proletariat should sacrifice its independence in the least degree, even for a single instant? No, it does not mean that. The united front can have a revolutionary meaning only on condition that it does not hinder the Communist Party in conducting its own independent political and organisational activity, in organising the proletariat into an independent political force, in arousing the peasantry against the landlords, and in openly organising the workers' and peasants' revolution, thus creating the conditions for the proletarian hegemony. I believe the case has been proved up to the hilt by comrade Bukharin in his report, on the basis of documents with which everyone is familiar, that it was precisely such an understanding of the united front that was suggested to the Chinese Communist Party by the Comintern.

The Telegram of October 26th.

Comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev alluded here to one single telegram sent to Shanghai on October 26th, 1926, which advised for the time being, until the capture of Shanghai, not to accentuate the agrarian movement. Far be it from me to consider that telegram as right and proper. I never thought nor do I think our Central Committee to be infallible. Mistakes do happen now and then, and that telegram was incontestibly a mistake. But, firstly, that very telegram was retracted by ourselves a few weeks afterwards (in November, 1926) without any advice on the part of the Opposition. Secondly, why has the Opposition recoiled the telegram now, after a lapse of nine months, and why does it conceal from the Party that the telegram was retracted by us nine months ago? It would, therefore, be a malicious calumny to assert that the telegram in question determined the line of our leadership. As a matter of fact, it was an incidental, isolated telegram which was in no way characteristic of the line of the Comintern, and the line of our leadership. This, I repeat, is already clear from the fact that it was retracted a few weeks afterwards in a series of documents which were absolutely characteristic of the line of our leadership.

Permit me to refer to those documents.

The C.I. and the Agrarian Movement

Here, for instance, is a passage from the resolution of the Seventh Plenum of the Comintern in November, 1926, that is, one month after the date of the aforementioned telegram:

"The unique feature of the present situation is its transitional character, when the proletariat

has to choose between the prospect of a bloc with considerable strata of the bourgeoisie, and the prospect of further consolidating its alliance with the peasantry. *If the proletariat fails to launch a radical agrarian programme, it will not be able to draw the peasantry into the revolutionary struggle and will lose the leadership in the national emancipation movement.*"*

And further:

"The National Government of Canton will not be able to retain power, the revolution will not advance towards the complete victory over foreign imperialism and native reaction, unless national liberation is identified with agrarian revolution." (See Resolution of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.)

Here you have a document which really defines the line of the Comintern leadership.

It is very strange that the Opposition leaders avoid mentioning this well-known Comintern document.

Perhaps I shall not sin against modesty if I refer to my own speech in the Chinese Commission of the Comintern, which in the same November, 1926, was working out—of course, not without my participation—the resolution of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum on the Chinese question. That speech since published in pamphlet form, under the title of "Perspectives of the Chinese Revolution." Here are a few quotations from that speech:

"I know that among the Kuomintang people, and even among the Chinese Communists, there are people who do not believe it possible to develop the revolution in the village, fearing that by having the peasantry drawn into the revolutionary movement, the united anti-imperialist front would be broken. This is a profound error, comrades. The anti-imperialist front in China will become stronger and more powerful the quicker and the more thoroughly the Chinese peasantry are drawn into the revolution."

And further:

"I know that among the Chinese Communists there are comrades who believe workers' strikes for better material and legal conditions undesirable, and dissuade the workers from striking.

(A Voice: This was the case in Canton and Shanghai.)

"This is a great mistake, comrades. It implies a grave under-estimation of the role and specific weight of the proletariat in China. This should be put down in the theses as an absolutely negative phenomenon. It would be a great mistake for the Chinese Communists not to take advantage of the present favourable situation to help the workers improve their material and legal conditions, even if by means of strikes. What good is then the revolution in China?" (See Stalin, "On the Perspectives of the Chinese Revolution.")

And here is a third document, dated December, 1926, at a moment when the C.I. was bombarded with declarations from all the cities of China, to the effect that the development of the workers' struggle was leading to

* The italics are mine.—J. Stalin.

The International Situation—continued

a crisis, to unemployment, and to the closing down of factories and workshops:

“The general policy of retreat in the cities, and of ceasing the struggle of the workers for better conditions, is incorrect. In the villages the struggle should be developed, but at the same time the favourable moment should be utilised to improve the material and legal status of the workers, endeavouring in every way to give an organised character to the workers' struggle, so as to prevent excesses and premature action. Particular care should be taken to get the struggle in the cities directed against the big imperialists, so as to retain the petty and middle bourgeoisie of China as far as possible in the united front against the common foe. The system of conciliation boards, arbitration courts, etc., we consider expedient, providing that a proper labour policy be secured in these institutions. At the same time we deem it necessary to say that it is absolutely inadmissible to issue decrees prohibiting strikes, workers' meetings, etc. In view of the importance of this question, we ask you to send regular information.”

The Warning of the C.I.

A fourth document, issued six weeks prior to Chiang Kai Shek's *coup d'état*:

“It is necessary to increase the activity of the Kuomintang and Communist nuclei in the army, and to organise them where none exist, but where it is possible to organise them. Where the organisation of Communist nuclei is impossible, it is necessary to carry on increased activity with the aid of secret Communists.

“It is necessary to steer our course towards the arming of the workers and the peasants, the transformation of the local peasant committees into actual organs of authority, with the organisation of self-defence, and so on.

“It is necessary that everywhere the Communist Party shall act as such: the policy of voluntary semi-legality is inadmissible; *the Communist Party may not act as a brake on the mass movement; the Communist Party should not shield the treacherous and reactionary policy of the Kuomintang right wingers; in order to expose them, it is necessary to mobilise the masses around the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party.*

“It is necessary to draw the attention of workers who are faithful to the revolution to the fact that at the present time the Chinese revolution, in view of the re-grouping of the class forces and the concentration of the imperialist armies, is passing through a critical period, and that further victories will be possible only if a determined course will be taken to develop the mass movement. Otherwise the revolution is menaced with grave peril. For this reason following the policy laid down is just now more essential than ever.”

And at a still earlier date, in April, 1926, a whole year prior to the *coup d'état* by the Kuomintang right

wing and Chiang Kai Shek, the Comintern had warned the Chinese Communist Party, urging that it was “essential to work either for the withdrawal or expulsion of the right wingers from the Kuomintang.”

This is how the Comintern understood, and continues to understand the tactics of the united front against imperialism during the first stage of the colonial revolution.

Does the Opposition know about these documents? Of course, it does. Why then does it hold its tongue about them? Because it wants a quarrel, and not the truth.

The Former Attitude of the Opposition

And yet there was a time when the present Opposition leaders, particularly comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev, did understand something about Leninism, and in the main, they advocated the same policy in regard to the Chinese revolutionary movement as was carried out by the Comintern, and which had been outlined to us by comrade Lenin in his theses. I have in mind the Sixth Plenum of the Communist International in February-March, 1926, when comrade Zinoviev was the president of the Comintern, when he was still a Leninist and had not yet gone over to the Trotsky camp. I refer to the Sixth Plenum of the Communist International because there exists a resolution of that Plenum on the Chinese revolution, unanimously adopted in February-March, 1926, containing approximately the same evaluation of the first stage of the Chinese revolution, of the the Canton Kuomintang and the Canton Government, as is given by the Comintern and the Soviet C.P., and which is now disowned by the Opposition: I refer to that resolution because comrade Zinoviev voted for it, whilst no one of the C.C. members raised any objection to it, including comrades Trotsky, Kamenev and other leaders of the present Opposition.

Permit me to quote a few passages from that resolution. Here is what the resolution has to say on the Kuomintang:

“The Shanghai and Hong Kong political strikes of the Chinese workers (June-September, 1925), have brought about a momentous departure in the fight for liberation of the Chinese people against the foreign imperialists. . . . The political action of the proletariat has given a wonderful impulse to the further development and consolidation of all the revolutionary-democratic organisations of the country, and in the first place, of the national-revolutionary Kuomintang Party and the revolutionary government at Canton. The Kuomintang Party, whose main body has acted in alliance with the Chinese Communists, represents a *revolutionary bloc of workers, peasants, intellectuals and urban democracy** on the grounds of the common class interests of these elements in the fight against the foreign imperialists and the whole of the militarist and feudal system, for the independence of the country, and for a united revolutionary-democratic national authority.”
(See Resolution of Sixth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.)

Here, then, we have the Canton Kuomintang as the alliance of four classes. Here, as you see, we get some-

* The italics are mine.—J. Stalin.

The International Situation—continued

thing near to the "Martynov doctrine" sanctioned by none other than the then president of the Comintern, comrade Zinoviev.

On the Canton Kuomintang Government

"The revolutionary Government at Canton formed by the Kuomintang Party has already established contact with the largest masses of the workers, the peasants and the urban democracy, and relying on them, it has smashed the counter-revolutionary bands supported by the imperialists and is now working on the radical democratisation of the whole political life of the Kwantung Province. Constituting thus the vanguard in the struggle of the Chinese people for independence, the Canton government constitutes a model for the future revolutionary-democratic building of the country."* (Ibid.)

Thus we find that the Canton Kuomintang government, representing a bloc of four classes, was a revolutionary government, and not only that, but even a model for the future revolutionary-democratic government in China.

On the United Front of Workers, Peasants and the Bourgeoisie

"In the face of the new dangers the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang should develop the most extensive political activity, organising mass action in support of the fight of the people's army, taking advantage of internal friction in the imperialist camp, and opposing to them the *united national-revolutionary front of the widest elements of the population* (workers peasants and the *bourgeoisie*)* under the guidance of the revolutionary-democratic organisations." (Ibid.)

Thus we find that temporary blocs and understandings with the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries at a certain stage in the colonial revolution are not only admissible, but even necessary.

Don't you think that this resembles very closely what Lenin told us in his famous thesis on the tactics of Communists in the colonial and subject countries? It is only a pity that comrade Zinoviev has already managed to forget all about it.

On the Question of withdrawing from the Kuomintang

"Individual strata of the upper bourgeoisie of China, who temporarily grouped themselves around the Kuomintang Party, have deserted it during the last year, which has caused the formation of a little group of the right wing of the Kuomintang who are openly opposed to the close alliance of the Kuomintang with the toiling masses, who want the Communists expelled from the Kuomintang, and who oppose the revolution-

ary policy of the Canton government. *The denunciation of this right wing at the Second Congress of the Kuomintang (January, 1926) and the confirmation of the need of the militant alliance of the Kuomintang with the Communists consolidates the revolutionary trend of the activities of the Kuomintang and the Canton Government, and ensures to the Kuomintang the revolutionary backing of the proletariat.*"* (Ibid.)

Thus we find that the withdrawal of the Communists from the Kuomintang during the first stage of the Chinese revolution would have constituted a serious mistake. It was only a pity that comrade Zinoviev, who voted for this resolution, has managed to forget all about it a month or so afterwards. For we find that in April, 1926 (one month after) Zinoviev demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Communists from the Kuomintang.

On Deviations in the Chinese Communist Party and on the Inadmissibility of Jumping over the Kuomintang Phase of the Revolution

"The political self-determination of the Chinese Communists will grow in the course of combatting two equally harmful deviations: the right wing liquidators which ignore the independent class tasks of the Chinese proletariat and which leads to a formless fusion with the general democratic national movement, and the extreme left tendencies which are trying to *jump over the revolutionary-democratic stage of the movement* directly to the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship and Soviet rule, *forgetting about the peasantry*,* this fundamental and deciding factor of the Chinese national emancipation movement." (Ibid.)

Here, as you see, there is everything to show up the present Opposition in regard to jumping over the Kuomintang stage of development in China, under-estimating the peasant movement, and leaping in the direction of Soviets. What a give-away this is.

Are comrades Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky aware of this resolution?

Presumably they are. At any rate, it ought to be known to comrade Zinoviev, who was President of the Comintern when it was adopted by the Sixth Plenum, and he himself voted for it. Why is it that the Opposition leaders now avoid mentioning this resolution carried by the supreme organ of the International Communist movement? Why do they keep quiet about it? Because it turns against them on all questions relating to the present Trotskyist argument of the Opposition. Because they have gone astray from the Comintern, astray from Leninism, and now, afraid of their own past, afraid of their own shadow, they are constrained to resort to cowardly evasion of the resolution of the Sixth Plenum of the Comintern.

This much in regard to the first stage of the Chinese revolution.

The Second Stage in China

Let us now turn to the second stage of the Chinese revolution.

If the essential feature of the first stage consisted

* The italics are mine.—J. Stalin.

* The italics are mine.—J. Stalin.

The International Situation—continued

in the fact that the edge of the revolution was directed mainly against foreign imperialism, the characteristic feature of the second stage consists in the fact that the edge of the revolution is directed chiefly against the internal enemies, and above all, against the feudal landlords and the feudal regime. Has the first stage accomplished its tasks of overthrowing foreign imperialism? No, it has not. It has left the accomplishment of this task as a legacy to the second stage of the Chinese revolutionary masses to rise against imperialism, to call a halt and to leave this work for the future. It should be presumed that the second stage of the revolution too will fail in the complete achievement of the task of chasing out the imperialists. It will give a further impetus to the fight of the masses of the Chinese workers and peasants against imperialism; but whilst doing this, it will leave the final achievement of the task to the next stage of the Chinese revolution, to the Soviet stage.

And in this, there is nothing to be wondered at. Do we not recollect similar facts in the history of our own revolution, if under different circumstances? Do we not know that the first stage of our own revolution did not completely fulfil its task of accomplishing the agrarian revolution, leaving this task to the next stage of the revolution, the October revolution, which has completely and entirely accomplished the task of stamping out the survivals of feudalism? Therefore, it will be no surprise if the second stage of the Chinese revolution does not succeed in bringing about the agrarian revolution in full, and if the second stage of the revolution, after having aroused the teeming millions of the peasantry to the fight against the survivals of feudalism, leaves the final accomplishment of this task to the next stage of the revolution, to the Soviet stage. And this will constitute another task for the future Soviet revolution in China.

What was the essential task of the Communists at the second stage of the revolution in China, when the centre of the revolutionary movement had been clearly transferred from Canton to Wuhan, and as a counterpoise to the revolutionary government of Wuhan a counter-revolutionary centre was formed at Nanking? Their task was to take full advantage of the possibility of open organisation of the Party, the proletariat (the trade unions), the peasantry (the peasant unions), and the revolution in general. Their task was to drive the Wuhan Kuomintang people towards the left, towards the agrarian revolution. Their task was to turn the Wuhan Kuomintang into the centre of the fight against the counter-revolution, and into the nucleus of the future revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

Was this policy the correct one? The facts have shown it to have been the only correct policy, capable of educating the wide masses of the workers and peasants in the spirit of the further development of the revolution.

Opposition Adventurism

The Opposition demanded at that time the immediate formation of Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies. But this was adventurism, an adventurous leap forward; for the immediate formation of Soviets would have meant them jumping over the left Kuomintang phase of development. Why? Because the Kuomintang at Wuhan, which was allied with the Communists, had

not yet discredited and exposed itself before the wide masses of the workers and peasants, had not yet spent itself as a bourgeois revolutionary organisation. Because to launch the slogan of Soviets and the overthrow of the Wuhan government at a moment when the masses had not yet become convinced from their own experience about the rottenness of that government, and about the need to overthrow it, was to leap forward, to break away from the masses, to lose the support of the masses, and thus leap to defeat. The Opposition thinks that if it could see the hopelessness, the instability, and the lack of revolutionary principle on the part of the Wuhan Kuomintang (and this could easily be seen by any politically qualified worker), the situation was equally clear to the masses, so much so that the masses could be induced to form Soviets instead of the Kuomintang. But this is the usual ultra-left error of the Opposition, which takes its own consciousness and understanding for the consciousness and understanding of the millions of workers and peasants.

The Opposition is right in saying that the Party should move onward. This is the usual Marxian rule, and no real Communist Party can exist without abiding by it. But this is only part of the truth. The whole truth is that the Party should not only move onward, but should also lead the masses behind it. To move onward without the masses following, is really to lag behind, to stay in the tail of the movement. To move onward while breaking away from the rear-guard, failing to get the rearguard to follow, is to take a headlong leap which may have the result of arresting the onward movement of the masses for some time to come. It is the essence of Leninist leadership that the vanguard should get the rearguard to follow, that the vanguard should move onward without breaking away from the masses. But in order that the vanguard might not break away from the masses, that the vanguard should lead behind it the millions, there is one essential condition that is of decisive import, namely, that the masses themselves should become convinced from their own experience of the correctness of the instructions, policy and slogans of the vanguard. It is precisely the trouble with the Opposition that it fails to recognise this simple Leninist rule of leading the masses, that a single party, a single advanced group, without the support of the teeming millions of the masses, is unable to bring about a revolution, that the revolution is "made" in the long run by the teeming millions of the toiling masses.

1917.

Why was it that we, the Bolsheviks, in April, 1917, did not launch the practical slogan of overthrowing the Provisional Government and establishing Soviet rule, although we were convinced that in the near future we would be confronted with the need of overthrowing the Provisional Government and establishing Soviet rule? Because the wide masses of the toilers, both in the rear and at the front, as well as the Soviets themselves, were as yet unprepared to embrace such a slogan, believing as they did in the revolutionary soundness of the Provisional Government. Because the Provisional Government had not yet managed to scandalise and discredit itself by supporting the counter-revolution in the rear and at the front. Why did Lenin assail the Bogdatyev group in April, 1917, in Leningrad, that launched the slogan of the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government

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and the establishment of Soviet rule? Because the Bogdatyev attempt would have been a dangerous leap forward, creating the danger of detaching the Bolshevik Party from the millions of workers and peasants.

Comrade Zinoviev says that in alluding to the Bogdatyev episode I am identifying the present Chinese revolution with our October revolution. This is sheer nonsense, of course. Firstly, I have myself made the reservation in my article "On Current Topics" that "the analogy here was only conditional," that "I drew that analogy only with all the necessary reservations, bearing in mind the difference between the situation of China to-day and Russia in 1917." Secondly, it were foolish to assert that it was generally wrong to draw an analogy between the revolutions of the different countries for the purpose of demonstrating the character of the different tendencies in the revolution of a given country, and the mistakes committed by them. Does not the revolution of one country learn from that of another country, even if these revolutions are not of one and the same type? If so, what value is there in the scientific study of the revolution? Zinoviev's argument amounts virtually to a denial of the possibility of scientific study of the revolution. Is it not a fact that Lenin shortly before the October revolution accused Tscheidze, Tseretelli and Steklov and others of the "Blanc-ism" of the French revolution of 1848? Just read Lenin's article "On Louis Blanc," and you will see how Lenin draw a wide analogy of the French revolution of 1848 when characterising the mistakes of one or another of the leaders before October, although Lenin knew quite well that the French revolution of 1848 and our October revolution were not of the same kind. And if it was proper to speak of the "Louis Blanc-ism" of Tscheidze and Tseretelli during the pre-October period, why is it not right to speak of the "Bogdatyevism" of Zinoviev and Trotsky during the period of the agrarian revolution in China?

The Revolutionary Centre

It is claimed by the Opposition that Wuhan was not the centre of the revolutionary movement. But why did comrade Zinoviev say then that "every help should be extended" to the Wuhan Government in order to turn it into the centre of the fight against the Chinese Cavaignacs? Why did the Wuhan territory, and not any other, become the centre of the maximum development of the agrarian movement? Is it not a fact that it was precisely the Wuhan territory (Hunan, Wupei) that was in the early part of this year the centre of the maximum development of the agrarian movement? Why may Canton, with no mass agrarian movement, be described as the "centre of revolution" (Trotsky) whilst Wuhan, on whose territory the agrarian revolution has started and developed, may not be considered as the centre of the revolutionary movement? If so, how are we to account for the fact that the Opposition demanded the retention of the Communist Party in the Wuhan Kuomintang and in the Wuhan Government? Can it be that the Opposition in April, 1927, favoured a bloc with the "counter-revolutionary" Wuhan Kuomintang? Whence such "forgetfulness," such confusion in the ranks of the Opposition?

The Opposition points out in an "I told you so"

sort of way that the bloc with the Wuhan Kuomintang was short-lived, asserting in the same breath that the Comintern did not warn the Chinese Communists of the possible relapse of the Wuhan Kuomintang. It is hardly necessary to argue that this malignant jubilation of the Opposition betokens only its political bankruptcy. It is apparently the belief of the Opposition that the bloc with the national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries should be of long duration. This can be presumed only by people who have shed the last remnants of Leninism. If, at the present stage, the feudals and the imperialists in China proved stronger than the revolution, if the pressure of these inimical forces has caused the rightward swing of the Wuhan Kuomintang and the temporary defeat of the Chinese revolution, it can be a matter of malignant jubilation only for people infected with the spirit of defeatism. As to the Opposition's assertion that the Comintern did not warn the Chinese Communist Party of the possible collapse of the Wuhan Kuomintang, this is one of the usual gossiping stories in which the Opposition arsenal abounds just now.

Two Documents—the First

As against these gossiping stories permit me to cite a few documents.

The first document bears the date of May, 1927:

"The most essential object just now in the internal policy of the Kuomintang is systematically to develop the agrarian revolution in all the provinces, and particularly in the Kwantung Province, under the slogan of 'All power to the peasant unions and committees in the village.' *Therein lies the basis of the success of the revolution and of the Kuomintang.** Therein lies the basis in China for the formation of a mighty political and military army against imperialism and its agents. In practice, the slogan of land confiscation is quite timely for the provinces that are involved in a strong agrarian movement, like Hunan, Kwantung, etc. *Without this no development of the agrarian revolution is possible.**

"It is necessary to proceed right away to the organisation of eight or ten divisions of revolutionary peasants and workers commanded by absolutely reliable officers. These will constitute the Wuhan guards both at the front and in the rear, for the purpose of disarming the unreliable troops. This should under no circumstances be delayed.

"It is necessary to increase the activity in the rear and among the troops of Chiang Kai Shek to demoralise them, and to render assistance to the peasant insurgents in the Kwantung Province, where the power of the landlords is particularly unendurable."

Two Documents—the Second

The second document is also dated May, 1927:

"*Without the agrarian revolution victory is impossible. Without it the Kuomintang C.C. will become transformed into a miserable plaything in the hands of unreliable generals.* It is

* The italics are mine.—J. Stalin.

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necessary to curb excesses, not through the troops, but through the peasant unions. We are decidedly in favour of the actual seizure of the land from below. The fears entertained in connection with Tan Pin Siang's journey are not grounded. We should not detach ourselves from the workers and peasants' movement, but should rather assist it in every way. *Otherwise you will ruin the cause.*

"Some of the old leaders in the Kuomintang C.C. are scared by the events, are wavering and compromising. It is necessary to attract to the Kuomintang C.C. more new leaders from the ranks of the peasants and workers below. *Their courageous voice will either imbue the old leaders with determination or put them on the scrap-heap.* The present structure of the Kuomintang should be modified. The top of the Kuomintang must be renovated and replenished with new leaders who came to the front in the agrarian revolution, whilst the membership should be enlarged by drawing in the millions from the workers' and peasants' unions. *Without this the Kuomintang runs the risk of becoming detached from life and of losing every prestige.*

"*It is necessary to get rid of the dependence upon unreliable generals.* Mobilise about 20,000 Communists, add to them about 50,000 revolutionary workers and peasants from Hunan and Hupeh, form several new corps, utilise the graduates from the military academies, and *organise, before it is too late, your own reliable army. Without this there is no guarantee against failure.* This is a difficult task, but there is no other way.

"Organise a revolutionary military tribunal, with prominent non-Communist members of the Kuomintang at the head. *Punish the officers who keep in touch with Chiang Kai Shek or who incite the soldiers against the people, against the workers and peasants.* Coaxing alone won't do. It is time to begin to act. *It is necessary to punish the scoundrels. If the Kuomintang people will not learn to be revolutionary Jacobins, they will be lost both to the people and to the revolution.*"*

Thus you see that the Comintern did foresee events, that it signalled the dangers in time, warning the Chinese Communists of the doom of the Wuhan Kuomintang, if the Kuomintang people would not become revolutionary Jacobins.

"Cavaignacs"

It was said by comrade Kamenev that for the defeat of the Chinese revolution the policy of the Comintern was to blame, that we "have reared Cavaignacs in China." Comrades, such things about the Party can be said only by a man who is ready to commit a crime against the Party. Such things were said about the

Bolsheviks, by the Mensheviks during the period of the July defeat of 1917, when Russian Cavaignacs appeared upon the stage. Lenin in his article "On Slogans" referred to the July defeat as the "victory of the Cavaignacs." The Mensheviks were malignantly jubilant then, asserting that for the appearance of the Russian Cavaignacs the policy of Lenin was to be blamed. Thus comrade Kamenev believed that for the appearance of Russian Cavaignacs during the period of defeat of 1917 the policy of Lenin was to be blamed, the policy of our Party, and not anything else? Is it befitting for comrade Kamenev in this case to copy the Mensheviks? (Laughter.) It is known that the revolution of 1905 was defeated, whilst the defeat was more profound than that of the Chinese revolution to-day. It was then asserted by the Mensheviks that for the defeat of the 1905 revolution the extreme revolutionary tactics of the Bolsheviks were to be blamed. Does comrade Kamenev intend to follow here the example of the Mensheviks in their interpretation of the history of our revolution, and throw stones at the Bolsheviks? And how is the defeat of the Bavarian Soviet Republic to be explained? Perhaps by the policy of Lenin, and not by the correlation of forces between the classes? How is the defeat of the Hungarian Soviet Republic to be explained? Perhaps by the policy of the Comintern, and not by the correlation of the forces between the classes? How can it be asserted that the tactics of this or that Party can eliminate or upset the correlation of the forces?

Was our policy in 1905 right or wrong? Why were we defeated then? Do not the facts demonstrate that if the policy of the Opposition had been followed in China the revolution would have been defeated far more quickly than it was? What name can we find for people who forget about the correlation of class forces in time of revolution, and are trying to explain everything merely by the tactics of this or that party? About such people only one thing can be said, that they have given up Marxism.

The Mistakes of the Opposition

Summing up, the following are the chief mistakes of the Opposition:

(1) The Opposition does not understand the character and outlook of the Chinese revolution.

(2) The Opposition does not see the difference between the revolution in China and the revolution in Russia, between revolution in colonial countries and the revolution in imperialist countries.

(3) The Opposition gives up Leninist tactics on the question of the attitude towards the national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries during the first stage of the revolution.

(4) The Opposition does not understand the question of the participation of Communists in the Kuomintang.

(5) The Opposition violates the fundamentals of Leninist tactics on the question of the relation between the vanguard (the Party) and the rearguard (the teeming millions of the toiling masses).

(6) The Opposition dissociates itself from the resolution of the Sixth and Seventh Plenums of the Communist International.

The Opposition noisily praises its own policy on the

* The italics are mine.—J. Stal

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Chinese question, claiming that its policy in China would have brought better results. There is hardly any need to argue that with the crudest mistakes admitted by the Opposition, the Chinese Communist Party would have landed in a hopeless *cul-de-sac* by following the anti-Leninist, adventurous policy of the Opposition. If the Chinese Communist Party has grown in a short space of time from a little group of 2,000 people into a mass Party of 60,000 members; if the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded during that period in organising about 3,000,000 workers in the trade unions; if the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded in arousing the teeming millions of the peasantry from their stupor, and in attracting tens of millions of peasants into the revolutionary peasant unions; if the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded during that period in gaining over to its side whole regiments and divisions of the national troops; if the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded during that period in turning the idea of the proletarian hegemony from a wish into a fact; if the Chinese Communist Party has attained all this during such a short space of time, it was due, among other things, to the fact that it has followed the path laid down by Lenin, the path indicated by the Comintern.

Needless to say, under the policy of the Opposition, with its mistakes, with its anti-Leninist course in questions of colonial revolution, the Chinese Communist Party would have either attained none of these conquests or the gains would have been reduced to a minimum.

This can be doubted only by ultra-left renegades and adventurers.

On the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee

As to the question of the Anglo-Russian Committee, it is asserted by the Opposition that we have staked on the Anglo-Russian Committee. This is untrue, comrades. It is part of the gossip to which the bankrupt Opposition frequently resorts. The whole world knows, and consequently also the Opposition ought to know, that we put our stake not upon the Anglo-Russian Committee, but upon the world revolution and upon the successes of our Socialist construction. The Opposition deceives the Party when saying that we have put or are putting our stake on the Anglo-Russian Committee.

What, then, does the Anglo-Russian Committee represent? It represents one of the forms of contact between the Red unions, our trade unions, and the English trade unions, the reformist trade unions, the reactionary trade unions. Our work towards the revolutionisation of the working class in Europe we conduct at present along three channels: (a) the channel of the Comintern, through the Communist sections, whose immediate task is to dispense with the reformist political leadership in the labour movement; (b) the channel of the R.I.L.U., through the revolutionary trade union minorities, whose immediate task is to overcome the reactionary aristocracy of labour in the trade unions; and (c) through the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee, as one of the means which might facilitate to the R.I.L.U. and its sections the struggle for the disintegration and isola-

tion of the aristocracy of labour in the trade unions. The first two channels are fundamental and permanent, obligatory to Communists, as long as there are classes and a class society. The third channel is a temporary, auxiliary, episodic one, and therefore undurable, not always reliable, and at times altogether unreliable. To place the third channel by the side of the first two is to go against the interests of the working class, against Communism. How can anyone say after this that we have put our stake on the Anglo-Russian Committee?

In going in for the formation of the Anglo-Russian Committee it was our aim to establish open contact with the masses of the workers organised in the English trade unions. What for? Firstly, in order to facilitate the formation of a united front of the workers against capitalism, or at least to obstruct the struggle of the reactionary leaders in the trade union movement against the formation of such united front. Secondly, in order to facilitate the creation of a united front of the workers against the menace of imperialist wars in general, and against the menace of intervention in particular, or at least to obstruct the struggle of the reactionary leaders in the trade union movement against the formation of a united front.

Communists and Reactionary T.U.'s

On the whole, is it admissible for Communists to work in the reactionary trade unions?

It is not only admissible, but sometimes a direct duty; for in the reactionary trade unions there are millions of workers, and the Communists have no right to refrain from extending their activities to these trade unions, to find the way to the masses, and to win them over to the side of Communism. Just read Lenin's pamphlet, "Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disease," and you will find that Leninist tactics make it incumbent on Communists not to refrain from work in the reactionary trade unions.

Is it generally admissible to form temporary understandings with reactionary trade unions, understandings on trade union lines or on political lines?

Not only admissible, but at times the duty. That the trade unions in the West are mostly reactionary, is a matter of common knowledge. But this is not the point. The point is that these trade unions are mass organisations. The point is that through these trade unions it is possible to gain access to the masses. The point is that such understandings should not restrict or limit the freedom of the revolutionary agitation and propaganda of the Communists, but that such understandings should facilitate the disintegration of the reformists and the revolutionisation of the masses of the workers who so far follow the reactionary leaders. Under such conditions temporary understandings with the reactionary mass trade unions are not only admissible, but at times the duty.

Lenin and Manœuvring

Here is what Lenin says on this subject:

"Capitalism would not be capitalism, had not the 'pure' proletariat been surrounded by a mass of extremely varied transitional types from the proletarian to the semi-proletarian (that is, one

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who gains half of his livelihood by selling his labour power), from the semi-proletarian to the small peasant (including the small artisan, craftsman or little boss in general), from the small peasant to the middle peasant, and so on; had not the proletariat itself been divided into more or less developed strata, such as peasant organisations, trade unions, sometimes religious organisations, and so on. *Hence the need, the absolute need for the vanguard of the proletariat, for its class-conscious section, for the Communist Party, to resort to manoeuvring, to conciliation and compromise with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and little bosses, becomes absolutely imperative.** The essential thing is to be able to apply these tactics in order to raise, and not to lower the general level of proletarian consciousness, of the revolutionary spirit, and of the capacity for struggle and victory." (Vol. XVII., page 162.)

And further :

"That the Hendersons, the Clynes's, the MacDonalds and the Snowdens are hopelessly reactionary, is true. It is equally true that they want to take power into their hands (preferring to do so, however, through a coalition with the bourgeoisie), that they want to 'govern' according to the time-honoured bourgeois rules, that they will be bound to behave themselves when in power in the same manner as the Scheidemanns and the Noskes did. All this is quite true. *But the deduction from this is not that to support them is to betray the revolution, but rather that for the sake of the revolution the working-class revolutionaries must give certain parliamentary support to these gentlemen.*"* (Ibid., page 168.)

The trouble with the Opposition is that it fails to understand and to recognise these indications given by Lenin, preferring the noisy ultra-left talk about the reactionary nature of the trade unions.

Does the Anglo-Soviet Committee hamper, or can it hamper our agitation and propaganda? No, it cannot. We have always criticised, and always will, the reactionary character of the English labour leaders, exposing their treason and treachery before the masses of the working class in England. Let the Opposition try to deny the fact that we have always openly and unsparingly criticised the reactionary work of the General Council.

We are told that our criticism may eventually prompt the English to break up the Anglo-Russian Committee. Well, let them break. The point is not at all whether or no there will be a break. The point is on what ground the break will occur, what idea the break will demonstrate. Just now we are confronted with the menace of war in general, and of intervention in particular. If the English leaders break with us the working class will know that the reactionary leaders of the English labour movement have broken with us because they do not wish to counteract their imperialist govern-

ment in the organisation of war. It can hardly be doubted that if the English leaders do break with us under such circumstances it will be easier for the Communists to expose the General Council, for the question of the war menace is just now the most burning question of to-day.

Possibly they will not decide to break with us. What will this mean? It will mean that we have secured for ourselves the freedom of criticism, the freedom of speaking freely about the reactionary leaders of the English labour movement, exposing their treachery and social-imperialism before the wide masses. Will this be a good thing for us? I believe it will not be bad.

Such, comrades, is our attitude on the questions of the Anglo-Russian Committee.

The War Menace and Defence of the U.S.S.R.

As to the question of war. First of all, I must refute the absolutely wrong statement made by Zinoviev and Trotsky alleging that I belonged to the so-called military opposition at the Eighth Congress of our Party. It is quite untrue, comrades. It is mere gossip, wantonly fabricated by comrades Zinoviev and Trotsky. I have in my hands the stenographic record which shows clearly that I took my stand then by the side of Lenin against the so-called military opposition. Finally, there are here participants of the Eighth Congress of the Party who will bear me out that I spoke against the military opposition at the Eighth Party Congress. I did not speak out with such hostility against the military opposition as it may perhaps have pleased comrade Trotsky, because I believe that among the military oppositionists there were splendid workers without whom we could not manage at the front; but that I spoke and argued against the military oppositionists is a fact which can be disputed only by such hopeless people as comrades Zinoviev and Trotsky.

What was the controversy about at the Eighth Congress? It was the question of the need to do away with volunteer and guerilla organisations, of the need to create a real, regular, workers' and peasants' army with an iron discipline, of the need to attract military experts to this work. There was one draft resolution submitted by the advocates of a regular army and an iron discipline, and it was supported by Lenin, Sokolnikov, Stalin and others. There was another draft by V. Smirnov, submitted by the advocates of the retention of the elements of guerilla organisation in the army. It was supported by V. Smirnov, Safarov, Voroshilov, Piatakov and others.

The Need for a Disciplined Army

Here is an extract from my speech :

"All the questions touched upon here amount to one thing: whether or no a strictly disciplined army shall exist in Russia. This is the crux of the question. About six or eight months ago we had a new army, after the break-up of the old Tsarist army, a volunteer, poorly-organised army, with collective management and command, submitting to no orders. It was a time when the aggressive intentions of the allied Powers became

* The italics are mine.—J. Stalin.

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more or less clearly indicated. The army was made up mainly, if not exclusively, of workers. Owing to the absence of discipline, owing to the absence of cohesion in this volunteer army, owing to the fact that orders were ignored, owing to disorganisation in the management of the army, we suffered defeat, so much so that Kazan was captured from us, whilst Krasnov was advancing from the South. . . . The facts showed that the volunteer army, poorly organised and poorly disciplined, could not stand criticism, that we, the Soviet Republic, would be unable to defend our Republic if we did not create another army, a regular one, impregnated with the spirit of discipline, with a well-organised political department, capable and able to get to its feet at first call and to throw itself against the enemy.

“ . . . The question is of deliberately supplementing the discipline of consciousness which we had during the volunteer period, whether it was bad or good, with a discipline of iron. I should say that those non-working class elements which make up the bulk of our army, the peasants, will not fight for Socialism; no, they won't. Voluntarily they won't fight. This has been indicated by a whole series of facts on all the fronts. A whole series of mutinies in the rear, and on the fronts, a whole series of excesses on the fronts, indicate that the non-proletarian elements, which make up the majority of our army, will not voluntarily fight for Communism. Hence our task is to compel these elements to fight, to follow the proletariat not only in the rear, but also on the fronts, to compel them to fight against imperialism, and in this process of rallying the armed peasantry around the proletarians, to complete the building of a real regular army, the only one capable of defending the country. Such is the question.

“ . . . Either we shall create a real workers' and peasants'—chiefly peasants'—army, rigidly disciplined, and then we shall defend our Republic, or we shall go under.

“ . . . The draft worked out by comrade Smirnov contains every attempt, disguised and vague, yet quite clear to me, to undermine the discipline, to relax it in regard to the peasant elements, and to prevent the welding of the army into a united disciplined mass.”

Such, comrades, are the facts.

“Moral Capital”—in the East

As you see, comrades Trotsky and Zinoviev have once again indulged in fibs.

It was further asserted here by comrade Kamenev that during the last period, during these two years, we have squandered all the moral capital which we previously possessed in the international world. Is that true? Of course it isn't. It is quite untrue. To what elements of the population was comrade Kamenev referring, among which elements of the population in the

East and in the West have we lost or gained influence? This was not vouchsafed by comrade Kamenev. And yet to us, as Marxists, it is just this question that matters. Take, for instance, China. Can it be said that we have lost our moral capital among the Chinese workers and peasants? Clearly no. Until very lately we were little known to the millions of workers and peasants in China. Until very lately the prestige of the U.S.S.R. was limited to the narrow circle of the upper crust of Chinese society, to the narrow circle of intellectuals in the Kuomintang, to leaders of the type of Feng Yu Hsiang, the Canton generals, and so on. Things have radically changed now. Now the U.S.S.R. enjoys such prestige in the eyes of millions of the masses of workers and peasants in China, that could be envied by any Power, any political party in the world. As against this, the prestige of the U.S.S.R. has been considerably lowered in the eyes of the liberal intellectuals in China, of the various generals, and so on, whilst many of the latter are even beginning to fight against the U.S.S.R.

Is there anything surprising or bad in this? Can it be demanded from the U.S.S.R., from the Soviet Power, from our Party, that our country should have moral prestige *among all elements* of Chinese society? Who but liberal phrasemongers can demand this from our Party, from the Soviet Power? What is better for us, prestige among the liberal intellectuals and sundry reactionary generals of China, or prestige among the millions of the masses of workers and peasants in China? What matters from the standpoint of our international position, from the standpoint of the development of the revolution throughout the world: the growth of the prestige of the U.S.S.R. among the teeming millions of the toilers coupled with the undoubted lowering of the prestige of the U.S.S.R. among the liberal-reactionary circles of Chinese society, or prestige among these liberal-reactionary circles whilst losing our moral weight among the wide masses of the population? To put this question is to see at once that comrade Kamenev has pointed his finger at the sky. . . .

“Moral Capital”—in the West

And what about the West? Can it be said that we have squandered away our moral capital among the proletarian elements of the West? Clearly no. What, for instance, is the evidence of the recent actions of the proletariat in Vienna, of the general strike and coal struggle in England, of the mass demonstrations by many thousands of workers in Germany and in France in favour of the U.S.S.R.? Does it indicate the lowering of the moral weight of the proletarian dictatorship in the eyes of the teeming millions of the working class? Of course it doesn't. On the contrary, it indicates that the moral weight of the U.S.S.R. is rising and growing in strength among the workers of the West, that the workers in the West are beginning to fight against their bourgeoisie “in the Russian manner.” No doubt, among certain elements of the pacifist and liberal-reactionary bourgeoisie a hostile attitude is developing against the U.S.S.R.; particularly, in connection with the shooting of 20 “noble” terrorists and arson fiends. But does comrade Kamenev indeed put more value on the opinion of the liberal-reactionary pacifist circles of the bour-

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geoisie than on the opinion of the millions of the proletarian masses of the West? Who will venture to deny the fact that the shooting of the 20 "noble ones" has met with the profoundest sympathetic response among the millions of the workers both here in the U.S.S.R. and in the West? "Serves the soundrels right!" Such was the verdict in working-class quarters on the shooting of the 20 "noble ones." I know there are among us some people who believe that the milder we behave, the better it will be for us. These people tell us: "The cause of the U.S.S.R. was all right when England broke with us; it was still better when Voikov was murdered, but the cause of the U.S.S.R. became worse when we showed our teeth, and in answer to the murder of comrade Voikov we shot 20 "noble" counter-revolutionaries; before the shooting of the 20 we were the object of commiseration and sympathy in Europe; after the shooting, on the contrary, that sympathy was gone, and we began to be accused of not being the good boys the public opinion of Europe wanted us to be." What can be said about this reactionary-liberal philosophy?

The only thing to be said about it is that its authors would like to see the U.S.S.R. toothless and unarmed, bowing to the ground before the enemies, and surrendering to them. There was once a "bleeding Belgium" whose pictures could be seen on cigarette-box labels. Why not have a "bleeding U.S.S.R." to arouse the sympathies of all and sundry? . . . No, comrades, that won't do. Let them rather go to the devil with all their liberal-pacifist philosophies of "sympathy" for the U.S.S.R. Let us only have the sympathy of the masses of the toilers, and the rest will be added. And if there must needs be somebody "bleeding," we shall see to it that the smashed and bleeding object should be any bourgeois country, but not the U.S.S.R.

On the Question of the Inevitability of War

Comrade Zinoviev has been at great pains to argue that in Bukharin's speeches the talk was about the "probability" and "inevitability" of war, but not about its unconditional inevitability. He told us that such formulation might lead to confusion in the Party. I happened to peruse comrade Zinoviev's article on the "Outlines of the future war." And what did I find? I found that in Zinoviev's article there is not one word, literally not one word, to the effect that war has become inevitable. Comrade Zinoviev's article speaks only of the possibility of a new war. It has a whole chapter which proves that war is possible. That chapter ends with the sentence: "That's why Bolshevik-Leninists should legitimately and of necessity think just now of the possibility of a new war." (General laughter.) Take note, comrades, of that "to think of the possibility of a new war." There is one passage in comrade Zinoviev's article which says that the war "is becoming" inevitable, but not one word, literally not one word, about the war having already become inevitable. And this man has—how shall I put it mildly?—the boldness to assail the theses of comrade Bukharin which say that war has become probable and inevitable. What does it mean to speak now of the "possibility" of war? It means at the very least to throw us back for seven

years, because seven years ago we were told by Lenin that war between the U.S.S.R. and the capitalist world was possible. What good was it for Zinoviev to reiterate the old lesson, offering his retrogression as a new message? What does it mean to say now that war is becoming inevitable? It means at the very least to throw us back for four years, because already at the time of the Curzon Ultimatum we said that war was becoming inevitable.

How could it happen that comrade Zinoviev, who only yesterday wrote such a modelled and entirely unfounded article on war, in which there is not a single word to the effect that war has become inevitable—how could it happen that this man should make bold to assail the clear and definite thesis of Bukharin on the inevitability of war? It happened because Zinoviev has forgotten about the things which he wrote yesterday. The fact is that comrade Zinoviev belongs to those blissful people who write in order to forget on the following day all about it. (Laughter.) It was asserted here by Zinoviev that Bukharin was "prompted" by Tchitcherin to write his thesis in the spirit of the probability and inevitability of war. And I ask who "prompted" comrade Zinoviev to write an article on the possibility of war now that war has become inevitable? (Laughter.)

On the Question of Stabilisation

Comrade Zinoviev has assailed Bukharin's thesis on the assertion that on the question of stabilisation the thesis departs from the position of the Comintern. This, of course, is a foolish assertion. Comrade Zinoviev has only shown thereby his total ignorance on the question of stabilisation, on the question of world capitalism. Comrade Zinoviev believes that since there is stabilisation, it means that the cause of the revolution is lost. He does not understand that the crisis of capitalism and the preparation for its doom arises out of this stabilisation. Is it not a fact that capitalism has lately perfected and rationalised its technical processes, turning out huge masses of products for which no markets can be found? Is it not a fact that the capitalist governments are turning more and more to Fascism, taking the offensive against the working class, and temporarily fortifying their position? Does it follow from these facts that stabilisation has been put on a solid basis? Of course, it doesn't. On the contrary, these very facts lead to the aggravation of the crisis which existed before the last imperialist war. The very fact of the capitalist governments turning to Fascism, precisely this fact leads to the aggravation of the internal situation in the capitalist countries, and to revolutionary actions on the part of the workers (Vienna, England). The very fact that capitalism rationalises its technical processes and turns out more goods than the markets can absorb, leads to the intensification of the strife among the capitalists for new markets for the exportation of capital and for the selling of goods, creating the conditions for a new war, for a new division of the world. Is it difficult to understand that the stupendous growth of the producing powers of capitalism, given a certain limitation of the world markets and a stability of the "spheres of influence," serves to intensify the scramble for markets, and the crisis of capitalism?

Capitalism might be able to dispose of this crisis, were it in a position to increase the workers' wages

The International Situation—continued

several times, were it able in this manner seriously to increase the purchasing powers of the millions of toilers, and the capacity of the home markets. But then capitalism would not be capitalism. Precisely because capitalism is unable to do this, precisely because capitalism makes use of its "income" not to raise the well-being of the majority of the toilers, but to increase their exploitation and to export capital into the less developed countries in order to reap even larger "returns"—precisely because of this scramble for markets and for the exportation of capital leads to a desperate struggle for a new sharing out of the world and for spheres of influence, a struggle which has already rendered inevitable a new imperialist war. Why is it that certain imperialist circles look askance at the U.S.S.R., organising a united front against it? Because the U.S.S.R. represents an exceedingly rich market for the sale of goods and the exportation of capital. Why is it that the same imperialist circles intervened in China? Because China represents an exceedingly rich market for the sale of commodities and the exportation of capital. And so on, and so forth. Herein lies the basis and the source of the inevitability of a new war, it matters not whether it will flare up between the different imperialist coalitions, or against the U.S.S.R.

The trouble with the Opposition is that it fails to understand these simple, elementary things.

On the Question of the Defence of our Country

And now permit me to deal with the last question, with the question of how the Opposition proposes to defend the U.S.S.R.

Comrades, the revolutionary character of this or that group, of this or that tendency, of this or that party, is not tested by the respective statements and declarations they make. The revolutionary character is tested by the work, the practice, the practical plans of this or that group, this or that tendency, this or that Party. One should not trust the statements and declarations of people, however imposing they may sound, if these are not supported by practical performances and achievements. There is one question which furnishes the touchstone wherewith to test the relative revolutionary or non-revolutionary character of the various groups, tendencies and parties. This question is now that of the defence of the U.S.S.R., the question of the absolute, unreserved defence of the U.S.S.R. against imperialist aggression. He is a revolutionary who absolutely, unconditionally, openly and honestly, without any secret military conferences, is prepared to defend and protect the U.S.S.R.; for the U.S.S.R. is the world's first proletarian, revolutionary State, which is building Socialism. He is an internationalist who unreservedly, unhesitatingly, without any conditions, is prepared to defend the U.S.S.R. because the U.S.S.R. is the basis of the world revolution, and it is impossible to defend and to move onward the world revolution without defending the U.S.S.R. Because he who thinks of defending the world revolution apart from and against the U.S.S.R., is setting his face against the world revolution, and will ultimately be bound to descend into the camp of the enemies of the world revolution.

Two camps have now been created in the face of

the war menace, and consequently, two positions: the position of unconditional defence of the U.S.S.R., and that of fighting against the U.S.S.R. A choice has to be made, for there is not and there cannot be any third position. Neutrality in this respect, hesitation, reservations, and the seeking of a third position, are merely an effort to shirk responsibility, to evade unconditional defence of the U.S.S.R., to be among the "Noes" at the most critical moment in the defence of the U.S.S.R. And what does it mean to shirk responsibility? It means to glide imperceptibly into the camp of the enemies of the U.S.S.R.

This is how the question now stands.

The Opposition and Defence

And how does the Opposition stand in regard to the defence of the U.S.S.R.? Permit me to refer, if I have to, to a certain letter addressed by comrade Trotsky to the C.C.C., in order to demonstrate to you the theory and the slogan of defence which comrade Trotsky keeps in reserve, for the event of war against the U.S.S.R. A passage from that letter has already been quoted by comrade Molotov in his speech, but he did not quote the whole passage. Permit me to quote it in full.

This then is how comrade Trotsky understands the policies of defeat and defence:

"What is defeatism? It is a policy which aims at contributing to the defeat of 'one's own' country that is in the hands of the enemy class. Any other understanding and interpretation of defeatism would be a falsification. Thus, for instance, should anyone say that the political line of ignorant and dishonest claptrappers should be swept out as so much rubbish in order to speed the victory of the proletarian State, he does not thereby by any means become a 'defeatist.' On the contrary, under the given concrete circumstances he would be the real spokesman of the policy of revolutionary defence of one's own country: ideological rubbish does not bring victory.

"Quite instructive lessons in this respect may be found in the history of other classes. I will cite only one of them. The French bourgeoisie at the outset of imperialist war had at its head a government without rudder and sails. The Clemenceau group was in opposition to that Government. In spite of the war and the military censorship, in spite even of the fact that the Germans were within 80 kilometres of Paris (Clemenceau said, 'just because of that') Clemenceau conducted a furious fight against the weak-kneed and wavering petty bourgeois policies, and for imperialist ferocity and ruthlessness. Clemenceau did not betray his class, the bourgeoisie; on the contrary, he served it more faithfully, more firmly, decisively and wisely, than did Viviani, Painlevé and Co. This was shown by the subsequent course of events. The Clemenceau group came into power, and by a more consistent, a more predatory imperialist policy, it secured the victory of the French bourgeoisie. Were there such newspapermen in France who put the label of 'defeatists' on the Clemenceau group? No doubt there were: fools and gossips will be found in the van of both classes. But these are not always given the opportunity to play an equally important part." (From the letter addressed by Trotsky to comrade Ordjonikidze, on July 11th, 1927.)

The International Situation—continued**Trotsky and Defence**

And here is the theory of defence of the U.S.S.R. (save the mark) as proposed by comrade Trotsky:

“Weak-kneed and wavering petty bourgeois policies,” such then is the description of a majority of our Party, of a majority of our C.C., of the majority of our Government. Clemenceau, that is, comrade Trotsky and his group. (Laughter.) If the enemy should get within 80 versts of the Kremlin, this new-found Clemenceau, this comic opera Clemenceau—it transpires—would first of all try to overthrow the present majority, just because the enemy got within 80 versts of the Kremlin, and only then he would take up the defence. And if our comic opera Clemenceau should succeed in doing this, it would be the real and unconditional defence of the U.S.S.R., so we are told. And in order to do this, he, comrade Trotsky, i.e., Clemenceau, would endeavour, in the first place, “to sweep out the rubbish in order to speed the victory of the proletarian State.” And what is meant by this “rubbish”? The majority of the Party, the majority of the C.C., the majority of the Government. Thus we learn that if the enemy should get within 80 versts of the Kremlin, the comic opera Clemenceau would be engaged not in defending the U.S.S.R., but in overthrowing the present majority of the Party. And this is what he calls defence. Of course, it is somewhat ridiculous when this little quixotic group, which has barely gathered a thousand odd votes in the course of four months, when this little group threatens the million strong Party, ‘I will sweep thee out.’ You may judge the miserable status of Trotsky’s group, if you consider that after working in the sweat of its brow for a stretch of four months it has barely got together a thousand signatures. I believe any Opposition group should be able to collect a few thousand signatures, if it worked efficiently. I repeat: it is ridiculous when this little group, in which the leaders are more numerous than the army (laughter), which as a result of four months’ work has barely a thousand signatures to show, when this little boy threatens the million strong Party: “I will sweep thee out.” (Laughter.) And how does this little factional group expect to “sweep out” the million strong Party? Do not the comrades in the Opposition imagine that the present majority of the Party, that the present majority of the C.C. has come by chance, that it has no firm roots in the Party, that it has no roots in the working class, that it will voluntarily allow itself to be “swept out” by the comic opera Clemenceau? No, this majority did not come by chance. It accumulated year by year, in the course of development of our Party, it was tested in the fire of the struggle, during October and after, during the civil war, and during the building of Socialism. In order to “sweep out” such a majority, a civil war will have to be started inside the Party at a moment when the enemy would be within 80 versts of the Kremlin. Well, this seems the limit . . . And the present Opposition leaders, were they not tested? Was it by chance that they, having at one time occupied foremost positions in our Party, have since turned out to be backsliders?

Is it necessary to prove that this was not the outcome of chance? And now Trotsky, with the aid of the little group which signed the platform of the Opposi-

sition, wants to turn back the wheel of history in our Party, and that at a moment when the enemy should be within 80 versts of the Kremlin, whilst we are told that some of the comrades who signed the Opposition platform did so because they thought in that way to secure exemption from war service. (Laughter.) No, comrade Trotsky, you had better not speak of “sweeping out the rubbish.” You had better not utter such words, as they are contagious. Should the majority become contaminated with this idea of “sweeping out the rubbish,” I wonder if the Opposition would fare well. Yet the possibility is not excluded that the majority of the C.C. might become infected with the word of “sweeping out,” and proceed to “sweep out” some people. It is not always safe to talk about sweeping out, as such talk might infect the majority of our C.C. And if comrade Trotsky intends to wield the broom against the Party and its majority, what wonder if the Party should turn this broom against the Opposition?

Now we know how the Opposition proposed to defend the U.S.S.R. This is demonstrated with sufficient clearness by the semi-defeatist theory of comrade Trotsky about Clemenceau, to which the entire Opposition subscribes.

Thus, in order to organise the defence of the U.S.S.R., it would be necessary, in the first place, to carry out the Clemenceau experiment.

This would be, so to speak, the first step of the Opposition towards the “unconditional” defence of the U.S.S.R.

The Party “Centrist”

The second step towards the defence of the U.S.S.R.—so it transpires—would be to declare our Party a centrist one. It transpires that the fact that our Party is combating the left deviation from Communism (Trotsky-Zinoviev) and the right deviation from Communism (Smyrnov-Sapronov) is considered by our ignorant Opposition as centrism. These cranks have apparently forgotten that in fighting against both deviations we are carrying out the behests of Lenin, who positively insisted on waging a determined fight both against “left wing theorising” and against “right wing opportunism.” The Opposition leaders have departed from Leninism, having consigned Lenin’s behests to oblivion. The Opposition leaders do not care to admit that their bloc, the Opposition bloc, constitutes a bloc of left and right deviationists from Communism. They do not care to admit that their present bloc constitutes a resurrection of the sadly remembered August bloc of comrade Trotsky upon a new foundation. They do not wish to understand that this very bloc harbours the menace of regeneration. They do not care to admit that the fusion of ultra-lefts like the rogues and counter-revolutionaries Maslov and Ruth Fischer into one bloc with the Georgian nationalist deviationists constitutes the worst possible reproduction of the liquidatory August bloc.

Thus, we find, in order to organise the defence of the country it would be necessary to declare our Party a centrist one and try to deprive it of the charm which it has in the eyes of the workers.

Such is the second step, so to speak, of the Opposition towards the “unconditional” defence of the U.S.S.R.

The third step towards the defence of the U.S.S.R.—so it transpires—consists in declaring our Party non-

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existent, and in depicting it as "Stalin's faction." What do the Oppositionists mean to say by this? They mean to say that there is no Party, but there is a Stalin faction. They mean to say that the Party's decisions are not binding on them, and that they may violate these decisions always and under all circumstances. By this they mean to facilitate for themselves the fight against our Party. It is true, they borrowed this weapon from the armoury of the Menshevik "Sozialistichesky Vestnik" and of the bourgeois "Rul." It is true that to borrow weapons from the Mensheviks and the bourgeois counter-revolutionaries is unworthy of Communists. But what of it? All means are fair in the eyes of the Opposition, as long as a fight can be carried on against the Party.

Thus, we find, in order to organise the defence of the U.S.S.R., it would be necessary to declare non-existent the very Party without which no defence can be thought of.

This constitutes, so to speak, the third step of the Opposition towards the "unconditional" defence of the U.S.S.R.

Splitting the C.I.

Their fourth step in the defence of the U.S.S.R. consists in splitting the Comintern, in organising a new Party in Germany with the rogues and counter-revolutionaries, Ruth Fischer and Maslov at the head, and in thus rendering it difficult for the proletariat in Western Europe to support the U.S.S.R.

Their fifth step in the defence of the U.S.S.R. consists in ascribing Thermidor tendencies to our Party, in splitting it, and in starting to build a new Party. For if we have no Party, if there is only a Stalin faction whose decisions are not binding upon the members of the Party, if this faction is permeated with Thermidor moods—foolish and ignorant as the talk about a Thermidor in our Party may be—what is to be done?

Thus, we find, in order to organise the defence of the U.S.S.R., it would be necessary to split our Party and to proceed to the organisation of a new Party.

This constitutes, so to speak, the fifth step of the Opposition towards the "unconditional" defence of the U.S.S.R.

Here you have the five principal measures proposed by the Opposition for the defence of the U.S.S.R.

Need it be argued that all these measures of the Opposition have nothing in common with the defence of our country, with the defence of the hearth of world revolution?

And these people want us to print their semi-defeatist semi-Menshevik articles in our Party press. Whom do they take us for? Is it that we already have extended the freedom of the press "from the Anarchists to the Monarchists"? No, we have not, and never shall. Why do we refuse to print Menshevik articles? Because we have no freedom of the press for anti-Leninist tendencies "from Anarchists to Monarchists."

What is the wish of the Oppositionists when insisting on having their semi-Menshevik, semi-defeatist articles printed? They wish to open a gap for freedom of the press as they understand it, failing to see that thereby they are animating the anti-Soviet elements and increasing their pressure on the proletarian dictatorship, paving the road for bourgeois democracy. Whilst knocking at one door, they open another.

Here is what a Mr. Dan writes about you:

"Russian Social-Democrats would warmly welcome such legalisation of the Opposition, although they have nothing in common with its positive programme. They would welcome the legality of the political struggle, the open self-liquidation of the dictatorship, and the passing to new political forms which would open new vistas for a wide labour movement." ("Sozialistichesky Vestnik," No. 13, July, 1927.)

The "open self-liquidation of the dictatorship," this is what is expected of you by the enemies of the U.S.S.R., and this is where your policy leads to, comrades of the Opposition.

Comrades, we are confronted with two dangers: the danger of war, which has turned into the menace of war, and the danger of the degeneration of certain sections of our Party. In preparing for the defence of our country, we must create an iron discipline in our Party. Without this discipline, the defence will be impossible. We must fortify the Party discipline, we must restrain all those who are disorganising our Party. We must restrain all those who are splitting our fraternal Parties in the West and in the East. (Cheers.) We must restrain all those who are splitting our fraternal Parties in the West, being supported in this work by rogues like Souvarine, Ruth Fischer, Maslov and Treint, the messer. Only thus, and only in this manner, shall we meet the war menace fully armed, endeavouring at the same time to make some material sacrifices in order to put off the war, to gain time, to ransom off capitalism. This we must do, and this we shall do.

The second danger is that of degeneration. Whence does it come? Here is where it comes from (pointing to the Opposition). This danger we must remove. (Prolonged cheers.)





BOOK REVIEW

LUPTA DE CLASA, theoretical fighting organ of the Communist Party of Roumania. Nos. 1 to 5, June, 1926 to June, 1927; 296 pages.

THE Communist Party of Roumania, which since its inception in 1921 existed through the days of terror in a state of semi-legality, and in 1924 became quite illegal, has not been able to conduct the necessary ideological fight for the Bolshevising of the Party masses to a sufficient extent. Consequently not only were there varying opinions within the ranks of the Party, but there also grew up by degrees firmly crystallised tendencies which can only be called ultra-left and right liquidatorial. Although the leaders and the whole Party were for some years cognisant of these dangers, and clear as to the methods for combating them, the journal of the Party could not appear. Technical difficulties—illegal press, organisational weakness of the Party, the lack of any apparatus for distribution, and, finally, the lack of adequate theoretical forces—these were the reasons why the appearance of the journal necessary for the life of the Party, and demanded by the Party masses, was continually deferred. It must be admitted that the lack of faith in their own powers was another reason for the non-appearance of such a paper. But the decision of the Sixth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. declared:

"The Central Committee of the C.P. of Roumania must be clear as to the whole situation, and correct their former mistakes, must issue a Party journal for the ideological education of the Party, must conduct a definite struggle against the right wing deviations in the spirit of the decisions of the Communist International, must struggle against even the smallest sectional manifestations, must work zealously for the ideological, political and organisational Bolshevising of the Party. . . ."

Corresponding to the position of the C.P. of Roumania, these words themselves include the programme of the journal which later appeared. The first number appeared in June, 1926. It contained the Resolution of the Sixth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. on the Roumanian question, the article of comrade Martynov on "the Problem of the Revolution in Roumania," and four articles which betokened a good beginning for putting into practice the decisions of the Comintern, and for the recovery of the Party, also an article against the liquidators in the person of Kristescu, one on the internal conditions of Roumania, and two further articles on the political policy of the Party. As is well known, the Sixth Plenum occupied itself with the mistakes of the C.P. of Roumania in the matter of the Communal elections early in 1926, when the "united front of the working class with all opposition bourgeois parties against the oligarchy," was preached and also partly brought about.

That, however, did not overcome the difficulties with which the C.P. of Roumania has to contend. The ferocious and bloody terror weakened the ranks of the Party physically, even disorganised it for a short time, while that same terror and the consolidation of Roumanian capitalism strengthened the right liquidatorial wing of the Party and brought it out in various forms. In one year only five numbers of the "Lupta de Clasa" in three volumes, could appear. This infrequent appearance of the journal rendered on one hand any improvement in its content more difficult,

and on the other hand gave the impression that the Central Committee did not define its position on many important questions of the day; and so the Party membership and the working masses who sympathised with them remained backward in their class education. As an example we give the following:

The journal fails to give a diary of international political life and an account of the White Terror; it gives in general little news on the work and struggles of the brother Parties and of the Communist International. Since the publishing company of an illegal Communist Party cannot be very large, and is certainly very unsafe, the journal can only contain purely theoretical articles on Marxism—and then only translations. On the other hand, the journal can say scarcely a word on trade union questions and trade unity in Roumania, which circumstance, in the present position of the organisational apparatus of the Communist Party, has contributed to the recognised mistakes within the trade union sphere.

In the second volumes (Nos. 2 and 3) "Lupta de Clasa" publishes the resolution of the Central Committee of the C.P. of the Soviet Union on "Fraction Work in the Party," and a translation of the most important theses and resolutions of the Seventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. Only two articles were devoted in this volume to the internal situation: one on the so-called "Struggle within the ruling classes and the tasks of the working class" and the other attacking the "Right wing tendency" of Kristescu.

The last volume (Nos. 4 and 5) of June, 1927, contains, besides the article of Stalin on "Perspectives of the Revolution in China" and the "Theses of the Communist International on the International Situation and the Tasks of the C.I.," which were accepted at the Seventh Plenum, six articles concerning questions vital to the C.P. of Roumania and therefore to the working class of that country.

The article, "The Struggle to Re-establish Trade Union Unity" has in view the latest attack of the Government on the unitary trade unions (dissolution by the courts), with an objective criticism both of the reformist and the revolutionary (unitary) trade unions.

The leaders of the unitary trade unions showed great hesitation in the negotiations which lasted eight to ten months with the leaders of the Amsterdam trade unions in Roumania on the question of unity. We say nothing of the right wing of the unitary unions, who are actually Social-Democrats, and who, to deceive the masses, remained with the Unitaries for years, and now, at a moment of the most open, brutal and intense attack of the bourgeoisie (the dissolution proceedings), consider the time to have arrived to make their attack and leave the unitary trade unions and attempt to split them. But this action of the members of the unitary trade unions, who have now openly declared themselves to be reformists, failed completely. Only a few hundred workers allowed themselves to be misled. The others continued the fight, which can only be carried on under the leadership of the unitary unions. In this complex of difficulties the organ of the C.C. of the C.P. of Roumania gives the following directions for the struggle of the trade unions, while retaining their class war character, to establish their legality.

"The duty of mobilising the working class masses to ensure the legality of the unitary trade unions is a primary one for us Communists. Although the unitary trade unions are not by any means a Communist organisation, and still less a Communist Party organisation, as the Social-Democrats and the bourgeoisie together maintain, they are the one legal organisation based on the class struggle, and it is the duty of the Communists to use all their influence in the unitary and reformist trade unions, in the workshouses and factories, for rousing the workers to the fight for the legality of the unitary trade unions. . . ."

As I have already remarked, however, it is necessary to devote more than one article to this problem in Roumania. The question of trade union unity and the unmasking of the Amsterdamers must appear continually in the journal, as the same question appears uninterruptedly on the agenda of the entire Communist Party of Roumania.

Two articles are devoted to the "Ideas" of Minku. These "Ideas" appeared in the first number (second year) of the

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“Cultura Proletara,” and we have mentioned them in our review in “The Communist International.” The “Lupta de Clasa” enters sharply and decisively into the struggle against Minku’s desire to conduct a “fight,” “parallel to and in common with” one section of the bourgeoisie, against another section. Minku recommends this method as the only correct one for the working class. Minku does not understand the capitalist character of the Liberal Party; he maintains that it is an “oligarchy,” a clique, and nothing else, and that the bourgeoisie is conducting a struggle against them, in which it may succeed. As against this incorrect idea the “Lupta de Clasa” declares that the Liberal Party is economically the most highly-developed section of the Roumanian bourgeoisie, exploiting the feudal section, and that it is not indeed an oligarchy but a hegemony of the finance capital of the country, an oligarchy of concentrated capital, following the course of a further concentration of capital. Since the power of the Liberals is expressed in the form of a dictatorship of the large banks, that signifies that the control of the economic life of the country, including industry, is in the hands of the Liberals. Facts show that hundreds of large factories and thousands of undertakings of all kinds are founded by the banks of the Liberals bought up by them, dependent on them or strongly influenced by them. Such being the case, Minku’s great mistake consists in speaking of the opposition bourgeois parties as of the “bourgeoisie” as such, which the oligarchic finance league must destroy; and in overlooking the fact that the power of the Liberals is so great just because it is in accordance with the forms of power in modern capitalism. No real “anti-Liberal bloc” on the side of the opposition bourgeois parties is possible, and on page 59 of the “Lupta de Clasa” it is correctly and definitely stated: “The outlook of comrade Minku obscures the class-consciousness of the working class; it gives rise to illusions which prevent the crystallisation of the one social force which is actually capable of putting an end to the dictatorship of the Liberals: the united front of the proletariat with the broad masses of the peasantry, liberated from the guardianship of the opposition bourgeois.”

Another question of great importance to the C.P. of Roumania to-day is dealt with in the article “Legal Illusions.” In this two aspects of the question are considered: (1) The openly-treacherous policy of liquidation of Kristescu, who is already outside the Party, and well on the road towards Social-Democracy; (2) the “policy of liquidation” of those who demand the utilisation of legal possibilities of work, according to the necessity of the time, in the form of a “legal workers’ party.”

The “deviations” of Kristescu have long been known to us: against illegal work, for the affiliation of the unitary trade unions to Amsterdam, for the unconditional union with the Roumanian reformists, for “the political unity” of the working class. In practice his ideas amount to the following: refusal of any Party work, boycotting the workers’ and peasants’ bloc—the only legal organisation which is leading the masses to the fight and has accepted in part the slogans of the C.P.—an election appeal for the “democratic opposition bourgeois parties against the workers’ and peasants’ bloc—the true Labour Party!” Kristescu wants “political unity,” for the “C.I. is going . . . to the right, and the Second International is going . . . to the left”! He appeals to the working class to found a “Socialist Party” which should aim at making the workers brothers and not enemies. Kristescu published these “thoughts” during the last election campaign in his paper “The Socialist Victory,” and after the campaign in an appeal “To the whole working class.”

Finally the question of the struggle between the bourgeois parties, the question of the succession to the throne is dealt with in the “Lupta de Clasa.” The article “Carolism or Republic?” approaches this question which has become particularly acute since the death of King Ferdinand. The “Carol question” has already endangered the fame and the authority of the idea of monarchy to a certain extent. The “fight” which is being waged to-day on this subject by the opposition bourgeoisie against the

Liberals endangers still more the idea of monarchy among the working and peasant masses, as well as among a section of the petty-bourgeoisie. This is taking place in spite of the obviously treacherous position taken up by the National Peasants’ Party, who wish to use the question of the Regency for eventually obtaining a share in the State power, and for nothing else. At the same time, the “Persecution and Exile of Prince Carol,” utilised politically by the oppositional bourgeoisie, can win over petty-bourgeois sections and create the illusion among many workers that a Roumanian “Mussolini regime” would be in a position to change the miserable conditions of the masses. That Prince Carol is in close association with the Fascist organisations in Roumania is an open secret.

The writer of the article foresaw the possibility of a coup d’état on the part of the finance bourgeoisie (the Liberal Party), and this did actually take place (the overthrow of the Averescu Government). The Liberals carried out this coup d’état to prevent any aggravation of the difficulties involved in the question of succession by military officers which might lead to a mass movement, the last thing on earth desired by the bourgeoisie. The following is laid down as “The task of the Party”: “The present moment demands courage and action from the proletariat. It cannot, and must not, avoid the issue; it must be present at such a decisive point of history. It must not leave to the other classes, the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois, the initiative in mobilising the working and peasant masses for outside interests. Against these dangerous manoeuvres the slogan of the **Republic** must be put forward, ‘Down with the Bratianu Monarchy! Down with the Carolist Monarchy! Up the People’s Republic!’ The slogan of the Republic, a workers’ and peasants’ republic, as the principal slogan of the moment, capable of mobilising the broad masses of the population, is extremely urgent. . . . The only further requirement is for the C.P. to prove itself able to translate this political policy into action. . . .”

Quite right! And we are convinced that the C.P. of Roumania has in this a well-fertilised and fruitful soil for activity, although in a country which has given up the idea of a republic for the last 25 years, where Social-Democracy gives “warnings” before any “grave” events, it is no easy task to win the workers over quickly to this slogan. But because of these difficulties it is even more the duty of the Communist Party to popularise more actively and more rapidly the slogan of a People’s Republic.

A Communist Party has and must have many tasks. There are many more important questions with which the C.P. of Roumania has to deal, such as, for example, unemployment, the question of nationalities and the peasant problem. We are, however, convinced that the questions touched upon in Nos. 4 and 5 of the “Lupta de Clasa” form and will continue to form for a long time the **central tasks** of the Party.

The journal, appearing as an illegal theoretical organ under conditions of indisputable difficulty, must throw light on those problems which are chiefly discussed by the Party membership. It remains the duty of the Central Committee to make even more and even greater sacrifices for the regular publication and distribution of the “Lupta de Clasa” than they have done in the past.

AL BAD.

*The Weekly Paper for All
Communists*

WORKERS’ LIFE

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