

Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U.(B.)

(July 29 - August 9, 1927)

Speeches delivered by J. V. Stalin

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Table of Content

I: The Attacks of the Opposition on Sections of the Comintern.....	2
II: About China.....	9
III: The Anglo-Soviet Unity Committee {}	31
IV: The Threat of War and the Defence of the U.S.S.R.	35
Speech Delivered on August 5	50
With Reference to the Opposition's "Declaration" of August 8, 1927	70

J. V. Stalin

Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U.(B.)^{1}

July 29 - August 9, 1927

The International Situation and the Defence of the U.S.S.R.

Speech Delivered on August 1

I: The Attacks of the Opposition on Sections of the Comintern

Comrades, I should like, first of all, to deal with the attacks of Kamenev, Zinoviev and Trotsky on sections of the Comintern, on the Polish section of the Comintern, on the Austrian, British and Chinese sections. I should like to

¹ [1](#). The joint plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U.(B.) was held from July 29 to August 9, 1927. The plenum discussed the following questions: the international situation; economic directives for 1927-28; the work of the Central Control Commission and Workers' and Peasants' Inspection; the Fifteenth Party Congress; breach of Party discipline by Zinoviev and Trotsky. At the meeting of the plenum on August 1, J. V. Stalin delivered a speech on "The International Situation and the Defence of the U.S.S.R." On August 2, the plenum elected J. V. Stalin to the commission for drafting the resolution on the international situation. Noting the growing threat of a new armed attack upon the Soviet Union, the plenum condemned the defeatist stand of the Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc and set the task of strengthening the defence capacity of the Soviet Union to the utmost. The plenum issued economic directives for 1927-28 and noted the utter bankruptcy of the opposition's defeatist line in the sphere of economic policy. In its resolution on the work of the Central Control Commission and Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, the plenum outlined a programme for the further improvement of the work of the state apparatus. At the meeting of the plenum on August 5, J. V. Stalin delivered a speech during the discussion of G. K. Orjonikidze's report on the breach of Party discipline by Zinoviev and Trotsky. On August 6, the plenum elected J. V. Stalin to the commission for drafting the resolution on G. K. Orjonikidze's report. The plenum exposed the criminal activities of the leaders of the Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc and raised the question of expelling Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. (B.). Only after this, on August 8, did the leaders of the opposition submit to the plenum a "declaration" in which they hypocritically condemned their own behaviour and promised to abandon factional activities. On August 9, J. V. Stalin delivered a speech at the plenum on the opposition's "declaration." The plenum gave Trotsky and Zinoviev a severe reprimand and warning, demanded that the leaders of the Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc dissolve their faction forthwith, and called upon all the organisations and members of the Party to defend unity and iron discipline in the Party. (For the resolutions of the plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U.(B.), see *Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U. Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, Part II, 1953, pp 239-74.)

touch on this question because they, the oppositionists, have muddied the waters here and have tried to throw dust in our eyes as regards our brother parties, whereas what we need here is clarity and not opposition twaddle.

The question of the Polish Party. Zinoviev boldly stated here that if there is a Right deviation in the person of Warski in the Polish Party, it is the Communist International, the present leadership of the Comintern, that is to blame. He said that if Warski at one time adopted—and he certainly did adopt—the standpoint of supporting Pilsudski's troops, the Comintern is to blame for it.

That is quite wrong. I should like to refer to the facts, to passages, well-known to you, of the verbatim report of the plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission held in July of last year,

I should like to refer to and cite the testimony of a man like Comrade Dzerzhinsky, who stated at the time that if there was a Right deviation in the Polish Party, it was fostered by none other than Zinoviev.

That was during the days of the so-called Pilsudski rising,² when we, the members of the Polish Commission of the E.C.C.I. and of the Central Committee of our Party, which included Dzerzhinsky, Unszlicht, myself, Zinoviev and others, were drafting the resolutions for the Communist Party of Poland. Zinoviev, as the Chairman of the Comintern, submitted his draft proposals, in which he said, among other things, that at that moment in Poland, when a struggle was flaring up between the forces that were behind Pilsudski and the forces that were behind the Witos government of Poland, that at such a moment, a policy of neutrality on the part of the Communist Party was impermissible and that *for the time being no sharp pronouncements against Pilsudski should be made.*

Some of us, including Dzerzhinsky, objected and said that that directive was wrong, that it would only mislead the Communist Party of Poland. It was necessary to say that not only a policy of neutrality, but also a policy of supporting Pilsudski was impermissible. After some objections, that directive was accepted with our amendments.

² This refers to the armed coup d'etat effected in Poland by Pilsudski in May 1926, as a result of which Pilsudski and his clique established their dictatorship and carried out the fascisation of the country. (On the Pilsudski coup d'etat, see J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 177-81.)

By this I want to say that it does not need much courage to come out against Warski, who made a mistake at that time and was suitably rebuked for it; but to blame others for one's own sins, to shift the blame for fostering the Right deviation in the Polish Party from the guilty one, Zinoviev, to the Comintern, to the present leaders of the Comintern, means to commit a crime against the Comintern.

You will say that this is a trifle and that I am wasting my time on it. No, comrades, it is not a trifle. The struggle against the Right deviation in the Polish Party is continuing and will continue. Zinoviev has—well, what is the mildest way I can put it—the audacity to assert that the Right deviation is supported by the present leadership of the Comintern. The facts, however, show the opposite. They show that Zinoviev is slandering the Comintern, that he is blaming others for his own sins. That is a habit with Zinoviev, it is nothing new for him. It is our duty, however, to expose this slanderous habit of his on every occasion.

About Austria. Zinoviev asserted here that the Austrian Communist Party is weak, that it failed to assume the leadership of the action that took place recently in Vienna.^{3} That is true and not true. It is true that the Austrian Communist Party is weak; but to deny that it acted correctly is to slander it. Yes, it is still weak, but it is weak because, among other things, there is not yet that profound revolutionary crisis of capitalism which revolutionises the masses, which disorganises Social-Democracy and rapidly increases the chances of communism; it is weak because it is young; because in Austria there has long been firmly established the domination of the Social-Democratic "Left wing,"^{4} which is able, under cover of Left phrases, to pursue a Right-wing, opportunist policy; because Social-Democracy cannot be shattered at one stroke. But what indeed is Zinoviev driving at? He hinted, but did not dare to say openly, that if the Austrian Communist Party is weak, the Comintern is to

³ This refers to the revolutionary action of the proletariat in Vienna on July 15-18, 1927. The action was provoked by the acquittal by a bourgeois court in Vienna of a group of fascists who had killed a number of workers. The action, which arose spontaneously, developed into an uprising with street fighting against the police and troops. The uprising was suppressed as a result of the treachery of the leaders of Austrian Social-Democracy.

⁴ This refers to the "Left" wing of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party. It arose in 1916 and was headed by F. Adler and O. Bauer. Under cover of revolutionary phrases this Social-Democratic "Left" wing in fact acted against the interests of the workers, and was therefore the most dangerous section of Social-Democracy.

blame for it. Evidently, that is what he wanted to say. But that is an impotent accusation. It is a slander. On the contrary, it was precisely after Zinoviev ceased to be the Chairman of the Comintern that the Austrian Communist Party was freed from nagging, from indiscriminate interference in its internal life, and thus obtained the opportunity to advance, to develop. Is it not a fact that it was able to take a most active part in the Vienna events, having won for itself the sympathy of the masses of the workers? Does not this show that the Austrian Communist Party is growing and becoming a mass party? How can these obvious facts be denied?

The attack upon the British Communist Party. Zinoviev asserted that the British Communist Party gained nothing from the general strike and the coal strike,^{5} that it even emerged from the struggle weaker than it was before. That is not true. It is not true because the importance of the British Communist Party is growing from day to day. Only those who are blind can deny that. It is obvious if only from the fact that whereas previously the British bourgeoisie paid no serious attention to the Communist Party, now, on the contrary, it is furiously persecuting it; not only the bourgeoisie, but also both the General Council and the British Labour Party have organised a furious campaign against "their" Communists. Why were the British Communists more or less tolerated until recently? Because they were weak, they had little influence among the masses. Why are they no longer tolerated, why are they now being fiercely attacked? Because the Communist Party is now feared as a force to be reckoned with, because the leaders of the British Labour Party and General Council fear it as their grave-digger. Zinoviev forgets this.

I do not deny that, in general, the Western sections of the Comintern are still more or less weak. That cannot be denied. But what are the reasons? The chief reasons are:

⁵ The general strike and coal miners' strike in Britain were provoked by the employers' offensive against the standard of living of the working class. On the refusal of the coal miners to accept a reduction of wages and increased hours, the coal owners declared a lock-out. The miners answered this by declaring a strike on May 1, 1926. On May 3, a general strike was proclaimed in solidarity with the miners. Several million organised workers in the most important branches of industry and transport took part in the strike. On May 12, when the workers' struggle was at its height, the leaders of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress betrayed the strikers by calling off the general strike. The miners, however, continued the struggle. It was only due to the repressive measures taken by the government and employers and the extreme distress among the miners that the latter were compelled in November 1926 to go back to work on the coal owners' terms. (On the British general strike, see J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 164-77.)

firstly, the absence of that profound revolutionary crisis which revolutionises the masses, brings them to their feet and turns them abruptly towards communism;

secondly, the circumstance that in all the West-European countries the Social-Democratic parties are still the predominant force among the workers. These parties are older than the Communist Parties, which appeared only recently and cannot be expected to shatter the Social-Democratic parties at one stroke.

And is it not a fact that, in spite of these circumstances, the Communist Parties in the West are growing, that their popularity among the masses of the workers is rising, that some of them have already become, and others are becoming, really mass parties of the proletariat?

But there is still another reason why the Communist Parties in the West are not growing rapidly. That reason is the splitting activities of the opposition, of the very opposition that is present in this hall. What is required to enable the Communist Parties to grow rapidly? Iron unity in the Comintern, the absence of splits in its sections. But what is the opposition doing? It has created a second party in Germany, the party of Maslow and Ruth Fischer. It is trying to create similar splitting groups in other European countries. Our opposition has created a second party in Germany with a central committee, a central organ, and a parliamentary group; it has organised a split in the Comintern, knowing perfectly well that a split at the present time is bound to retard the growth of the Communist Parties; and now, throwing the blame on the Comintern, it is itself crying out about the slow growth of the Communist Parties in the West! Now, that is indeed impudence, unlimited impudence. . . .

About the Chinese Communist Party. The oppositionists cry out that the Chinese Communist Party, or properly speaking, its leadership, has committed Social-Democratic, Menshevik mistakes. That is correct. The leadership of the Comintern is being blamed for that. Now, that is absolutely incorrect. On the contrary, the Comintern has systematically rectified the mistakes of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Only those who are blind can deny that. You know it from the press, from *Pravda*, from *The Communist*

International,^{6} you know it from the decisions of the Comintern. The opposition has never named, and will not be able to name, a single directive, a single resolution of the Comintern capable of giving rise to a Menshevik deviation in the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, because there have been no such directives. It is foolish to think that if a Menshevik deviation has arisen in some Communist Party, or in its Central Committee, the Comintern must necessarily be to blame for it.

Kamenev asks: Where do the Menshevik mistakes of the Chinese Communist Party come from? And he answers: They can only come about owing to the faulty leadership of the Comintern. But I ask: Where did the Menshevik mistakes of the German Communist Party during the 1923 revolution come from? Where did Brandlerism^{7} come from? Who supported it? Is it not a fact that the Menshevik mistakes committed by the Central Committee of the German Party were supported by the present leader of the opposition, Trotsky? Why did not Kamenev say at that time that the appearance of Brandlerism was due to the incorrect leadership of the Comintern? Kamenev and Trotsky have forgotten the lessons of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. They have forgotten that with the upsurge of the revolution Right and Left deviations are bound to appear in the Communist Parties, the former refusing to break with the past and the latter refusing to reckon with the present. They have forgotten that no revolution is without such deviations.

And what happened in our Party in October 1917? Were there not a Right and a Left deviation in our Party at that time? Have Kamenev and Zinoviev forgotten that? Do you remember, comrades, the history of the Menshevik mistakes that Kamenev and Zinoviev made in October? What were those mistakes due to? Who was to blame for them? Could Lenin, or the Central Committee of Lenin's Party, be blamed for them? How could the opposition

⁶ *Communist International*—a magazine, organ of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, published from May 1919 to June 1943 in Russian, French, German, English and other languages. It ceased publication in connection with the decision taken on May 15, 1943 by the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Comintern to dissolve the Communist International.

⁷ Brandlerism—a Right-opportunist trend in the Communist Party of Germany, so named after Brandler, who belonged to the leadership of the Communist Party of Germany in 1922-23 and was leader of the Right-wing group. The defeatist policy of the Brandlerites and their collaboration with the Social-Democratic top leadership led to the defeat of the German working class in the 1923 revolution. In 1929, Brandler was expelled from the Communist Party for his factional, anti-Party activities.

"forget" these and similar facts? How could it "forget" that with the upsurge of the revolution Right and Left deviations from Marxism always make their appearance within the parties? And what is the task of the Marxists, of the Leninists, under such circumstances? It is to fight the Left and Right deviators.

I am surprised at the arrogance displayed by Trotsky who, you see, apparently cannot tolerate the slightest mistake being made by the Communist Parties in the West or in the East. He, if you please, is surprised that over there, in China, where there is a young party, barely two years old, Menshevik mistakes could make their appearance. But how many years did Trotsky himself stray among the Mensheviks? Has he forgotten that? Why, he strayed among the Mensheviks for fourteen years—from 1903 to 1917. Why does he excuse his own straying among all sorts of anti-Leninist "trends" for fourteen years before he drew near to Bolshevism, but does not grant the young Chinese Communists at least four years? Why is he so arrogant towards others while forgetting about his own strayings? Why? Where is the "fairness" of it, so to speak?

II: About China

Let us pass to the question of China.

I shall not dwell on the mistakes of the opposition on the question of the character and prospects of the Chinese revolution. I shall not do so because enough has been said, and said quite convincingly, on this subject, and it is not worth while repeating it here. Nor shall I dwell on the assertion that in its present phase the Chinese revolution is a revolution for customs autonomy (Trotsky). Nor is it worth while dwelling on the assertion that no feudal survivals exist in China, or that, if they do exist, they are of no great importance (Trotsky and Radek), in which case the agrarian revolution in China would be absolutely incomprehensible. You no doubt already know from our Party press about these and similar mistakes of the opposition on the Chinese question.

Let us pass to the question of the basic premises of Leninism in deciding the questions of revolution in colonial and dependent countries.

What is the basic premise of the Comintern and the Communist Parties generally in their approach to the questions of the revolutionary movement in colonial and dependent countries?

It consists in a strict *distinction* between revolution in imperialist countries, in countries that oppress other nations, and revolution in colonial and dependent countries, in countries that suffer from imperialist oppression by other states. Revolution in imperialist countries is one thing: there the bourgeoisie is the oppressor of other nations; there it is counter-revolutionary at all stages of the revolution; there the national factor, as a factor in the struggle for emancipation, is absent. Revolution in colonial and dependent countries is another thing: there the imperialist oppression by other states is one of the factors of the revolution; there this oppression cannot but affect the national bourgeoisie also; there the national bourgeoisie, at a certain stage and for a certain period, may support the revolutionary movement of its country against imperialism; there the national factor, as a factor in the struggle for emancipation, is a revolutionary factor.

To fail to draw this distinction, to fail to understand this difference and to identify revolution in imperialist countries with revolution in colonial countries, is to depart from the path of Marxism, from the path of Leninism, to take the path of the supporters of the Second International.

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

"What is the *most important*, the *fundamental* idea of our theses? The *distinction* between *oppressed* nations and *oppressing* nations. We emphasise this distinction—in contrast to the Second International and bourgeois democracy" (Vol. XXV, p. 351).

The principal error of the opposition is that it fails to understand and does not admit this difference between the two types of revolution.

The principal error of the opposition is that it *identifies* the 1905 Revolution in Russia, an imperialist country which oppressed other nations, with the revolution in China, an oppressed, semi-colonial country, which is compelled to fight imperialist oppression on the part of other states.

Here in Russia, in 1905, the revolution was directed against the bourgeoisie, against the liberal bourgeoisie, in spite of the fact that it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Why? Because the liberal bourgeoisie of an *imperialist* country is bound to be counter-revolutionary. For that very reason among the Bolsheviks at that time there was not, and could not be, any question of temporary blocs and agreements with the liberal bourgeoisie. On these grounds, the opposition asserts that the same attitude should be adopted in China at all stages of the revolutionary movement, that temporary agreements and blocs with the national bourgeoisie are never permissible in China under any conditions. But the opposition forgets that only people who do not understand and do not admit that there is a difference between revolution in oppressed countries and revolution in oppressing countries can talk like that, that only people who are breaking with Leninism and are sinking to the level of supporters of the Second International can talk like that.

Here is what Lenin said about the permissibility of entering into temporary agreements and blocs with the bourgeois-liberation movement in colonial countries :

"The Communist International must enter into a *temporary alliance** with bourgeois democracy in the colonies and backward countries, but must not merge with it, and must unfailingly preserve the independence of the proletarian movement, even if in its most rudimentary form" (see Vol. XXV, p. 290) . . . "we, as Communists, should, and will, *support bourgeois-liberation** movements in colonial countries only when those movements are really revolutionary, when the representatives of those movements do not hinder us in training and organising the peasantry and the broad masses of the exploited in a revolutionary spirit" (Vol. XXV, p. 353).

How could it "happen" that Lenin, who fulminated against agreements with the bourgeoisie *in Russia*, admitted that such agreements and blocs were permissible *in China*? Perhaps Lenin was mistaken? Perhaps he had turned from revolutionary tactics to opportunist tactics? Of course not! It "happened" because Lenin understood the difference between revolution in an oppressed country and revolution in an oppressing country. It "happened" because Lenin understood that, at a certain stage of its development, the national bourgeoisie in the colonial and dependent countries may support the revolutionary movement of its own country against the oppression of imperialism. That the opposition refuses to understand, but it refuses to do so because it is breaking with Lenin's revolutionary tactics, breaking with the revolutionary tactics of Leninism.

Have you noticed how carefully in their speeches the leaders of the opposition evaded these directives of Lenin's, being afraid to mention them? Why do they evade these universally-known tactical directives of Lenin's for the colonial and dependent countries? Why are they afraid of these directives? Because they are afraid of the truth. Because Lenin's tactical directives refute the entire ideological and political line of Trotskyism on the questions of the Chinese revolution.

About the stages of the Chinese revolution. The opposition has got so confused that it is now denying that there are any stages at all in the development of the Chinese revolution. But is there such a thing as a revolution that does not go through definite stages of development? Did not

our revolution have its stages of development? Take Lenin's April Theses^{8} and you will see that Lenin recognised two stages in our revolution: the first stage was the bourgeois-democratic revolution, with the agrarian movement as its main axis; the second stage was the October Revolution, with the seizure of power by the proletariat as its main axis.

What are the stages in the Chinese revolution?

In my opinion there should be three :

the first stage is the revolution of an all-national *united* front, the Canton period, when the revolution was striking chiefly at foreign imperialism, and the national bourgeoisie supported the revolutionary movement;

the second stage is the bourgeois-democratic revolution, after the national troops reached the Yangtse River, when the national bourgeoisie deserted the revolution and the agrarian movement grew into a mighty revolution of tens of millions of the peasantry (the Chinese revolution is now at the second stage of its development);

the third stage is the Soviet revolution, which has not yet come, but will come.

Whoever fails to understand that there is no such thing as a revolution without definite stages of development, whoever fails to understand that there are three stages in the development of the Chinese revolution, understands nothing about Marxism or about the Chinese question.

What is the characteristic feature of the first stage of the Chinese revolution?

The characteristic feature of the first stage of the Chinese revolution is, firstly, that it was the revolution of an all-national united front, and secondly, that it was directed mainly against foreign imperialist oppression (the Hongkong strike,^{9} etc.). Was Canton then the centre, the place d'armes, of the revolutionary movement in China? Of course, it was. Only those who are blind can deny that now.

⁸ V. I. Lenin, The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution (see Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 24, pp. 1-7).

⁹ The Hongkong strike of the Chinese workers began on June 19, 1925, and lasted sixteen months. The strike bore a political character and was directed against foreign imperialist oppression.

Is it true that the first stage of a colonial revolution must have just such a character? I think it is true. In the "Supplementary Theses" of the Second Congress of the Comintern, which deal with the revolution in China and India, it is explicitly stated that in those countries "foreign domination is all the time hindering the free development of social life," that "therefore, *the first step** of a revolution in the colonies must be to overthrow foreign capitalism" (see *Verbatim Report of the Second Congress of the Comintern*, p. 605).

The characteristic feature of the Chinese revolution is that it has taken this "first step," has passed through the first stage of its development, has passed through the period of the revolution of an all-national united front and has entered the second stage of its development, the period of the agrarian revolution.

The characteristic feature, for instance, of the Turkish revolution (the Kemalists), on the contrary, is that it got stuck at the "first step," at the first stage of its development, at the stage of the bourgeois-liberation movement, without even attempting to pass to the second stage of its development, the stage of the agrarian revolution.

What were the Kuomintang^{10} and its government at the first stage of the revolution, the Canton period? They were a bloc of the workers, the peasants, the bourgeois intellectuals and the national bourgeoisie. Was Canton at that time the centre of the revolutionary movement, the place d'armes of the revolution? Was it correct policy at that time to support the Canton

¹⁰ The Kuomintang—a political party in China, founded in 1912 by Sun Yat-sen for the purpose of fighting for a republic and for the national independence of the country. In 1924 the Communist Party of China joined the Kuomintang and thus helped to convert the latter into a mass people's revolutionary party. In the first stage of development of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, when the latter was an anti-imperialist revolution of a united all-national front, the Kuomintang was the party of the bloc of the proletariat, the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie and a section of the big national bourgeoisie. In the second stage, in the period of the agrarian, bourgeois-democratic revolution, after the national bourgeoisie had passed into the camp of the counter-revolution, the Kuomintang was a bloc of the proletariat, the peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie, and pursued an anti-imperialist revolutionary policy. The expansion of the agrarian revolution and the pressure exerted by the feudal landlords on the Kuomintang on the one hand, and on the other hand the pressure brought to bear by the imperialists, who demanded that the Kuomintang should break with the Communists, frightened the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia (the Lefts in the Kuomintang), who turned to the side of the counter-revolution. When the Left Kuomintangists began to desert the revolution (in the summer of 1927), the Communists withdrew from the Kuomintang and the latter became the centre of the struggle against the revolution. (On the Kuomintang, see J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 246-55 and 346-55.)

Kuomintang, as the government of the struggle for liberation from imperialism? Were we right in giving assistance to Canton in China and, say, Ankara in Turkey, when Canton and Ankara were fighting imperialism? Yes, we were right. We were right, and we were then following in the footsteps of Lenin, for the struggle waged by Canton and Ankara was dissipating the forces of imperialism, was weakening and discrediting imperialism, and was thus facilitating the development of the centre of the world revolution, the development of the U.S.S.R. Is it true that at that time the present leaders of our opposition joined with us in supporting both Canton and Ankara, giving them certain assistance? Yes, it is true. Let anybody try to refute that.

But what does a united front with the national bourgeoisie at the first stage of a colonial revolution mean? Does it mean that Communists must not intensify the struggle of the workers and peasants against the landlords and the national bourgeoisie, that the proletariat ought to sacrifice its independence, if only to a very slight extent, if only for a very short time? No, it does not mean that. A united front can be of revolutionary significance only where, and only on condition that, it does not prevent the Communist Party from conducting its independent political and organisational work, from organising the proletariat into an independent political force, from rousing the peasantry against the landlords, from openly organising a workers' and peasants' revolution and from preparing in this way the conditions for the hegemony of the proletariat. I think that the reporter fully proved on the basis of universally-known documents that it was precisely this conception of the united front that the Comintern impressed upon the Chinese Communist Party.

Kamenev and Zinoviev referred here to a single telegram sent to Shanghai in October 1926, stating that for the time being, until Shanghai was captured, the agrarian movement should not be intensified. I am far from admitting that that telegram was right. I have never regarded and do not now regard the Comintern as being infallible. Mistakes are sometimes made, and that telegram was unquestionably a mistake. But, firstly, the *Comintern itself cancelled* that telegram a few weeks later (in November 1926), without any promptings or signals from the opposition. Secondly, why has the opposition kept silent about this until now? Why has it recalled that telegram only *after nine months*? And why does it conceal from the Party the fact that the Comintern cancelled that telegram *nine months ago*? Hence, it would be malicious slander to assert that that

telegram defined the line of our leadership. As a matter of fact, it was an isolated, episodic telegram, totally uncharacteristic of the line of the Comintern, of the line of our leadership. That is obvious, I repeat, if only from the fact that it was cancelled within a few weeks by a number of documents which laid down the line, and which were indeed characteristic of our leadership.

Permit me to refer to these documents.

Here, for instance, is an excerpt from the resolution of the Seventh Plenum of the Comintern, *in November 1926*, i.e., a month after the above-mentioned telegram:

"The peculiar feature of the present situation is its transitional character, the fact that the proletariat must choose between the prospect of a bloc with considerable sections of the bourgeoisie and the prospect of further consolidating its alliance with the peasantry. *If the proletariat fails to put forward a radical agrarian programme, it will be unable to draw the peasantry into the revolutionary struggle and will forfeit its hegemony in the national-liberation movement.*"*

And further :

"The Canton People's Government will not be able to retain power in the revolution, will not be able to achieve complete victory over foreign imperialism and native reaction until the cause of national liberation is *identified with the agrarian revolution*"* (see *Resolution of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.*).

There you have a document which really does define the line of the Comintern leadership.

It is very strange that the leaders of the opposition avoid mention of this universally-known Comintern document.

Perhaps it will not be taken as boastful if I refer to the speech I delivered *in November of that same year, 1926*, in the Chinese Commission of the Comintern, which, not without my participation of course, drafted the resolution of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum on the Chinese question. That speech was subsequently published in pamphlet form under the title *The Prospects of the Revolution in China*. Here are some passages from that speech :

"I know that there are Kuomintangists and even Chinese Communists who do not consider it possible to unleash revolution in the countryside, since they fear that if the peasantry were drawn into the revolution it would disrupt the united anti-imperialist front. *That is a profound error, comrades. The more quickly and thoroughly the Chinese peasantry is drawn into the revolution, the stronger and more powerful the anti-imperialist front in China will be.*"

And further :

"I know that among the Chinese Communists there are comrades who do not approve of workers going on strike for an improvement of their material conditions and legal status, and who try to dissuade the workers from striking. (*A voice: "That happened in Canton and Shanghai."*) That is a great mistake, comrades. It is a very serious underestimation of the role and importance of the Chinese proletariat. This fact should be noted in the theses as something decidedly objectionable. It would be a great mistake if the Chinese Communists failed to take advantage of the present favourable situation to assist the workers to improve their material conditions and legal status, even through strikes. Otherwise, what purpose does the revolution in China serve?" (See Stalin, *The Prospects of the Revolution in China.*)^{11}

And here is a third document, of *December 1926*, issued at a time when every city in China was bombarding the Comintern with assertions that an extension of the struggle of the workers would lead to a crisis, to unemployment, to the closing down of mills and factories :

"A general policy of retreat in the towns and of curtailing the workers' struggle to improve their conditions would be *wrong*. The struggle in the countryside must be extended, but at the same time advantage must be taken of the favourable situation to improve the material conditions and legal status of the workers, while striving in every way to lend the workers' struggle an organised character, which precludes excesses or running too far ahead. Special efforts must be exerted to direct the struggle in the towns against the big bourgeoisie and, above all, against the imperialists, so as to keep the Chinese petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie as far as possible within the framework of the united front against the common enemy. We regard the system of conciliation boards, arbitration courts, etc., as expedient, provided a correct

¹¹ See J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 385, 389.

working-class policy is ensured in these institutions. At the same time we think it necessary to utter the warning that decrees directed against the right to strike, against workers' freedom of assembly, etc., are absolutely impermissible."

Here is a fourth document, issued six weeks before Chiang Kai-shek's coup^{12}:

"The work of the Kuomintang and Communist units in the army must be intensified; they must be organised wherever they do not now exist and it is possible to organise them; where it is not possible to organise Communist units, intensified work must be conducted with the help of concealed Communists.

"It is necessary to adopt the course of arming the workers and peasants and converting the peasant committees in the localities into actual organs of governmental authority equipped with armed self-defence, etc.

"The Communist Party must everywhere come forward as such; a policy of voluntary semi-legality is impermissible; the Communist Party must not come forward as a brake on the mass movement; the Communist Party should not cover up the treacherous and reactionary policy of the Kuomintang Rights, and should mobilise the masses around the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party on the basis of exposing the Rights.

"The attention of all political workers who are loyal to the revolution must be drawn to the fact that at the present time, in connection with the regrouping of class forces and concentration of the imperialist armies, the Chinese revolution is passing through a critical period, and that it can achieve further victories only by resolutely adopting the course of developing the mass movement. Otherwise a tremendous danger threatens the revolution. The fulfilment of directives is therefore more necessary than ever before."

And even earlier, already *in April 1926*, a year before the coup of the Kuomintang Rights and Chiang Kaishek, the Comintern warned the Chinese Communist Party, pointing out that it was "necessary to work for the resignation or expulsion of the Rights from the Kuo-mintang."

¹² This refers to the counter-revolutionary coup in China carried out on April 12, 1927, by the Right-wing Kuomintangists headed by Chiang Kai-shek, as a result of which a counter-revolutionary government was set up in Nanking. (On Chiang Kai-shek's coup, see J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 229-31.)

That is how the Comintern understood, and still understands, the tactics of a united front against imperialism at the first stage of a colonial revolution.

Does the opposition know about these guiding documents? Of course it does. Why then does it say nothing about them? Because its aim is to raise a squabble, not to bring out the truth.

And yet there was a time when the present leaders of the opposition, especially Zinoviev and Kamenev, did understand something about Leninism and, in the main, advocated the same policy for the Chinese revolutionary movement as was pursued by the Comintern, and which Comrade Lenin outlined for us in his theses.^{13} I have in mind the Sixth Plenum of the Communist International, held in *February-March 1926*, when Zinoviev was Chairman of the Comintern, when he was still a Leninist and had not yet migrated to Trotsky's camp. I mention the Sixth Plenum of the Communist International because there is a resolution of that plenum on the Chinese revolution,^{14} which was adopted unanimously in February-March 1926, and which gives approximately the same estimate of the first stage of the Chinese revolution, of the Canton Kuomintang and of the Canton government, as is given by the Comintern and by the C.P.S.U.(B.), but which the opposition is now repudiating. I mention this resolution because Zinoviev voted for it at that time, and not a single member of the Central Committee, not even Trotsky, Kamenev, or the other leaders of the present opposition, objected to it.

Permit me to quote a few passages from that resolution.

Here is what is said in the resolution *about the Kuo-mintang*:

"The Shanghai and Hongkong political strikes of the Chinese workers (June-September 1925) marked a turning point in the struggle of the Chinese people for liberation from the foreign imperialists. . . . The political action of the proletariat gave a powerful impetus to the further development and consolidation of all the revolutionary-democratic organisations in the country,

¹³ V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions" (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 31, pp. 122-28).

¹⁴ The resolution on the Chinese question drafted by the Eastern Commission of the Sixth Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern was adopted at a plenary meeting on March 13, 1926 (see *The Sixth Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Theses and Resolutions*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1926, pp. 131-36).

especially of the people's revolutionary party, the Kuomintang, and the revolutionary government in Canton. The Kuomintang party, the main body of which acted in alliance with the Chinese Communists, is *a revolutionary bloc of workers, peasants, intellectuals, and the urban democracy*,* based on the common class interests of these strata in the struggle against the foreign imperialists and against the whole military-feudal way of life, for the independence of the country and for a single revolutionary-democratic government" (see *Resolution of the Sixth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.*).

Thus, the Canton Kuomintang is an alliance of four "classes." As you see, this is almost "Martynovism"^{15} sanctified by none other than the then Chairman of the Comintern Zinoviev./p>

About the Canton Kuomintang government:

"The revolutionary government created by the Kuomintang party in Canton has already succeeded in establishing contact with the widest masses of the workers, peasants, and urban democracy, and, basing itself on them, has smashed the counterrevolutionary bands supported by the imperialists (and is working for the radical democratisation of the whole political life of the Kwangtung Province). Thus, being the vanguard in the struggle of the Chinese people for independence, the Canton government serves as a model for the future revolutionary-democratic development of the country"* (ibid.).*

It turns out that the Canton Kuomintang government, being a bloc of four "classes," was a revolutionary government, and not only revolutionary, but even a model for the future revolutionary-democratic government in China./p>

About the united front of workers, peasants and the bourgeoisie:

"In face of the new dangers, the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang must develop the most wide-spread political activity, organising mass action in support of the struggle of the people's armies, taking advantage of the contradictions within the camp of the imperialists and opposing to them

¹⁵ In an article on the development of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, A. Martynov (a former Menshevik who was admitted to membership of the R.C.P.(B.) by the Twelfth Party Congress) advanced the thesis that the revolution in China could peacefully evolve from a bourgeois-democratic revolution into a proletarian revolution. The Trotsky-Zinoviev anti-Soviet bloc tried to thrust responsibility for Martynov's mistaken thesis upon the leadership of the Comintern and of the C.P.S.U.(B.).

a united national revolutionary front of the broadest strata of the population (workers, peasants, and the bourgeoisie) under the leadership of the revolutionary-democratic organisations" (ibid.).*

It follows that temporary blocs and agreements with *the bourgeoisie* in colonial countries at a certain stage of the colonial revolution are not only permissible, but positively essential.

Is it not true that this is very similar to what Lenin tells us in his well-known directives for the tactics of Communists in colonial and dependent countries? It is a pity, however, that Zinoviev has already managed to forget that.

The question of withdrawal from the Kuomintang:

"Certain sections of the Chinese big bourgeoisie, which had temporarily grouped themselves around the Kuomintang Party, withdrew from it during the past year, which resulted in the formation on the Right wing of the Kuomintang of a small group that openly opposed a close alliance between the Kuomintang and the masses of the working people, demanded the expulsion of the Communists from the Kuomintang and opposed the revolutionary policy of the Canton government. *The condemnation of this Right wing at the Second Congress of the Kuomintang (January 1926) and the endorsement of the necessity for a militant alliance between the Kuomintang and the Communists confirm the revolutionary trend of the activities of the Kuomintang and the Canton government and ensure for the Kuomintang the revolutionary support of the proletariat"* (ibid.).*

It is seen that withdrawal of the Communists from the Kuomintang at the first stage of the Chinese revolution would have been a serious mistake. It is a pity, however, that Zinoviev, who voted for this resolution, had already managed to forget it in about a month; for it was not later than April 1926 (within a month) that Zinoviev demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Communists from the Kuomintang./p>

About the deviations within the Chinese Communist Party and the impermissibility of skipping over the Kuomin-tang phase of the revolution:</p>

"The political self-determination of the Chinese Communists will develop in the struggle against two equally harmful deviations: against Right

Liquidationism, which ignores the independent class tasks of the Chinese proletariat and leads to a formless merging with the general democratic national movement; and against the extreme Left sentiments in favour of *skipping over the revolutionary-democratic stage of the movement* to come immediately to the tasks of proletarian dictatorship and Soviet power, *forgetting about the peasantry*, that basic and decisive factor in the Chinese movement for national emancipation"* (*ibid.*).

As you see, here are all the grounds for convicting the opposition now of wanting to skip over the Kuomin-tang phase of development in China, of underestimating the peasant movement, and of dashing post-haste towards Soviets. It hits the nail right on the head.

Do Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky know about this resolution?

We must assume that they do. At any rate Zino-view must know about it, for it was under his chairmanship that this resolution was adopted at the Sixth Plenum of the Comintern and he himself voted for it. Why are the leaders of the opposition now avoiding this resolution of the highest body of the world communist movement? Why are they keeping silent about it? Because it turns against them on all questions concerning the Chinese revolution. Because it refutes the whole of the present Trotskyist standpoint of the opposition. Because they have deserted the Comintern, deserted Leninism, and now, fearing their past, fearing their own shadows, are obliged cravenly to avoid the resolution of the Sixth Plenum of the Comintern.

That is how matters stand as regards the first stage-of the Chinese revolution.

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

While the distinguishing feature of the first stage was that the spearhead of the revolution was turned mainly against foreign imperialism, the characteristic feature of the second stage is that the spearhead of the revolution is now turned mainly against internal enemies, primarily against the feudal landlords, against the feudal regime.

Did the first stage accomplish its task of overthrowing foreign imperialism? No, it did not. It bequeathed the accomplishment of this task to the second stage of the Chinese revolution. It merely gave the revolutionary masses the

first shaking up that roused them against imperialism, only to run its course and hand on the task to the future.

It must be presumed that the second stage of the revolution also will not succeed in fully accomplishing the task of expelling the imperialists. It will give the broad masses of the Chinese workers and peasants a further shaking up to rouse them against imperialism, but it will do so in order to hand on the completion of this task to the next stage of the Chinese revolution, to the Soviet stage.

There is nothing surprising in that. Do we not know that analogous facts occurred in the history of our revolution, although in a different situation and under different circumstances? Do we not know that the first stage of our revolution did not fully accomplish its task of completing the agrarian revolution, and that it handed on that task to the next stage of the revolution, to the October Revolution, which wholly and completely accomplished the task of eradicating the survivals of feudalism? It will therefore not be surprising if the second stage of the Chinese revolution does not succeed in fully completing the agrarian revolution, and if the second stage of the revolution, after giving the vast masses of the peasantry a shaking up and rousing them against the survivals of feudalism, hands on the completion of this task to the next stage of the revolution, to the Soviet stage. That will only be a merit of the future Soviet revolution in China.

What was the task of the Communists at the second stage of the revolution in China, when the centre of the revolutionary movement had obviously shifted from Canton to Wuhan, and when, parallel with the revolutionary centre in Wuhan, a counter-revolutionary centre was set up in Nanking?

The task was to utilise to the full the possibility of openly organising the Party, the proletariat (trade unions), the peasantry (peasant associations), and the revolution generally.

The task was to push the Wuhan Kuomintangists to the Left, towards the agrarian revolution.

The task was to make the Wuhan Kuomintang the centre of the fight against counter-revolution and the core of a future revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

Was that policy correct?

The facts have shown that it was the only correct policy, the only policy capable of training the masses of workers and peasants for the further development of the revolution.

The opposition at that time demanded the immediate formation of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. But that was sheer adventurism, an adventurist leap ahead, for the immediate formation of Soviets at that time would have meant skipping over the Left Kuomintang phase of development. Why?

Because the Kuomintang in Wuhan, which supported the alliance with the Communists, had not yet discredited and exposed itself in the eyes of the masses of workers and peasants, and had not yet exhausted itself as a bourgeois revolutionary organisation.

Because to have issued the slogan of Soviets and of the overthrow of the Wuhan government at a time when the masses had not yet been convinced through their own experience of the worthlessness of that government and of the necessity of overthrowing it, would have meant leaping ahead, breaking away from the masses, losing the support of the masses and thus causing the failure of the movement that had already started.

The opposition thinks that, if it understands that the Wuhan Kuomintang was unreliable, unstable and insufficiently revolutionary (and it is not difficult for any qualified political worker to understand that), that is quite enough for the masses also to understand all this, that is enough for replacing the Kuomintang by Soviets and for securing the following of the masses. But that is the usual "ultra-Left" mistake made by the opposition, which takes its own political consciousness and understanding for the political consciousness and understanding of the vast masses of workers and peasants.

The opposition is right when it says that the Party must go forward. That is an ordinary Marxist precept, and there can not be any real Communist Party if it is not adhered to. But that is only part of the truth. The whole truth is that the Party must not only go forward, but must also *secure the following* of the vast masses. To go forward without securing the following of the vast masses means in fact to break away from the movement. To go forward, breaking away

from the rear-guard, without being able to secure the following of the rear-guard, means to make a leap ahead that can prevent the advance of the masses for some time. The essence of Leninist leadership is precisely that the vanguard should be able to *secure the following* of the rear-guard, that the vanguard should go forward *without breaking away* from the masses. But in order that the vanguard should not break away from the masses, in order that the vanguard should really secure the following of the vast masses, a decisive condition is needed, namely, that *the masses themselves should be convinced through their own experience that the instructions, directives and slogans issued by the vanguard are correct.*

The misfortune of the opposition is that it does not accept this simple Leninist rule for leading the vast masses, that it does not understand that the Party alone, an advanced group alone, without the support of the vast masses, cannot make a revolution, that, in the final analysis, a revolution "is made" by the vast masses of the working people.

Why did we Bolsheviks, in April 1917, refrain from putting forward the practical slogan for the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the establishment of Soviet power in Russia, although we were convinced that in the very near future we should be faced with the necessity of overthrowing the Provisional Government and of establishing Soviet power?

Because the broad masses of the working people, both in the rear and at the front, and, lastly, the Soviets themselves, were not yet ready to accept such a slogan, they still believed that the Provisional Government was revolutionary.

Because the Provisional Government had not yet disgraced and discredited itself by supporting counterrevolution in the rear and at the front.

Why did Lenin, in April 1917, denounce the Bag-datyev group in Petrograd which put forward the slogan of the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government and the establishment of Soviet power?

Because Bagdatyev's attempt was a dangerous leap ahead which created the danger of the Bolshevik Party breaking away from the vast masses of the workers and peasants.

Adventurism in politics, Bagdatyevism in matters concerning the Chinese revolution—that is what is now killing our Trotskyist opposition.

Zinoviev asserts that in speaking of Bagdatyevism I identify the present Chinese revolution with the October Revolution. That, of course, is nonsense. In the first place, I myself made the reservation in my article "Notes on Contemporary Themes" that "the analogy is a qualified one" and that "I make it with all the necessary reservations, bearing in mind the difference between the situation of China in our day and that of Russia in 1917."^{16} In the second place, it would be foolish to assert that one must never draw analogies with revolutions in other countries when characterising certain tendencies and certain mistakes committed in the revolution of a given country. Does not a revolution in one country learn from revolutions in other countries, even if those revolutions are not all of the same type? If not, what does the science of revolution amount to?

In essence, Zinoviev denies that there can be a science of revolution. Is it not a fact that in the period just before the October Revolution Lenin accused Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov and others of the "Louis Blancism" of the French Revolution of 1848? Look at Lenin's article "Louis Blancism"^{17} and you will realise that Lenin made wide use of analogies from the French Revolution of 1848 in characterising the mistakes made by various leaders before October, although Lenin knew very well that the French Revolution of 1848 was not of the same type as our October Revolution. And if we can speak of the "Louis Blancism" of Chkheidze and Tsereteli in the period before the October Revolution, why cannot we speak of the "Bag-datyevism" of Zinoviev and Trotsky in the period of the agrarian revolution in China?

The opposition asserts that Wuhan was not the centre of the revolutionary movement. Why then did Zi-noviev say that "all round assistance should be rendered" the Wuhan Kuomintang, so as to make it the centre of the struggle against the Chinese Cavaignacs? Why did the Wuhan territory, and no 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, Hupeh) that was the centre of the maximum development of the agrarian movement at the beginning of this year? Why could Canton, where there was no mass agrarian movement, be called "the place d'armes of the revolution" (Trotsky), whereas

¹⁶ See J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 9, p. 366.

¹⁷ See V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 24, pp. 15-18.

Wuhan, in the territory of which the agrarian revolution began and developed, must not be regarded as the centre, as the "place d'armes" of the revolutionary movement? How in that case are we to explain the fact that the opposition demanded that the Communist Party should remain in the Wuhan Kuomintang and the Wuhan government? Was the opposition, in April 1927, really in favour of a bloc with the "counter-revolutionary" Wuhan Kuomintang? Why this "forgetfulness" and confusion on the part of the opposition?

The opposition is gloating over the fact that the bloc with the Wuhan Kuomintang proved to be shortlived, and, moreover, it asserts that the Comintern failed to warn the Chinese Communists of the possibility of the collapse of the Wuhan Kuomintang. It scarcely needs proof that the malicious glee displayed by the opposition only testifies to its political bankruptcy. The opposition evidently thinks that blocs with the national bourgeoisie in colonial countries ought to be of long duration; but only people who have lost the last remnants of Leninism can think that. Only those who are infected with defeatism can gloat over the fact that at the present stage the feudal landlords and imperialists in China have proved to be stronger than the revolution, that the pressure exercised by these hostile forces has induced the Wuhan Kuomintang to swing to the Right and has led to the temporary defeat of the Chinese revolution. As for the opposition's assertion that the Comintern failed to warn the Communist Party of China of the possible collapse of the Wuhan Kuomintang, that is one of the usual slanders now so abundant in the opposition's arsenal.

Permit me to quote some documents to refute the slanders of the opposition.

First document, of May 1927:

"The most important thing now in the internal policy of the Kuomintang is to develop the agrarian revolution systematically in all provinces, particularly in Kwangtung, under the slogan 'All power to the peasant associations and committees in the countryside.' *This is the basis for the success of the revolution and of the Kuomintang.* This is the basis for creating in China a big and powerful political and military army against imperialism and its agents. Practically, the slogan of confiscating the land is quite timely for the provinces in which there is a strong agrarian movement, such as Hunan, Kwangtung, etc. *Without this the extension of the agrarian revolution is impossible*.* . . .

"It is necessary to start at once to organise eight or ten divisions of revolutionary peasants and workers with absolutely reliable officers. This will be a Wuhan guards force both at the front and in the rear for disarming unreliable units. This must not be delayed.

"Disintegrating activities must be intensified in the rear and in Chiang Kai-shek's units, and assistance must be given to the insurgent peasants in Kwangtung, where the rule of the landlords is particularly unbearable."

The second document, of May 1927:

"Without an agrarian revolution, victory is impossible. Without it the Central Committee of the Kuomintang will be converted into a wretched plaything of unreliable generals. Excesses must be combated not, however, by means of troops, but through the peasant associations. We are decidedly in favour of the actual seizure of the land by the masses. Apprehensions concerning Tang Ping-shan's mission are not devoid of foundation. You must not sever yourselves from the working-class and peasant movement, but must assist it in every way. Otherwise you will ruin the work.

"Some of the old leaders of the Central Committee of the Kuomintang are frightened by events, they are vacillating and compromising. An increased number of new peasant and working-class leaders must be drawn from the masses into the Central Committee of the Kuomintang. Their bold voices will either stiffen the backs of the old leaders or result in their removal. The present structure of the Kuomintang must be changed. The top leadership of the Kuo-mintang must certainly be refreshed and reinforced with new leaders who have come to the fore in the agrarian revolution, while the local organisations must be broadened from the millions of members in workers' and peasants' associations. If this is not done the Kuomintang will run the risk of becoming divorced from life and of losing all prestige.

"Dependence upon unreliable generals must be eliminated. Mobilise about 20,000 Communists, add about 20,000 revolutionary workers and peasants from Hunan and Hupeh, form several new army corps, use the students at the officers' school as commanders and organise your own reliable army before it is too late. If this is not done there is no guarantee against failure. It is a difficult matter, but there is no alternative.

"Organise a Revolutionary Military Tribunal headed by prominent non-Communist Kuomintangists. Punish officers who maintain contact with Chiang

Kaishek or who incite the soldiers against the people, the workers and peasants. Persuasion is not enough. It is time to act. Scoundrels must be punished. If the Kuo-mintangists do not learn to be revolutionary / Jacobins they will perish so far as the people and the revolution are concerned."*

As you see, the Comintern foresaw events, it gave timely warning of the dangers and told the Chinese Communists that the Wuhan Kuomintang would perish if the Kuomintangists failed to become revolutionary Jacobins.

Kamenev said that the defeat of the Chinese revolution was due to the policy of the Comintern, and that we "bred Cavaignacs in China." Comrades, only one who is ready to commit a crime against the Party can say that sort of thing about our Party. That is what the Mensheviks said about the Bolsheviks during the July defeat of 1917, when the Russian Cavaignacs appeared on the scene. In his article "On Slogans,"^{18} Lenin wrote that the July defeat was "a victory for the Cavaignacs." The Mensheviks at that time gloatingly asserted that the appearance of the Russian Cavaignacs was due to Lenin's policy. Does Kamenev think that the appearance of the Russian Cavaignacs during the July defeat of 1917 was due to Lenin's policy, to the policy of our Party, and not to some other cause? Is it becoming for Kamenev in this case to imitate the Menshevik gentry? (*Laughter.*) I did not think that the comrades of the opposition could sink so low. . . .

We know that the Revolution of 1905 suffered defeat, more over that defeat was more profound than the present defeat of the Chinese revolution. The Mensheviks at that time said that the defeat of the 1905 Revolution was due to the extreme revolutionary tactics of the Bolsheviks. Does Kamenev here, too, want to take the Menshevik interpretation of the history of our revolution as his model and to cast a stone at the Bolsheviks?

And how are we to explain the defeat of the Bavarian Soviet Republic? By Lenin's policy, perhaps, and not by the correlation of class forces?

How are we to explain the defeat of the Hungarian Soviet Republic? By the policy of the Comintern, perhaps, and not by the correlation of class forces?

¹⁸ See V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 25, pp. 164-70.

How can it be asserted that the tactics of this or that party can abolish or reverse the correlation of class forces? Was our policy in 1905 correct, or not? Why did we suffer defeat at that time? Do not the facts show that if the policy of the opposition had been followed the revolution in China would have reached defeat more rapidly than was actually the case? What are we to say of people who forget about the correlation of class forces in time of revolution and who try to explain everything solely by the tactics of this or that party? Only one thing can be said of such people—that they have broken with Marxism.

Conclusions. The chief mistakes of the opposition are:

- 1) The opposition does not understand the character and prospects of the Chinese revolution.
- 2) The opposition sees no difference between the revolution in China and the revolution in Russia, between revolution in colonial countries and revolution in imperialist countries.
- 3) The opposition is departing from Leninist tactics on the question of the attitude to the national bourgeoisie in colonial countries at the first stage of the revolution.
- 4) The opposition does not understand the question of the Communists' participation in the Kuomintang.
- 5) The opposition is violating the principles of Leninist tactics on the question of the relations between the vanguard (the Party) and the rear-guard (the vast masses of the working people).
- 6) The opposition is departing from the resolutions of the Sixth and Seventh Plenums of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

The opposition noisily brags about its policy on the Chinese question and asserts that if that policy had been adopted the situation in China today would be better than it is. It scarcely needs proof that, considering the gross mistakes committed by the opposition, the Chinese Communist Party would have landed in a complete impasse had it adopted the anti-Leninist and adventurist policy of the opposition.

The fact that the Communist Party in China has in a short period grown from a small group of five or six thousand into a mass party of 60,000 members; the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded in organising nearly 3,000,000 proletarians in trade unions during this period; the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded in rousing the many millions of the peasantry from their torpor and in drawing tens of millions of peasants into the revolutionary peasant associations; the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded during this period in winning over whole regiments and divisions of national troops; the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded during this period in converting the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat from an aspiration into a reality—the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded in a short period in achieving all these gains is due, among other things, to its having followed the path outlined by Lenin, the path indicated by the Comintern.

Needless to say, if the policy of the opposition, with its mistakes and its anti-Leninist line on questions of colonial revolution, had been followed, these gains of the Chinese revolution would either not have been achieved at all, or would have been extremely insignificant.

Only "ultra-Left" renegades and adventurers can doubt this.

III: The Anglo-Soviet Unity Committee^{19}

About the Anglo-Soviet Committee. The opposition asserts that we banked, so to speak, on the Anglo-Soviet Committee. That is not true, comrades. It is one of those slanders that the bankrupt opposition so often resorts to. The whole world knows, and, therefore, the opposition should know too, that we do not bank on the Anglo-Soviet Committee, but on the world revolutionary movement and on our successes in building socialism. The opposition is deceiving the Party when it says that we banked, or are banking, on the Anglo-Soviet Committee.

What, then, is the Anglo-Soviet Committee? The Anglo-Soviet Committee is one of the forms of contact between our trade unions and the British trade unions, reformist trade unions, reactionary trade unions. At the present time we are carrying on our work for revolutionising the working class in Europe through three channels:

- a) through the channel of the Comintern, through the Communist sections, the immediate task of which is to eliminate reformist political leadership from the working-class movement;
- b) through the channel of the Profintern, through the revolutionary trade-union minorities, the immediate task of which is to defeat the reactionary labour aristocracy in the trade unions;
- c) through the Anglo-Soviet Unity Committee, as one of the means of helping the Profintern and its sections in their struggle to isolate the labour aristocracy in the trade unions.

The first two channels are the main and permanent ones, essential for the Communists as long as classes and class society exist. The third is only a

¹⁹ The Anglo-Soviet, or Anglo-Russian, Unity Committee (the Joint Consultative Committee of the trade-union movements of Great Britain and the U.S.S.R.) was set up on the initiative of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions at an Anglo-Russian trade-union conference in London, April 6-8, 1925. The committee consisted of representatives of the A.U.C.C.T.U. and of the General Council of the British Trades Union Congress. The committee ceased to exist in the autumn of 1927 owing to the treacherous policy of the reactionary leaders of the British trade unions. (On the Anglo-Russian Committee, see J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 193-202, 205-14.)

temporary, auxiliary, episodic channel and, therefore, not durable, not always reliable, and some times quite unreliable. To put the third channel on a par with the first two means running counter to the interests of the working class, to communism. That being the case, how can one talk about our having banked on the Anglo-Soviet Committee?

Our aim in agreeing to form the Anglo-Soviet Committee was to establish open contact with the masses of the organised workers of Britain.

For what purpose?

Firstly, for the purpose of helping to form a workers' united front against capital, or, at any rate, of hindering the efforts of the reactionary trade-union leaders to prevent the formation of such a front.

Secondly, for the purpose of helping to form a workers' united front against the danger of imperialist war in general and against the danger of intervention in particular, or, at any rate, of hindering the efforts of the reactionary trade-union leaders to prevent the formation of such a front.

Is it permissible at all for Communists to work in reactionary trade unions?

It is not only permissible, but sometimes it is positively essential to do so, for there are millions of workers in the reactionary trade unions, and Communists have no right to refuse to join those unions, to find a road to the masses and to win them over to communism.

Look at Lenin's book "*Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*^{20} and you will see that Lenin's tactics makes it obligatory for Communists not to refuse to work in reactionary trade unions.

Is it at all permissible to conclude temporary agreements with reactionary trade unions, agreements on trade-union matters, or on political matters?

It is not only permissible, but sometimes it is positively essential to do so. Everyone knows that the majority of the trade unions in the West are reactionary, but that is not the point at all. The point is that these unions are mass unions. The point is that through these trade unions it is possible to gain access to the masses. Care must be taken, however, that such agreements do

²⁰ See V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 31, pp. 1-97.

not restrict, do not limit the freedom of Communists to conduct revolutionary agitation and propaganda, that such agreements help to disintegrate the ranks of the reformists and to revolutionise the masses of the workers who still follow the reactionary leaders. On these conditions, temporary agreements with mass reactionary trade unions are not only permissible but sometimes positively essential.

Here is what Lenin says on this score :

"Capitalism would not be capitalism if the 'pure' proletariat were not surrounded by a mass of exceedingly motley intermediate types between the proletarian and the semi-proletarian (who earns his livelihood in part by the sale of his labour power), between the semi-proletarian and the small peasant (and the petty artisan, handicraft worker and small proprietor in general), between the small peasant and the middle peasant, and so on, and if the proletariat itself were not divided into more developed and less developed strata, if it were not divided according to place of birth, trade, sometimes according to religion, and so on. *And from all this follows the necessity, the absolute necessity, for the vanguard of the proletariat, for its class-conscious section, for the Communist Party, to resort to manoeuvres, arrangements and compromises with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small proprietors.** The whole point lies in knowing how to apply these tactics in order to *raise*, and not lower, the *general* level of proletarian political consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and win" (Vol. XXV, p. 213).

And further:

"That the Hendersons, Clyneses, MacDonaldis and Snowdens are hopelessly reactionary is true. It is equally true that they want to take power into their own hands (though, incidentally, they prefer a coalition with the bourgeoisie), that they want to 'rule' on the old bourgeois lines, and that when they do get into power they will unfailingly behave like the Scheidemanns and Noskes. All that is true. *But it by no means follows that to support them is treachery to the revolution, but rather that in the interests of the revolution the working-class revolutionaries should give these gentlemen a certain amount of parliamentary support"** (*ibid.*, pp. 218-19).

The misfortune of the opposition is that it does not understand and does not accept these instructions of Lenin's, and instead of Lenin's policy prefers "ultra-Left" noisy talk about the trade unions being reactionary.

Does the Anglo-Soviet Committee restrict our agitation and propaganda, can it restrict it? No, it cannot. We have always criticised and will criticise the reactionary character of the leaders of the British labour movement, revealing to the masses of the British working class the perfidy and treachery of these leaders. Let the opposition try to refute the fact that we have always openly and ruthlessly criticised the reactionary activities of the General Council.

We are told that this criticism may cause the British to break up the Anglo-Soviet Committee. Well, let them do so. The point is not whether there will be a rupture or not, but on what question it will take place, what idea will be demonstrated by that rupture. At the present moment we are faced with the threat of war in general and of intervention in particular. If the British break away, the working class will know that the reactionary leaders of the British labour movement broke away because they *did not want to counteract* the organisation of war by their imperialist government. There can scarcely be any doubt that a rupture brought about by the British under such circumstances will help the Communists to discredit the General Council, for the question of war is the fundamental question of the present day.

It is possible that they will not venture to break away. But what will that mean? It will mean that we have established our freedom to criticise, our freedom to continue criticising the reactionary leaders of the British labour movement, to expose their treachery and social imperialism to the broad masses. Will that be good for the labour movement? I think it will not be bad.

Such, comrades, is our attitude towards the question of the Anglo-Soviet Committee.

IV: The Threat of War and the Defence of the U.S.S.R.

The question of war. First of all, I must refute the absolutely incorrect and false assertion made by Zinoviev and Trotsky that I belonged to the so-called "Military Opposition" at the Eighth Congress of our Party. It is absolutely untrue, comrades. It is a fable, invented by Zinoviev and Trotsky for want of something better to do. I have before me the verbatim report, from which it is clear that, together with Lenin, I spoke against the so-called "Military Opposition." Lastly, there are people here who attended the Eighth Party Congress and can confirm the fact that I spoke against the "Military Opposition" at the Eighth Congress. I did not oppose the "Military Opposition" as strongly as Trotsky would perhaps have liked, because I considered that among the Military Opposition there were splendid workers who could not be dispensed with at the front; but that I certainly did speak against and combat the Military Opposition is a *fact*, which only incorrigible individuals like Zinoviev and Trotsky can dispute.

What was the dispute about at the Eighth Congress? About the necessity of putting an end to the voluntary principle and the guerilla mentality; about the necessity of creating a genuine, regular, workers' and peasants' army bound by iron discipline; about the necessity of enlisting the services of military experts for that purpose.

There was a draft resolution submitted by the advocates of a regular army and iron discipline. It was supported by Lenin, Sokolnikov, Stalin and others. There was another draft, that of V. Smirnov, submitted by those who were in favour of preserving elements of the guerilla mentality in the army. It was supported by V. Smirnov, Safarov, Voroshilov, Pyatakov and others. Here are excerpts from my speech:

"All the questions touched upon here boil down to one: Is Russia to have, or not to have, a strictly disciplined regular army?"

"Six months ago, after the collapse of the old, tsarist army, we had a new, a volunteer army, an army which was badly organised, which had a collective control, and which did not always obey orders. This was at a time when an Entente offensive was looming. The army was made up principally, if not

exclusively, of workers. Because of the lack of discipline in this volunteer army, because it did not always obey orders, because of the disorganisation in the control of the army, we sustained defeats and surrendered Kazan to the enemy, while Krasnov was successfully advancing from the South. . . . The facts show that a volunteer army cannot stand the test of criticism, that we shall not be able to defend our Republic unless we create another army, a regular army one infused with the spirit of discipline, possessing a competent political department and able and ready to rise at the first command and march against the enemy.

"I must say that those non-working-class elements—the peasants—who constitute the majority in our army will not voluntarily fight for socialism. A whole number of facts bear this out. The series of mutinies in the rear and at the fronts, the series of excesses at the fronts show that the non-proletarian elements comprising the majority of our army are not disposed to fight for communism voluntarily. Hence our task is to re-educate these elements, infusing them with a spirit of iron discipline, to get them to follow the lead of the proletariat at the front as well as in the rear, to compel them to fight for our common socialist cause, and, in the course of the war, to complete the building of a real regular army, which is alone capable of defending the country.

"That is how the question stands.

". . . Either we create a real workers' and peasants' army, a strictly disciplined regular army, and defend the Republic, or we do not, and in that event our cause will be lost.

". . . Smirnov's project is unacceptable, because it can only under mine discipline in the army and make it impossible to build a regular army."²¹

Such are the facts, comrades.

As you see, Trotsky and Zinoviev have resorted to slander again.

Further. Kamenev asserted here that during the past period, during these two years, we have squandered the moral capital that we formerly possessed in the international sphere. Is that true? Of course not! It is absolutely untrue!

²¹ See J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 258-59.

Kamenev did not say which strata of the population he had in mind, among which strata of the population of the East and the West we have lost or gained influence. For us Marxists, however, it is precisely that question that is decisive. Take China, for example. Can it be asserted that we have lost the moral capital that we possessed among the Chinese workers and peasants? Clearly, it cannot. Until lately, the vast masses of workers and peasants of China knew little about us. Until lately, the prestige of the U.S.S.R. was limited to a narrow upper circle of Chinese society, to a narrow circle of liberal intellectuals in the Kuomintang, leaders like Feng Yu-hsiang, the Canton generals, and so forth. The situation has now radically changed. At the present time the U.S.S.R. enjoys a prestige among the vast masses of the workers and peasants of China that may well be envied by any force, by any political party in the world. On the other hand, the prestige of the U.S.S.R. has fallen considerably among the liberal intellectuals in China, among the various generals, and so forth; and many of the latter are beginning to wage a struggle against the U.S.S.R. But what is there surprising, or bad, about that? Can it be required of the U.S.S.R., the Soviet Government, our Party, that our country should enjoy moral prestige among all strata of Chinese society? Who but mere liberals can require this of our Party, of the Soviet Government? What is better for us: prestige among the liberal intellectuals and all sorts of reactionary generals in China, or prestige among the vast masses of workers and peasants in China? What is decisive from the standpoint of our international position, from the standpoint of the development of the revolution throughout the world: the growth of the U.S.S.R.'s prestige among the vast masses of the working people *with an undoubted decline of the U.S.S.R.'s prestige among reactionary liberal circles of Chinese society*, or prestige among those reactionary liberal circles *with a decline of moral influence among the broad masses of the population*? It is enough to put this question to realise that Kamenev is wide of the mark. . . .

But what about the West? Can it be said that we have squandered the moral capital we possessed among the proletarian strata in the West? Obviously not. What is shown, for example, by the recent actions of the proletariat in Vienna, the general strike and the coal strike in Britain, and the demonstrations of many thousands of workers in Germany and France in defence of the U.S.S.R.? Do they show that the moral influence of the proletarian dictatorship is declining among the vast working-class masses? Of course not! On the contrary, they show that the moral influence of the U.S.S.R. is rising and

growing stronger among the workers in the West; that the workers in the West are beginning to fight their bourgeoisie "in the Russian way."

There can be no doubt that hostility against the U.S.S.R. is growing among certain strata of the pacifist and reactionary liberal bourgeoisie, especially owing to the shooting of the twenty "illustrious" terrorists and incendiaries.^{22} But does Kamenev really prize the good opinion of the reactionary liberal pacifist circles of the bourgeoisie more than the good opinion of the vast proletarian masses in the West? Who would dare deny the fact that the shooting of the twenty "illustrious ones" met with a profoundly sympathetic response among the vast masses of the workers in the West as well as among us in the U.S.S.R.? "Serves them right, the scoundrels!"— such was the cry with which the shooting of the twenty "illustrious ones" was met in the working-class districts.

I know that there are people of a certain sort among us who assert that the more quietly we behave the better it will be for us. These people tell us: "Things were well with the U.S.S.R. when Britain broke off relations with it, and they became still better when Voikov was assassinated; but things became bad when, in answer to the assassination of Voikov, we bared our teeth and shot the twenty 'illustrious' counter-revolutionaries. Before we shot the twenty they were sorry for us in Europe and they sympathised with us; after the shooting, that sympathy vanished and they began to accuse us of not being such good boys as the public opinion of Europe would like us to be."

What can be said about this reactionary liberal philosophy? The only thing that can be said about it is that its authors would like to see the U.S.S.R. toothless, unarmed, grovelling at the feet of its enemies and surrendering to them. There was a "bleeding" Belgium, pictures of which at one time used to decorate cigarette packets. Why should there not be a "bleeding" U.S.S.R.? Everybody would then sympathise with it and be sorry for it. But no, comrades ! We do not agree with this. Rather let all those liberal pacifist philosophers with their "sympathy" for the U.S.S.R. go to the devil. If only we have the sympathy of

²² This refers to the shooting, in accordance with the sentence pronounced on June 9, 1927, by the Collegium of the OGPU of the U.S.S.R., of twenty monarchist whiteguards for conducting terrorist, sabotage and espionage activities. These whiteguards had been sent to the U.S.S.R. by the intelligence services of foreign countries; among them were former Russian princes and members of the nobility, big landlords, industrialists, merchants and guards officers of the tsarist army.

the vast masses of the working people, the rest will follow. And if it is necessary that somebody should "bleed," we shall make every effort to ensure that the one to be bloodily battered and "bleeding" shall be some bourgeois country and not the U.S.S.R.

The question whether war is inevitable. Zinoviev vehemently asserted here that Bukharin's theses say that war is "probable" and "inevitable," but not that it is absolutely inevitable. He insisted that such a formulation is liable to confuse the Party. I picked up Zinoviev's article "The Contours of the Future War" and glanced through it. And what did I find? I found that in Zinoviev's article there is not a single word, literally not a single word, about war *having become* inevitable. In that article Zinoviev says that a new war is *possible*. A whole chapter in it is devoted to proving that a war is *possible*. That chapter ends with the sentence: "That is why it is legitimate and necessary for Bolshevik-Leninists to think now about the possibility of a new war." (*General laughter.*) Please note, comrades—"to *think*" about the possibility of a new war. In one passage in the article Zinoviev says that war "*is becoming*" inevitable, but he does not say a single word, literally not a single word, about war already *having become* inevitable. And this man has—what is the mildest way of putting it?—the audacity to make an accusation against Bukharin's theses which say that war has become probable and inevitable.

What does it mean to say now that war is "possible"? It means dragging us back at least some seven years, for it was as early as some seven years ago that Lenin said that war between the U.S.S.R. and the capitalist world was possible. Was it worth while for Zinoviev to repeat what was said long ago and to make out his reversion to the past to be a new utterance?

What does it mean to say now that war *is becoming* inevitable? It means dragging us back at least some four years, for it was as early as the period of the Curzon ultimatum^{23} that we said that war was becoming inevitable.

How could it happen that Zinoviev, who only yesterday wrote such a confused and quite absurd article about war, containing not a single word about war having become inevitable, how could it happen that this man dared to attack Bukharin's clear and definite theses about the inevitability of war? It happened

²³ The Curzon ultimatum—the Note dated May 8, 1923, sent by Lord Curzon, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, threatening a new intervention against the U.S.S.R.

because Zinoviev forgot what he wrote yesterday. The fact of the matter is that Zinoviev is one of those fortunate people who write only to forget the very next day what they have written. (*Laughter.*)

Zinoviev asserted here that Bukharin was "prompted" by Comrade Chicherin to draft his theses on the lines that war is probable and inevitable. I ask: Who "prompted" Zinoviev to write an article about war being *possible* now when war has already become inevitable? (*Laughter.*)

The question of the stabilisation of capitalism. Zinoviev here attacked Bukharin's theses, asserting that on the question of stabilisation they depart from the position of the Comintern. That, of course, is nonsense. By that Zinoviev only betrayed his ignorance of the question of stabilisation, of the question of world capitalism. Zinoviev thinks that once there is stabilisation, the cause of the revolution is lost. He does not understand that the crisis of capitalism and the preparation for its doom grow as a result of stabilisation. Is it not a fact that capitalism has lately perfected and rationalised its technique and has produced a vast mass of goods which cannot find a market? Is it not a fact that the capitalist governments are more and more assuming a fascist character, attacking the working class and temporarily strengthening their own positions? Do these facts imply that stabilisation has become durable? Of course not! On the contrary, it is just these facts that tend to aggravate the present crisis of world capitalism, which is incomparably deeper than the crisis before the last imperialist war.

The very fact that the capitalist governments are assuming a fascist character tends to aggravate the internal situation in the capitalist countries and gives rise to revolutionary action by the workers (Vienna, Britain).

The very fact that capitalism is rationalising its technique and is producing a vast mass of goods which the market cannot absorb, this very fact tends to intensify the struggle within the imperialist camp for markets and for fields of capital export and leads to the creation of the conditions for a new war, for a new redivision of the world.

Is it difficult to understand that the excessive growth of capitalism's productive potentialities, coupled with the limited capacity of the world market and the stability of "spheres of influence," intensifies the struggle for markets and deepens the crisis of capitalism?

Capitalism could solve this crisis if it could increase the wages of the workers severalfold, if it could considerably improve the material conditions of the peasantry, if it could thereby considerably increase the purchasing power of the vast masses of the working people and enlarge the capacity of the home market. But if it did that, capitalism would not be capitalism. Precisely because capitalism cannot do that, precisely because capitalism uses its "incomes" not to raise the well-being of the majority of the working people, but to intensify their exploitation and to export capital to less-developed countries in order to obtain still larger "incomes"—precisely for that reason, the struggle for markets and for fields of capital export gives rise to a desperate struggle for a new redivision of the world and of spheres of influence, a struggle which has already made a new imperialist war inevitable.

Why do certain imperialist circles look askance at the U.S.S.R. and organise a united front against it? Because the U.S.S.R. is a very valuable market and field of capital export. Why are these same imperialist circles intervening in China? Because China is a very valuable market and field of capital export. And so on and so forth.

That is the basis and source of the inevitability of a new war, irrespective of whether it breaks out between separate imperialist coalitions, or against the U.S.S.R.

The misfortune of the opposition is that it does not understand these simple, elementary things.

The question of the defence of our country. And now permit me to deal with the last question, how our opposition intends to defend the U.S.S.R.

Comrades, the revolutionary spirit of a given group, of a given trend, of a given party, is not tested by the statements or declarations it issues. The revolutionary spirit of a given group, of a given trend, of a given party, is tested by its deeds, by its practice, by its practical plans. Statements and declarations, no matter how striking they may be, cannot be believed if they are not backed by deeds, if they are not put into effect.

There is one question which serves as a dividing line between all possible groups, trends and parties and as a test of whether they are revolutionary or anti-revolutionary. Today, that is the question of the defence of the U.S.S.R., of

unqualified and unreserved defence of the U.S.S.R. against attack by imperialism.

A *revolutionary* is one who is ready to protect, to defend the U.S.S.R. without reservation, without qualification, openly and honestly, without secret military conferences; for the U.S.S.R. is the first proletarian, revolutionary state in the world, a state which is building socialism. An *internationalist* is one who is ready to defend the U.S.S.R. without reservation, without wavering, unconditionally; for the U.S.S.R. is the base of the world revolutionary movement, and this revolutionary movement cannot be defended and promoted unless the U.S.S.R. is defended. For whoever thinks of defending the world revolutionary movement apart from, or against, the U.S.S.R., goes against the revolution and must inevitably slide into the camp of the enemies of the revolution.

Two camps have now been formed in face of the threat of war, and as a result two positions have arisen: that of unqualified defence of the U.S.S.R. and that of fighting the U.S.S.R. One has to choose between them, for there is not, nor can there be, a third position. Neutrality in this matter, waverings, reservations, the search for a third position, are attempts to avoid responsibility, to wriggle out of the unqualified struggle to defend the U.S.S.R., to be missing at the most critical moment for the defence of the U.S.S.R. What does avoiding responsibility mean? It means imperceptibly slipping into the camp of the enemies of the U.S.S.R.

That is how the question stands now.

How do matters stand with the opposition from the standpoint of the defence, the protection, of the U.S.S.R.?

Since things have gone so far, let me refer to Trotsky's letter to the Central Control Commission in order to demonstrate to you the "theory" of defence, the defence slogan, that Trotsky is holding in reserve in the event of war against the U.S.S.R. Comrade Molotov has already quoted a passage from this letter in his speech, but he did not quote the whole passage. Permit me to quote it in full.

This is how Trotsky understands defeatism and de-fencism:

"What is defeatism? A policy which pursues the aim of facilitating the defeat of one's 'own' state which is in the hands of a hostile class. Any other conception and interpretation of defeatism will be a falsification. Thus, for example, if someone says that the political line of ignorant and dishonest cribbers must be swept away like garbage precisely in the interests of the victory of the workers' state, that does not make him a 'defeatist.' On the contrary, under the given concrete conditions, he is thereby giving genuine expression to revolutionary defencism: ideological garbage does not lead to victory!

"Examples, and very instructive ones, could be found in the history of other classes. We shall quote only one. At the beginning of the imperialist war the French bourgeoisie had at its head a government without a sail or rudder. The Clemenceau group was in opposition to that government. Notwithstanding the war and the military censorship, notwithstanding even the fact that the Germans were eighty kilometres from Paris (Clemenceau said: 'precisely because of it'), he conducted a fierce struggle against petty-bourgeois flabbiness and irresolution and for imperialist ferocity and ruthlessness. Clemenceau was not a traitor to his class, the bourgeoisie; on the contrary, he served it more loyally, more resolutely and more shrewdly than Viviani, Painlevé and Co. The subsequent course of events proved that. The Clemenceau group came into power, and its more consistent, more predatory imperialist policy ensured victory for the French bourgeoisie. Were there any French newspapermen that called the Clemenceau group defeatist? There must have been: fools and slanderers follow in the train of every class. They do not, however, always have the opportunity to play an equally important role" (excerpt from Trotsky's letter to Comrade Orjonikidze, dated July 11, 1927).

There you have the "theory," save the mark, of the defence of the U.S.S.R. proposed by Trotsky.

"Petty-bourgeois flabbiness and irresolution"—that, it turns out, is the majority in our Party, the majority in our Central Committee, the majority in our government. Clemenceau—that is Trotsky and his group. (*Laughter.*) It turns out that if the enemy comes within, say, eighty kilometres of the walls of the Kremlin, this new edition of Clemenceau, this comic opera Clemenceau will first of all try to overthrow the present majority, precisely because the enemy will be eighty kilometres from the Kremlin, and only after that will he start

defending. And it turns out that if our comic-opera Clemenceau succeeds in doing that, it will be genuine and unqualified defence of the U.S.S.R.

And in order to do this, he, Trotsky, i.e., Clemenceau, is first of all trying to "sweep away" the "garbage" "in the interests of the victory of the workers' state." And what is this "garbage"? It turns out that it is the majority in our Party, the majority in the Central Committee, the majority in the government.

It turns out, then, that when the enemy comes within eighty kilometres of the Kremlin, this comic-opera Clemenceau will be concerned not to defend the U.S.S.R., but to overthrow the present majority in the Party. And that is what he calls defence!

Of course, it is rather funny to hear this small quixotic group, which in the course of four months barely managed to scrape together about a thousand votes, to hear this small group threatening a party a million strong with the words: "We shall sweep you away." You can judge from this how deplorable the position of Trotsky's group must be if, after toiling for four months in the sweat of its brow, it barely managed to scrape together about a thousand signatures. I think that any opposition group could collect several thousand signatures if it knew how to set to work. I repeat, it is funny to hear a small group in which the leaders outnumber the army (*laughter*), and which after working hard for four whole months barely managed to scrape together about a thousand signatures, threatening a party a million strong with the words: "We shall sweep you away." (*Laughter.*)

But how can a small factional group "sweep away" a party a million strong? Do the comrades of the opposition think that the present majority in the Party, the majority in the Central Committee, is an accidental one, that it has no roots in the Party, that it has no roots in the working class, that it will voluntarily allow itself to be "swept away" by a comic-opera Clemenceau? No, that majority is not an accidental one. It has been built up year by year in the course of our Party's development; it was tested in the fire of struggle during October, after October, during the Civil War, and during the building of socialism.

To "sweep away" such a majority it will be necessary to start civil war in the Party. And so, Trotsky is thinking of starting civil war in the Party at a time when the enemy will be eighty kilometres from the Kremlin. It seems that one could hardly go to greater lengths. . . .

But what about the present leaders of the opposition? Have they not been tested? Is it an accident that they, who at one time occupied most important posts in our Party, later became renegades? Does it still need proof that this cannot be regarded as an accident? Well, Trotsky wants, with the aid of the small group which signed the opposition's platform, to turn back the wheel of our Party's history at a time when the enemy will be eighty kilometres from the Kremlin; and it is said that some of the comrades who signed the opposition's platform did so because they thought that if they signed they would not be called up for military service. (*Laughter.*)

No, my dear Trotsky, it would be better for you not to talk about "sweeping away garbage." It would be better not to talk about it because those words are infectious. If the majority becomes "infected" from you by the method of sweeping away garbage, I do not know whether that will be good for the opposition. After all, it is not impossible that the majority in the Central Committee may become "infected" by this method and "sweep away" somebody or other.

Talk about sweeping away is not always desirable or safe, for it may "infect" the majority in our Central Committee and compel it to "sweep away" somebody or other. And if Trotsky is thinking of using the broom against the Party and its majority, will it be surprising if the Party turns that broom the other way and uses it against the opposition?

Now we know how the opposition intends to defend the U.S.S.R. Trotsky's essentially defeatist theory about Clemenceau, which is supported by the entire opposition, is sufficiently striking evidence of this.

It follows, therefore, that to ensure the defence of the U.S.S.R., it is necessary, first of all, to carry out the Clemenceau experiment.

That, so to speak, is the opposition's first step towards "unqualified" defence of the U.S.S.R.

The second step towards defence of the U.S.S.R., it turns out, is to declare that our Party is a Centrist party. The fact that our Party is fighting both the Left deviation from communism (Trotsky-Zinoviev) and the Right deviation from communism (Smirnov-Sapronov) is apparently regarded by our ignorant opposition as Centrism.

It turns out that these cranks have forgotten that in fighting both deviations we are only fulfilling the behests of Lenin, who absolutely insisted on a determined fight both against "Left doctrinairism" and against "Right opportunism."

The leaders of the opposition have broken with Leninism and have consigned Lenin's behests to oblivion. The leaders of the opposition refuse to admit that their bloc, the opposition bloc, is a bloc of Right and Left deviators from communism. They refuse to admit that their present bloc is the re-creation on a new basis of Trotsky's notorious August bloc of dismal memory. They refuse to understand that it is this bloc that harbours the danger of degeneration. They refuse to admit that the union in one camp of "ultra-Lefts," like those scoundrels and counter-revolutionaries Maslow and Ruth Fischer, and Georgian nationalist deviators is a copy of the Liq-uidationist August bloc of the worst kind.

And so, it turns out that to arrange for defence it is necessary to declare that our Party is a Centrist party and to strive to deprive it of its attractiveness in the eyes of the workers.

That, so to speak, is the opposition's second step towards "unqualified" defence of the U.S.S.R.

The third step towards defence of the U.S.S.R., it appears, is to declare that our Party is non-existent and to depict it as "Stalin's faction." What do the oppositionists mean to say by that? They mean to say that there is no Party, there is only "Stalin's faction." They mean to say that the Party's decisions are not binding upon them and that they have the right to violate those decisions at all times and under all circumstances. In that way they want to facilitate their fight against our Party. True, they adopted this weapon from the arsenal of the Menshevik *Sotsialistichesky Vestnik*^{24} and of the bourgeois *Rul.*^{25} True, it is unworthy of Communists to adopt the weapons of Mensheviks and bourgeois

²⁴ *Sotsialistichesky Vestnik (Socialist Herald)* — a magazine published by Menshevik whiteguard emigres. From February 1921 to March 1933 it was published in Germany, and later in France and the U.S.A. The magazine is the mouthpiece of the reactionary whiteguard emigres.

²⁵ *Rul (Helm)* — a Cadet, whiteguard emigre newspaper, published in Berlin from November 1920 to October 1931.

counter-revolutionaries, but what do they care about that? The opposition regards every means as justified as long as there is a fight against the Party.

And so, it turns out that to prepare the defence of the U.S.S.R., it is necessary to declare that the Party is nonexistent, the very Party without which no defence is conceivable.

That, so to speak, is the opposition's third step towards "unqualified" defence of the U.S.S.R.

The fourth step towards defence of the U.S.S.R., it appears, is to split the Comintern, to organise a new party in Germany headed by those scoundrels and counterrevolutionaries Ruth Fischer and Maslow, and thereby make it more difficult for the West-European proletariat to support the U.S.S.R.

And so, it turns out that to prepare the defence of the U.S.S.R., it is necessary to split the Comintern.

That, so to speak, is the opposition's fourth step towards "unqualified" defence of the U.S.S.R.

The fifth step towards defence of the U.S.S.R., it appears, is to ascribe Thermidor tendencies to our Party, to split it and begin to build a new party. For if we have no party, if there is only "Stalin's faction," whose decisions are not binding upon the members of the Party, if that faction is a Thermidor faction—al-though it is stupid and ignorant to speak of Thermidor tendencies in our Party—what else can be done?

And so, it turns out that to arrange for the defence of the U.S.S.R., it is necessary to split our Party and to set about organising a new party.

That, so to speak, is the opposition's fifth step towards "unqualified" defence of the U.S.S.R.

There you have the five most important measures that the opposition proposes for defence of the U.S.S.R.

Does it still need proof that all these measures proposed by the opposition have nothing in common with the defence of our country, with the defence of the centre of the world revolution?

And these people want us to publish their defeatist, semi-Menshevik articles in our Party press! What do they take us for? Have we already "freedom" of the press for all, "from anarchists to monarchists"? No, and we shall not have it. Why do we not publish Menshevik articles? Because we have no "freedom" of the press for anti-Leninist, anti-Soviet trends "from anarchists to monarchists."

What is the aim of the oppositionists in insisting on the publication of their semi-Menshevik, defeatist articles? Their aim is to create a loop-hole for bourgeois "freedom" of the press; and they fail to see that thereby they are reviving the anti-Soviet elements, strengthening their pressure upon the proletarian dictatorship, and opening the road for bourgeois "democracy." They knock at one door, but open another.

Here is what Mr. Dan writes about the opposition:

"Russian Social-Democrats would ardently welcome such a 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 transition to new political forms that would provide scope for a wide labour movement" (*Sotsialistichesky Vestnik*, No. 13, July 1927).

"The open self-liquidation of the dictatorship"— that is what the enemies of the U.S.S.R. expect of you, and that is where your policy is leading, comrades of the opposition.

Comrades, we are faced by two dangers: the danger of war, which has become the threat of war; and the danger of the degeneration of some of the links of our Party. In setting out to prepare for defence we must create iron discipline in our Party. Without such discipline defence is impossible. We must strengthen Party discipline, we must curb all those who are disorganising our Party. We must curb all those who are splitting our brother parties in the West and in the East. (*Applause.*) We must curb all those who are splitting our brother parties in the West and are supported in this by those scoundrels Sou-varine, Ruth Fischer, Maslow and that muddle-head Treint.

Only thus, only in this way shall we be able to meet war fully armed, while at the same time striving, at the cost of some material sacrifice, to postpone war, to gain time, to ransom ourselves from capitalism.

This we must do, and we shall do it.

The second danger is the danger of degeneration.

Where does it come from? From there! (*Pointing to the opposition.*) That danger must be eliminated. (*Prolonged applause.*)

Speech Delivered on August 5

Comrades, Zinoviev was grossly disloyal to this plenum in reverting in his speech to the already settled question of the international situation.

We are now discussing point 4 on the agenda: "The violation of Party discipline by Trotsky and Zinoviev." Zinoviev, however, evading the point under discussion, reverted to the question of the international situation and tried to resume the discussion of an already settled question. Moreover, in his speech he concentrated his attack on Stalin, forgetting that we are not discussing Stalin, but the violation of Party discipline by Zinoviev and Trotsky.

I am therefore compelled in my speech to revert to several aspects of the already settled question in order to show that Zinoviev's speech was groundless.

I apologise, comrades, but I shall also have to say a few words about Zinoviev's thrusts at Stalin. (*Voices*: "Please, do!")

First. For some reason, Zinoviev in his speech recalled Stalin's vacillation in March 1917, and in doing so he piled up a heap of fairy-tales. I have never denied that I vacillated to some extent in March 1917, but that lasted only a week or two; on Lenin's arrival in April 1917 that vacillation ceased and at the April Conference 1917, I stood side by side with Comrade Lenin against Kamenev and his opposition group. I have mentioned this a number of times in our Party press (see *On the Road to October, Trotskyism or Leninism?*, etc.).

I have never regarded myself as being infallible, nor do I do so now. I have never concealed either my mistakes or my momentary vacillations. But one must not ignore also that I have never persisted in my mistakes, and that I have never drawn up a platform, or formed a separate group, and so forth, on the basis of my momentary vacillations.

But what has that to do with the question under discussion, the violation of Party discipline by Zinoviev and Trotsky? Why does Zinoviev, evading the question under discussion, revert to reminiscences of March 1917? Has he really forgotten his own mistakes, his struggle against Lenin, his separate

platform in opposition to Lenin's Party in August, September, October and November 1917? Perhaps Zinoviev by his reminiscences of the past hopes to push into the background the question, now under discussion, of the violation of Party discipline by Zinoviev and Trotsky? No, that trick of Zinoviev's will not succeed.

Second. Zinoviev, further, quoted a passage from a letter I wrote to him in the summer of 1923, some months before the German revolution of 1923. I do not remember the history of that letter, I have no copy of it, and I am therefore unable to say with certainty whether Zinoviev quoted it correctly. I wrote it, I think, at the end of July or beginning of August 1923. I must say, however, that that letter is absolutely correct from beginning to end. By referring to that letter Zinoviev evidently wants to imply that I was in general sceptical about the German revolution of 1923. That, of course, is nonsense.

The letter touched first of all on the question whether the Communists should take power immediately. In July or the beginning of August 1923 there was not yet in Germany that profound revolutionary crisis which brings the vast masses to their feet, exposes the compromising policy of Social-Democracy, utterly disorganises the bourgeoisie and raises the question of the immediate seizure of power by the Communists. Naturally, under the circumstances prevailing in July-August, there could be no question of the *immediate* seizure of power by the Communists in Germany, who moreover were a *minority* in the ranks of the working class.

Was that position correct? I think it was. And that was the position held at that time by the Political Bureau.

The second question touched on in that letter relates to a demonstration of communist workers at a time when armed fascists were trying to provoke the Communists to premature action. The stand I took at that time was that the Communists should not allow themselves to be provoked. I was not the only one to take that stand; it was the stand of the whole Political Bureau.

Two months later, however, a radical change took place in the situation in Germany; the revolutionary crisis became more acute; Poincare began a military offensive against Germany; the financial crisis in Germany became catastrophic; the German government began to collapse and a ministerial reshuffle began; the evolutionary tide rose, threatening to overwhelm the

Social-Democrats; the workers began en masse to desert Social-Democracy and to go over to the Communists; the question of the seizure of power by the Communists came on the order of the day. Under these circumstances I, like the other members of the Comintern Commission, was resolutely and definitely in favour of the immediate seizure of power by the Communists.

As is known, the German Commission of the Comintern that was set up at that time, consisting of Zinoviev, Bukharin, Stalin, Trotsky, Radek and a number of German comrades, adopted a series of concrete decisions concerning direct assistance to the German comrades in the matter of seizing power.

Were the members of that commission unanimous on all points at that time? No, they were not. There was disagreement at that time on the question whether Soviets should be set up in Germany. Bukharin and I argued that the factory committees could not serve as substitutes for Soviets and proposed that proletarian Soviets be immediately organised in Germany. Trotsky and Radek, as also some of the German comrades, opposed the organisation of Soviets and argued that the factory committees would be enough for seizure of power. Zinoviev wavered between these two groups.

Please note, comrades, that it was not a question of China, where there are only a few million proletarians, but of Germany, a highly industrialised country, where there were then about fifteen million proletarians.

What was the upshot of these disagreements? It was that Zinoviev *deserted* to the side of Trotsky and Radek and the question of Soviets was settled in the negative.

True, later on, Zinoviev repented of his sins, but that does not do away with the fact that at that time Zinoviev was on the Right, opportunist flank on one of the fundamental questions of the German revolution, whereas Bukharin and Stalin were on the revolutionary, communist flank.

Here is what Zinoviev said about this later:

"On the question of Soviets (in Germany — *J. St.*) we made a mistake in yielding to Trotsky and Radek. Every time a concession is made on these questions, one becomes convinced that one is making a mistake. It was

impossible to set up workers' Soviets at the time, but that was a touchstone for revealing whether the line was Social-Democratic or Communist. We should not have yielded on this question. To yield was a mistake on our part. That is how the matter stands, comrades" (Verbatim Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. with Representatives of the Communist Party of Germany, January 19, 1924, p. 70).

In this passage Zinoviev says "we made a mistake." Who are "we"? There was not, and could not have been, any "we." It was Zinoviev who made a mistake in deserting to the side of Trotsky and Radek and in adopting their erroneous position.

Such are the facts.

Zinoviev would have done better not to recall the German revolution of 1923 and disgrace himself in the eyes of the plenum; the more so because, as you see, the question of the German revolution which he raised has nothing to do with point 4 of the plenum agenda which we are now discussing.

The question of China. According to Zinoviev it appears that Stalin, in his report at the Fourteenth Party Congress, identified China with America. That, of course, is nonsense. There was no question of any identification of China with America in my report, nor could there have been. Actually, in my report I merely dealt with the right of the Chinese people to national unity and to national liberation from the foreign yoke. Concentrating my criticism on the imperialist press, I said: If you, Messieurs the imperialists, justify, at any rate in words, the national war in Italy, the national war in America, and the national war in Germany for unity and liberation from a foreign yoke, in what way is China inferior to these countries, and why should not the Chinese people have the right to national unity and liberation?

That is what I said in my report, without in any way touching upon the question of the prospects and tasks of the Chinese revolution from the standpoint of communism.

Was that presentation of the question legitimate in controversy with the bourgeois press? Obviously, it was. Zinoviev does not understand a simple thing like that, but for that his own obtuseness is to blame and nothing else.

Zinoviev, it appears, considers that the policy of transforming the Wuhan Kuomintang, when it was revolutionary, into the core of a future revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry was wrong. The question arises: What was wrong about it? Is it not a fact that the Wuhan Kuomintang was revolutionary at the beginning of this year? Why did Zinoviev shout for "all-round assistance" for the Wuhan Kuomintang if the Wuhan Kuomintang was not revolutionary? Why did the opposition swear that it was in favour of the Communist Party remaining in the Wuhan Kuomintang if the latter was not revolutionary at that time? What would Communists be worth who, belonging to the Wuhan Kuomintang and enjoying influence in it, did not attempt to get the Kuomintang fellow-travellers to follow them and did not attempt to transform the Wuhan Kuomintang into the core of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship? I would say that such Communists would not be worth a farthing.

True, that attempt failed, because at that stage the imperialists and the feudal landlords in China proved to be stronger than the revolution and, as a consequence, the Chinese revolution suffered temporary defeat. But does it follow from that that the Communist Party's policy was wrong?

In 1905 the Russian Communists also attempted to transform the Soviets which existed at that time into the core of a future revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry; but that attempt also failed at that time owing to the unfavourable correlation of class forces, owing to the fact that tsar-ism and the feudal landlords proved to be stronger than the revolution. Does it follow from this that the Bolsheviks' policy was wrong? Obviously, it does not.

Zinoviev asserts, further, that Lenin was in favour of the immediate organisation of Soviets of *workers'* deputies in China, and he referred to Lenin's theses on the colonial question that were adopted at the Second Congress of the Comintern. But here Zinoviev is simply misleading the Party.

It has been stated in the press several times, and it must be repeated here, that in Lenin's theses there is not a single word about Soviets of *workers'* deputies in China.

It has been stated in the press several times, and it must be repeated here, that in his theses Lenin had in mind not Soviets of *workers'* deputies, but "peasant

Soviets," "people's Soviets," "toilers' Soviets," and he made the special reservation that this applied to countries "*where there is no industrial proletariat, or practically none.*"

Can China be included in the category of countries where "there is no industrial proletariat, or practically none"? Obviously not. Is it possible in China to form peasant Soviets, toilers' Soviets, or people's Soviets, without *first* forming class Soviets of the *working class*? Obviously not. Why, then, is the opposition deceiving the Party by referring to Lenin's theses?

The question of the respite. In 1921, on the termination of the Civil War, Lenin said that we now had some respite from war and that we ought to take advantage of that respite to build socialism. Zinoviev is now finding fault with Stalin, asserting that Stalin converted that respite into a period of respite, which, he alleges, contradicts the thesis on the threat of war between the U.S.S.R. and the imperialists.

Needless to say, this fault-finding of Zinoviev's is stupid and ridiculous. Is it not a fact that there has been no military conflict between the imperialists and the U.S.S.R. for the past seven years? Can this period of seven years be called a *period* of respite? Obviously, it can and should be so called. Lenin more than once spoke of the *period* of the Brest Peace, but everybody knows that that period did not last more than a year. Why can the one-year period of the Brest Peace be called a period and the seven-year period of respite not be called a period of respite? How is it possible to take up the time of the joint plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission with such ridiculous and stupid fault-finding?

About the dictatorship of the Party. It has been stated several times in our Party press that Zinoviev distorts Lenin's conception of the "dictatorship" of the Party by identifying the dictatorship of the proletariat with the dictatorship of the Party. It has been stated several times in our Party press that by "dictatorship" of the Party Lenin understood the Party's leadership *of the working class*, that is to say, not the Party's use of force against the working class, but leadership by means of persuasion, by means of the political education of the working class, to be precise, leadership by one party, which does not share, and does not desire to share, that leadership with other parties.

Zinoviev does not understand this and distorts Lenin's conception. However, by distorting Lenin's conception of the "dictatorship" of the Party, Zinoviev is, perhaps without realising it, making way for the penetration of "Arakcheyev" methods into the Party, for justifying Kautsky's slanderous allegation that Lenin was effecting "the dictatorship of the Party over the working class." Is that a decent thing to do? Obviously not. But who is to blame if Zinoviev fails to understand such simple things?

About national culture. The nonsense Zinoviev talked here about national culture ought to be perpetuated in some way, so that the Party may know that Zinoviev is opposed to the development of the national culture of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. on a Soviet basis, that he is, in fact, an advocate of colonisation.

We used to regard, and still regard, the slogan of national culture in the epoch of the domination of the bourgeoisie in a multi-national state as a bourgeois slogan. Why? Because, in the period of the domination of the bourgeoisie in such a state, that slogan signifies the spiritual subordination of the masses of the working people of all nationalities to the leadership, the domination, the dictatorship, of the bourgeoisie.

After the proletariat seized power we proclaimed the slogan of the development of the national culture of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. *on the basis of the Soviets.* What does that mean? It means that we adapt the development of national culture among the peoples of the U.S.S.R. to the interests and requirements of socialism, to the interests and requirements of the proletarian dictatorship, to the interests and requirements of the working people of all the nationalities of the U.S.S.R.

Does that mean that we are now opposed to national culture in general? No, it does not. It merely means that we are now in favour of developing the national culture of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., their national languages, schools, press, and so forth, *on the basis of the Soviets.* And what does the reservation "on the basis of the Soviets" mean? It means that *in its content* the culture of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. which the Soviet Government is developing must be a culture common to all the working people, a socialist culture; in its *form*, however, it is and will be different for all the peoples of the U.S.S.R.; it is and will be a national culture, different for the various peoples of the U.S.S.R. in conformity with the differences in language and specific national features. I spoke about

this in the speech I delivered at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East about three years ago.^{26} It is on these lines that our Party has been operating all the time, encouraging the development of *national* Soviet schools, of a *national* Soviet press, and other cultural institutions; encouraging the "*nationalisation*" of the Party apparatus, the "*nationalisation*" of the Soviet apparatus, and so on and so forth.

It is precisely for this reason that Lenin, in his letters to comrades working in the national regions and republics, called for the development of the national culture of these regions and republics on the basis of the Soviets.

It is precisely because we have pursued this line ever since the proletariat seized power that we have succeeded in erecting an international edifice never before seen in the world, the edifice known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Zinoviev, however, now wants to overturn all this, to obliterate, to bury all this by declaring war on national culture. And this colonialist twaddle on the national question he calls Leninism! Is that not ridiculous, comrades?

The building of socialism in one country. Notwithstanding the series of severe defeats they have sustained on this question, Zinoviev and the opposition in general (Trotsky, Kamenev) clutch at it again and again and waste the time of the plenum. They try to make it appear that the thesis that the victory of socialism is possible in the U.S.S.R. is not Lenin's theory, but Stalin's "theory."

It scarcely needs proof that this assertion by the opposition is an attempt to deceive the Party. Is it not a fact that it was none other than Lenin who, as far back as 1915, stated that the victory of socialism is possible in one country?^{27} Is it not a fact that it was none other than Trotsky who, *at that very time*, opposed Lenin on this question and described Lenin's thesis as "national narrow-mindedness"? What has Stalin's "theory" to do with it?

Is it not a fact that it was none other than Kamenev and Zinoviev who dragged in the wake of Trotsky in 1925 and declared that Lenin's teaching that the victory of socialism is possible in one country was "national narrow-

²⁶ J. V. Stalin, "The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East" (see *Works*, Vol 7, pp. 135-54).

²⁷ V. I. Lenin, "The United States of Europe Slogan" (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 21, p. 311).

mindedness"? Is it not a fact that our Party, as represented by its Fourteenth Conference, adopted a special resolution declaring that the victorious building of socialism in the U.S.S.R. is possible,^{28} in spite of Trotsky's semi-Menshevik theory?

Why do Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev evade this resolution of the Fourteenth Conference?

Is it not a fact that our Party, as represented by its Fourteenth Congress, endorsed the resolution of the Fourteenth Conference and spearheaded its decision against Kamenev and Zinoviev?^{29}

Is it not a fact that the Fifteenth Conference of our Party adopted a decision substantiated in detail declaring that the victory of socialism is possible in the U.S.S.R.,^{30} and that it spearheaded that decision against the opposition bloc and its head, Trotsky?

Is it not a fact that the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. endorsed that resolution of the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) and found Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev guilty of a Social-Democratic deviation?^{31}

The question is: What has Stalin's "theory" to do with it?

Did Stalin ever demand of the opposition anything else than that it should admit the correctness of these decisions of the highest bodies of our Party and of the Comintern?

²⁸ This refers to the resolution "The Tasks of the Comintern and the R.C.P.(B.) in Connection with the Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I." adopted by the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) held April 27-29, 1925 (see *Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U. Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, Part II, 1953, pp. 43-52).

²⁹ This refers to the resolution on the report of the Central Committee adopted by the Fourteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.) held December 18-31, 1925 (see *Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U. Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, Part II, 1953, pp. 73-82).

³⁰ This refers to the resolution on "The Opposition Bloc in the C.P.S.U.(B.)" adopted by the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) held October 26 to November 3, 1926 (see *Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U. Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, Part II, 1953, pp. 209-20).

³¹ This refers to the resolution on the Russian question adopted by the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern held November 22 to December 16, 1926 (see *Theses and Resolutions of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1927, pp. 60-70)

Why do the leaders of the opposition evade all these facts if their consciences are clear? What are they counting on? On deceiving the Party? But is it difficult to understand that nobody will succeed in deceiving our Bolshevik Party?

Such, comrades, are the questions which, properly speaking, have nothing to do with the point under discussion about the breach of Party discipline by Trotsky and Zinoviev, but which nevertheless Zinoviev has dragged in for the purpose of throwing dust in our eyes and of slurring over the question under discussion.

I again ask you to excuse me for taking up your time by examining these questions, but I could not do otherwise, for there was no other way of killing the desire of our oppositionists to deceive the Party.

And now, comrades, permit me to pass from "defence" to attack.

The chief misfortune of the opposition is that it still fails to understand why it has been "reduced to this kind of life."

In point of fact, why did its leaders, who only yesterday were among the leaders of the Party, "suddenly" become renegades? How is this to be explained? The opposition itself is inclined to attribute it to causes of a personal character: Stalin "did not help," Bukharin "let us down," Rykov "did not support," Trotsky "missed the opportunity," Zinoviev "overlooked," and so forth. But this cheap "explanation" is not even the shadow of an explanation. The fact that the present leaders of the opposition are isolated from the Party is a fact of no little significance. And it certainly cannot be called an accident. The fact that the present leaders of the opposition fell away from the Party has deep-seated causes. Evidently, Zinoviev, Trotsky and Kamenev went astray on some question, they must have committed some grave offence—otherwise the Party would not have turned away from them, as from renegades. And so the question is: On what did the leaders of the present opposition go astray, what did they do to deserve being "reduced to this kind of life"?

The first fundamental question on which they went astray was the question of Leninism, the question of the Leninist ideology of our Party. They went astray in trying, and they are still trying, to *supplement* Leninism with Trotskyism, in fact, to *substitute* Trotskyism for Leninism. But, comrades, by doing so the leaders of the opposition committed a very grave offence for which the Party

could not, and cannot, forgive them. Obviously, the Party could not follow them in their attempt to turn from Leninism to Trotskyism, and owing to this the leaders of the opposition found themselves isolated from the Party.

What is the present bloc of the Trotskyists with the former Leninists in the opposition? Their present bloc is the material expression of the attempt to supplement Leninism with Trotskyism. It was not I who invented the term "Trotskyism." It was first used by Comrade Lenin to denote something that is the opposite of Leninism.

What is the principal sin of Trotskyism? The principal sin of Trotskyism is disbelief in the strength and capacity of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. to lead the peasantry, the main mass of the peasantry, both in the struggle to consolidate the rule of the proletariat and, particularly, in the struggle for victory in building socialism in our country.

The principal sin of Trotskyism is that it does not understand and, in essence, refuses to accept the Leninist idea of the hegemony of the proletariat (in relation to the peasantry) in the matter of winning and consolidating the proletarian dictatorship, in the matter of building socialism in separate countries.

Were the former Leninists—Zinoviev and Kamenev — aware of these organic defects of Trotskyism? Yes, they were. Only yesterday they were shouting from the housetops that Leninism is one thing and Trotskyism is another. Only yesterday they were shouting that Trotskyism is incompatible with Leninism. But it was enough for them to come into conflict with the Party and to find themselves in the minority to forget all this and to turn to Trotskyism in order to wage a joint struggle against the Leninist Party, against its ideology, against Leninism.

You, no doubt, remember our disputes at the Fourteenth Congress. What was our dispute at that time with the so-called "New Opposition"? It was about the role and significance of the middle peasant, about the role and significance of the main mass of the peasantry, about the possibility of the proletariat leading the main mass of the peasantry in the matter of building socialism in spite of the technical backwardness of our country.

In other words, our dispute with the opposition was on the same subject as that on which our Party has long been in dispute with Trotskyism. You know that the result of the disputes at the Fourteenth Congress was deplorable for the "New Opposition." You know that as a result of the disputes the "New Opposition" migrated to the camp of Trotskyism on the fundamental question of the Leninist idea of the hegemony of the proletariat in the era of proletarian revolution. It was on this basis that the so-called opposition bloc of the Trotskyists and the former Leninists in the opposition arose.

Did the "New Opposition" know that the Fifth Congress of the Comintern had defined Trotskyism as a *petty-bourgeois deviation*?^{32} Of course, it did. More than that, it itself helped to carry the corresponding resolution at the Fifth Congress. Was the "New Opposition" aware that Leninism and a petty-bourgeois deviation are incompatible? Of course, it was. More than that, it shouted it from the house-tops for the entire Party to hear.

Now judge for yourselves: Could the Party refrain from turning away from leaders who burn today what they worshipped yesterday, who deny today what they loudly preached to the Party yesterday, who try to supplement Leninism with Trotskyism in spite of the fact that only yesterday they denounced such an attempt as a betrayal of Leninism? Obviously, the Party had to turn away from such leaders.

In its zeal to turn everything upside down, the opposition even went so far as to deny that Trotsky belonged to the Mensheviks in the period before the October Revolution. Don't let that surprise you, comrades. The opposition bluntly says that Trotsky has never been a Menshevik since 1904. Is that a fact? Let us turn to Lenin.

Here is what Lenin said about Trotsky in 1914, three and a half years before the October Revolution.

"The old participants in the Marxist movement in Russia know the figure of Trotsky very well and there is no need to discuss him for their benefit. But the younger generation of workers does not know him, and it is therefore

³² This refers to the resolution on the Russian question adopted at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International held June 17 to July 8, 1924 (see *The Fifth World Congress of the Communist International Theses, Resolutions and Decisions*, Moscow 1924, pp. 175-86).

necessary to discuss him, for he is typical of all the five coteries abroad, which, in fact, also vacillate between the Liquidators and the Party.

"In the period of the old Iskra (1901-03), these waverers, who flitted from the 'Economists' to the 'Iskra-ists' and back again, were dubbed 'Tushino deserters' (the name given in the 'Turbulent Times in Russia' to soldiers who deserted from one camp to another). . . .

"The only ground the 'Tushino deserters' have for claiming that they stand above factions is that they 'borrow' their ideas from one faction one day and from another faction the next day. Trotsky was an ardent 'Iskra-ist' in 1901-03, and Ryazanov described his role at the Congress of 1903 as that of 'Lenin's cudgel.' *At the end of 1903, Trotsky was an ardent Menshevik,** i.e., he had gone over from the Iskra-ists to the 'Economists.' He proclaimed that 'there is a gulf between the old and the new *Iskra*.' In 1904-05, he deserted the Mensheviks and began to oscillate, co-operating with Martynov (an 'Economist') at one moment and proclaiming his absurdly Left 'permanent revolution' theory the next. In 1906-07, he approached the Bolsheviks, and in the spring of 1907 he declared that he was in agreement with Rosa Luxemburg.

"In the period of disintegration, after long 'non-factional' vacillation, he again went to the Right, and in August 1912 he entered into a bloc with the Liquidators. Now he has deserted them again, although, in substance, he repeats their paltry ideas.*

"Such types are characteristic as the wreckage of past historical formations, of the time when the mass working-class movement in Russia was still dormant, and when every coterie had 'space' in which to pose as a trend, group or faction, in short, as a 'power,' negotiating amalgamation with others.

"The younger generation of workers need to know thoroughly whom they are dealing with when people come before them making incredibly pretentious claims, but absolutely refusing to reckon with *either* the Party decisions that since 1908 have defined and established our attitude towards Liquidationism, or the experience of the present-day working-class movement in Russia, which has actually brought about the *unity* of the majority on the basis of full recognition of the above-mentioned decisions" (see Vol. XVII, pp. 393-94).

It turns out therefore that throughout the period after 1903 Trotsky was outside the Bolshevik camp, now flitting to the Menshevik camp, now deserting it, but never joining the Bolsheviks; and in 1912 he organised a bloc with the Menshevik-Liquidators against Lenin and his Party, while remaining in the same camp as the Mensheviks.

Is it surprising that such a "figure" is distrusted by our Bolshevik Party?

Is it surprising that the opposition bloc headed by this "figure" finds itself isolated from and rejected by the Party?

The second fundamental question on which the leaders of the opposition went astray was that of whether the victory of socialism in one country is possible in the period of imperialism. The opposition's mistake is that it tried imperceptibly to liquidate Lenin's teaching on the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country.

It is now no secret to anyone that as far back as 1915, two years before the October Revolution, Lenin proclaimed the thesis, on the basis of the law of uneven economic and political development in the conditions of imperialism, that "the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country taken separately" (Lenin, Vol. XVIII, p. 232).

It is now no secret to anyone that it was none other than Trotsky who, in that same year 1915, opposed Lenin's thesis in the press and declared that to admit the possibility of the victory of socialism in separate countries "is to fall a prey to that very national narrow-mindedness* which constitutes the essence of social-patriotism" (Trotsky, *The Year 1917*, Vol. III, Part 1, pp. 89-90).

Nor is it a secret, but a universally-known fact, that this controversy between Lenin and Trotsky continued, in fact, right up to the appearance in 1923 of Lenin's last pamphlet *On Co-operation*,^{33} in which he again and again proclaimed that it is possible to build "a complete socialist society" in our country.

What changes in connection with this question occurred in the history of our Party after Lenin's death? In 1925, at the Fourteenth Conference of our Party, Kamenev and Zinoviev, after a number of vacillations, accepted Lenin's

³³ V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 33, pp. 427-35.

teaching on the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country and, with the Party, dissociated themselves from Trotskyism on this question. Several months later, however, before the Fourteenth Congress, when they found themselves in the minority in the struggle against the Party and were compelled to enter into a bloc with Trotsky, they "suddenly" turned towards Trotskyism, repudiating the resolution of the Fourteenth Conference of our Party and abandoning Lenin's teaching on the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country. As a result, Trotsky's semi-Menshevik twaddle about the national narrow-mindedness of Lenin's theory has served the opposition as a screen by means of which it attempts to cover up its activities aimed at liquidating Leninism on the question of building socialism.

The question is: What is there surprising in the fact that the Party, educated and trained in the spirit of Leninism, considered it necessary, after all that, to turn away from these Liquidators, and that the leaders of the opposition found themselves isolated from the Party?

The third fundamental question on which the leaders of the opposition went astray was the question of our Party, of its monolithic character, of its iron unity.

Leninism teaches that the proletarian Party must be united and monolithic, that it must not have any factions or factional centres, that it must have a single Party centre and a single will. Leninism teaches that the interests of the proletarian party require enlightened discussion of questions of Party policy, an enlightened attitude of the mass of the Party membership towards the Party's leadership, criticism of the Party's defects, criticism of its mistakes. At the same time, however Leninism requires that the decisions of the Party should be unquestioningly carried out by all members of the Party, once these decisions have been adopted and approved by the leading Party bodies.

Trotskyism looks at the matter differently. According to Trotskyism, the Party is something in the nature of a federation of factional groups, with separate factional centres. According to Trotskyism, the Party's proletarian discipline is unbearable. Trotskyism cannot tolerate the proletarian regime in the Party. Trotskyism does not understand that it is impossible to carry out the dictatorship of the proletariat unless there is iron discipline in the Party.

Were the former Leninists in the opposition aware of these organic defects in Trotskyism? Of course, they were. More than that, they shouted from the

house-tops that the "organisational schemes" of Trotskyism were incompatible with the organisational principles of Leninism. The fact that in its statement of October 16, 1926, the opposition repudiated the conception of the Party as a federation of groups is only additional confirmation of the fact that the opposition had not, and has not, a leg to stand on in this matter. This repudiation, however, was only verbal, it was insincere. Actually, the Trotskyists have never abandoned their efforts to foist the Trotskyist organisational line upon our Party, and Zinoviev and Kamenev are helping them in that disgraceful work. It was enough for Zinoviev and Kamenev to find themselves in the minority in their struggle against the Party for them to turn to the Trotskyist, semi-Menshevik organisational plan and, jointly with the Trotskyists, to proclaim war on the proletarian regime in the Party as the slogan of the day.

What is there surprising in the fact that our Party did not consider it possible to bury the organisational principles of Leninism and that it cast aside the present leaders of the opposition?

Such, comrades, are the three fundamental questions on which the present leaders of the opposition went astray and broke with Leninism.

After that, can one be surprised that Lenin's Party in its turn broke with those leaders?

Unfortunately, however, the degradation of the opposition did not end there. It sank still lower, to limits beyond which it is impossible to go without running the risk of landing outside the Party.

Judge for yourselves.

Until now it was difficult to suppose that, low as it had sunk, the opposition would waver on the question of the unqualified defence of our country. Now, however, we must not only assume, but assert, that the attitude of the present leaders of the opposition is a defeatist one. How else is one to interpret Trotsky's stupid and absurd thesis about a Clemenceau experiment in the event of a new war against the U.S.S.R.? Can there be any doubt that this is a sign that the opposition has sunk still lower?

Until now it was difficult to suppose that the opposition would ever hurl against our Party the stupid and incongruous accusation of being a Thermidor

party. In 1925, when Zalutsky first talked about Thermidor tendencies in our Party, the present leaders of the opposition emphatically dissociated themselves from him. Now, however, the opposition has sunk so low that it goes farther than Zalutsky and accuses the Party of being a Thermidor party. What I cannot understand is how people who assert that our Party has become a Thermidor party can remain in its ranks.

Until now the opposition tried "merely" to organise separate factional groups in the sections of the Comintern. Now, however, it has gone to the length of openly organising a new party in Germany, the party of those counter-revolutionary scoundrels Maslow and Ruth Fischer, in opposition to the existing Communist Party in Germany. That stand is one of directly splitting the Comintern. From the formation of factional groups in the sections of the Comintern to splitting the Comintern—such is the road of degradation that the leaders of the opposition have travelled.

It is characteristic that in his speech Zinoviev did not deny that there is a split in Germany. That this anti-communist party was organised by our opposition is evident if only from the fact that the anti-Party articles and speeches of the leaders of our opposition are being printed and distributed in pamphlet form by Mas-low and Ruth Fischer. (*A voice: "Shame!"*)

And what is the significance of the fact that the opposition bloc put up Vuiovich to undertake in our press the political defence of this second, Maslow-Ruth Fischer, party in Germany? It shows that our opposition is supporting Maslow and Ruth Fischer openly, is supporting them *against* the Comintern, against its proletarian sections. That is no longer merely factionalism, comrades. It is a policy of *openly splitting* the Comintern. (*Voices: "Quite right!"*)

Formerly, the opposition strove to secure freedom for factional groups within our Party. Now, that is not enough for it. Now, it is taking the path of an outright split, creating a new party in the U.S.S.R., with its own Central Committee and its own local organisations. From the policy of factionalism to the policy of an outright split, to the policy of creating a new party, to the

policy of “Ossovskyism”^{34} — such are the depths to which the leaders of our opposition have sunk.

Such are the principal landmarks on the road of the opposition's further degradation in departing from the Party and the Comintern, in pursuing the policy of splitting the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B).

Can such a situation be tolerated any longer? Obviously not. The splitting policy cannot be permitted either in the Comintern or in the C.P.S.U.(B). That evil must be eradicated immediately if we value the interests of the Party and the Comintern, the interests of their unity.

Such are the circumstances that compelled the Central Committee to raise the question of expelling Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee.

What is the way out?—you will ask.

The opposition has landed in an impasse. The task is to make a *last* attempt to help the opposition to extricate itself from that impasse. What Comrade Orjoni-kidze proposed here on behalf of the Central Control Commission is the method and the maximum of concession to which the Party could agree in order to promote peace in the Party.

Firstly, the opposition must emphatically and irrevocably abandon its “Thermidor” twaddle and its foolish slogan of a Clemenceau experiment. The opposition must understand that people with such views and such tendencies cannot defend our country in face of the threat of war that hangs over it. The opposition must understand that people with such views and such tendencies cannot continue to be members of the Central Committee of our Party. (*Voices:* “Quite right!”)

Secondly, the opposition must openly and definitely condemn the splitting, anti-Leninist Maslow-Ruth Fischer group in Germany and break off all connection with it. Support of the policy of splitting the Comintern cannot be tolerated any longer. (*Voices:* “Quite right!”)

³⁴ “Ossovskyism”—a counter-revolutionary “theory” that tried to justify the formation of a Trotskyist party in the U.S.S.R. This “theory” was propounded by the Trotskyist Ossovsky, who was expelled from the C.P.S.U.(B.) in August 1926.

The U.S.S.R. cannot be defended if support is given to the splitting of the Comintern and to the disorganisation of the sections of the Comintern.

Thirdly, the opposition must emphatically and irrevocably abandon all factionalism and all the paths that lead to the creation of a new party within the C.P.S.U.(B.). The splitting policy must not be permitted in our Party either two months or even two hours before our Party congress. (*Voices*: "Quite right!")

Such, comrades, are the three chief conditions which must be accepted if we are to allow Trotsky and Zino-view to remain members of the Central Committee of our Party.

It will be said that this is repression. Yes, it is repression. We have never regarded the weapon of repression as excluded from our Party's arsenal. We are acting here in conformity with the well-known resolution of the Tenth Congress of our Party, in conformity with the resolution that was drafted and carried through at the Tenth Congress by Comrade Lenin^{35}.

Here are points 6 and 7 of this resolution:

Point 6: "The congress orders the immediate dissolution of all groups without exception that have been formed on the basis of one platform or another and instructs all organisations strictly to see to it that there shall be no factional pronouncements of any kind. Non-observance of this decision of the congress shall involve certain and immediate expulsion from the Party."

Point 7: "In order to ensure strict discipline within the Party and in all Soviet work and to secure the maximum unanimity, doing away with all factionalism, the congress authorises the Central Committee, in case (cases) of breach of discipline or of a revival or toleration of factionalism, to apply all Party penalties, up to and including expulsion from the Party and, in regard to members of the Central Committee, to reduce them to the status of candidate members and even, as an extreme measure, to expel them from the Party. A condition for the application of such an extreme measure (to members and candidate members of the C.C. and members of the Control Commission) must be the convocation of a plenum of the Central Committee, to which all

³⁵ This refers to the resolution "On Party Unity" adopted by the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) held March 8-16, 1921 (see *Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U. Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, Part I, 1953, pp. 527-30).

candidate members of the Central Committee and all members of the Control Commission shall be invited. If such a general assembly of the most responsible leaders of the Party, by a two-thirds majority, considers it necessary to reduce a member of the Central Committee to the status of a candidate member, or to expel him from the Party, this measure shall be put into effect immediately."

Voices: This should be put into effect at once.

Stalin: Wait, comrades, don't be in a hurry. This was written and bequeathed to us by Lenin, for he knew what iron Party discipline is, what the proletarian dictatorship is. For he knew that the dictatorship of the proletariat is exercised through the Party, that without the Party, a united and monolithic party, the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible.

Such are the conditions which must be accepted if Trotsky and Zinoviev are to remain members of the Central Committee of our Party. If the opposition accepts these conditions, well and good. If it does not, so much the worse for it. (*Applause.*)

With Reference to the Opposition's "Declaration" of August 8, 1927

Speech Delivered on August 9

Comrades, what the opposition is offering us cannot be regarded as peace in the Party. We must not harbour any illusions. What the opposition is offering us is a temporary armistice. (*A voice: "Not even temporary!"*) It is a temporary armistice, which may be something of a step forward under certain circumstances, but on the other hand it may not. That must be borne in mind once and for all. That must be borne in mind, whether or not the opposition agrees to yield further.

It is a step forward for the Party that the opposition has retreated to some extent on all the three questions we put to it. It has retreated to some extent, but with such reservations as may create grounds for an even sharper struggle in the future. (*Voices: "Quite right!" "Quite right, that's true!"*)

The question of the defence of the U.S.S.R. is a fundamental one for us in view of the threat of war that has arisen. In its declaration the opposition states in a positive form that it stands for the unqualified and unreserved defence of the U.S.S.R., but it refuses to condemn Trotsky's well-known formula, his well-known slogan about Clemenceau. Trotsky must have the courage to admit facts.

I think that the entire plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission is unanimously of the opinion that a man who in his heart, who in deed and not only in word, stands for the unqualified defence of our country would not write what Trotsky wrote in his letter to the Central Control Commission addressed to Comrade Orjonikidze.

I think that the entire plenum of the C.C. and C.C.C. is convinced that this slogan, this formula, of Trotsky's about Clemenceau can only raise doubts of Trotsky's sincerity in regard to the defence of the U.S.S.R. More than that, it creates the impression that Trotsky adopts a negative attitude towards the

questions of the unqualified defence of our country. (*Voices*: "Quite right, absolutely right!")

I think that the entire plenum of the C.C. and C.C.C. is profoundly convinced that in issuing this slogan, this formula, about Clemenceau, Trotsky made the defence of the U.S.S.R. depend on the condition contained in the point about changing the leadership of our Party and the leadership of the Soviet Government. Only those who are blind can fail to see that. If Trotsky lacks the courage, the elementary courage, to admit his mistake, he himself will be to blame.

Since the opposition in its document does not condemn this mistake of Trotsky's, it means that the opposition wants to keep a weapon in reserve for future attacks on the Party in regard to the defence of the country, in regard to the line that the Party is pursuing. It means that the opposition is keeping a weapon in reserve with the intention of using it.

Hence, on this fundamental question, the opposition seeks not peace, but a temporary armistice, with a reservation that may still further intensify the struggle in the future. (*A voice*: "We don't need an armistice, we need peace.")

No, comrades, you are mistaken, we do need an armistice. If we were to take an example, it would be best to take that of Gogol's Ossip, who said: "A piece of string? Give it here, even a piece of string will come in handy." It will indeed be best to act like Gogol's Ossip. We are not so rich in resources and so strong that we can afford to reject a piece of string. We must not reject even a piece of string. Think well and you will understand that our arsenal must include even a piece of string.

On the second question, the question of Thermidor, the opposition has undoubtedly retreated; on this score it has retreated to some extent from its previous stand, for after such a retreat there cannot (to be logical, of course) be any more of that stupid agitation about a "Thermidor degeneration" of the Party which has been conducted by certain members of the opposition, particularly by some of its semi-Menshevik members.

The opposition, however, has accompanied this concession with a reservation that may, in future, remove all possibility of an armistice and peace. They say that there are certain elements in the country who betray tendencies towards a

restoration, towards a Thermidor. But nobody has ever denied that. Since antagonistic classes exist, since classes have not been abolished, attempts will always, of course, be made to restore the old order. But that was not the point of our dispute. The point of the dispute is that in its documents the opposition makes thrusts at the Central Committee, and hence at the Party, concerning Thermidor tendencies. The Central Committee cannot be separated from the Party. It cannot. That is nonsense. Only anti-Party people who fail to understand the basic elementary premises of Lenin's organisational structure can assume that the Central Committee, particularly our Central Committee, can be separated from the Party.

The opposition, however, accompanies its concessions with the reservations I have mentioned. But such reservations provide the opposition with a weapon in reserve with which to attack the Party again when the opportunity occurs.

Of course, it is ludicrous to speak of Thermidor tendencies of the Central Committee. I will say more: it is nonsense. I don't think that the opposition itself believes that nonsense, but it needs it as a bogey. For if the opposition really believed that, then, of course, it should have declared open war on our Party and on our Central Committee; but it assures us that it wants peace in the Party.

And so, on the second point also, the opposition is keeping a weapon in reserve with which to attack the Central Committee again later on. That, too, must be borne in mind comrades, under all circumstances. Whether we remove the leaders of the opposition from the Central Committee or not on the fundamental question of Thermidor they will have a weapon in reserve, and the Party must take now all measures so as to eliminate the opposition if it takes up this anti-Party weapon again.

The third question is that of the split in the Communist Party of Germany, of the anti-Leninist and splitting group of Ruth Fischer and Maslow.

We had a strange talk in the commission yesterday. With great, very great, difficulty, after a number of speeches, the oppositionists found the courage to say that, in obedience to the decision of the Comintern — not because they were convinced, but in obedience to the decision of the Comintern — they agreed to admit that organisational contact with this anti-Party group is impermissible. I proposed: "organisational contact with and support of this

group." Trotsky said: "No, that is not necessary, we cannot accept that. The Comintern's decision to expel them was wrong. I shall try to get those people—Ruth Fischer and Maslow—reinstated."

What does that show? Judge for yourselves. How completely the elementary notion of the Party principle has disappeared from the minds of these people!

Let us suppose that, today, the C.P.S.U.(B.) expels Myasnikov, about whose anti-Party activities you all know. Tomorrow, Trotsky will come along and say: "I cannot refrain from supporting Myasnikov, because the Central Committee's decision was wrong, but I am willing to break off organisational contact with him in obedience to your orders."

Tomorrow we expel the "Workers' Truth" group,^{36} about whose anti-Party activities you also know. Trotsky will come forward and say: "I cannot refrain from supporting this anti-Party group, because you were wrong in expelling it."

The day after tomorrow the Central Committee expels Ossovsky, because he is an enemy of the Party, as you know very well. Trotsky will tell us that it was wrong to expel Ossovsky, and that he cannot refrain from supporting him.

But if the Party, if the Comintern, after a detailed discussion of the conduct of certain people, including that of Ruth Fischer and Maslow, if these high proletarian bodies decide that such people must be expelled, and if, in spite of that, Trotsky persists in supporting these expelled people, what is the position then? What becomes of our Party, of the Comintern? Do they exist for us? It turns out that for Trotsky neither the Party nor the Comintern exists, there exists only Trotsky's personal opinion.

But what if not only Trotsky but also other members of the Party want to behave as Trotsky does? Obviously, this guerrilla mentality, this hetman mentality, can only lead to the destruction of the Party principle. There will no longer be a party; instead there will be the personal opinion of each hetman. That is what Trotsky refuses to understand.

Why did the opposition refuse to refrain from supporting the anti-communist Maslow-Ruth Fischer group? Why did the leaders of the opposition refuse to

³⁶ 36. The "Workers' Truth" group — a counter-revolutionary underground group formed in 1921. The members of this group were expelled from the R.C.P.(B).

accept our amendment on that point? Because they want to keep a third weapon in reserve with which to attack the Comintern. That must also be borne in mind.

Whether we reach agreement with them or not, whether they are removed from the Central Committee or not, they will have this weapon in reserve for a future attack on the Comintern.

The fourth question is that of the dissolution of factions. We propose that it be said honestly and straightforwardly: "The faction must be dissolved without fail." The leaders of the opposition refuse to say that. Instead, they say: "The elements of factionalism must be eliminated"; but they add: "the elements of factionalism engendered by the inner-Party regime."

Here you have the fourth little reservation. That is also a weapon held in reserve against our Party and its unity.

What was the intention of the oppositionists in refusing to accept the formulation proposing the immediate dissolution of the faction, which they have, and which intends to hold an illegal conference here in Moscow in a day or two? It means that they want to retain the right to go on organising demonstrations at railway stations, as much as to say: the regime is to blame, we were compelled to organise yet another demonstration. It means that they want to retain the right to go on attacking the Party, as much as to say: the regime compels us to attack. Here you have yet another weapon which they are keeping in reserve.

The joint plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission should know and remember all this.

* My italics. — J. St.

J. Stalin, On the Opposition, Articles and Speeches (1921-27), Moscow and Leningrad, 1928