This volume is dedicated to
the memory of JAMES P. CANNON (1890-1974)

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# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to <em>Writings of Leon Trotsky (1929-40)</em></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronology</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C'est la Marche des Evenements! <em>February 25, 1929</em></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deportation from the Soviet Union <em>February 25, 1929</em></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Could This Happen? <em>February 25, 1929</em></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalin's Victory <em>February 25, 1929</em></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where Is the Soviet Republic Going? <em>February 25, 1929</em></td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Parliamentary Democracy Likely to Replace the Soviets? <em>February 25, 1929</em></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Secret Ballot <em>February 27, 1929</em></td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Is the Immediate Aim of Exiling Trotsky? <em>March 4, 1929</em></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protests to the GPU <em>March 5 and 8, 1929</em></td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview by the <em>Daily Express</em> <em>March 16, 1929</em></td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within the Right-Centrist Bloc <em>March 20, 1929</em></td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Letter to the Workers of the USSR <em>March 29, 1929</em></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groupings in the Communist Opposition <em>March 31, 1929</em></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks of the Opposition <em>March 1929</em></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What We Intend to Publish First <em>March 1929</em></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communists and the Bourgeois Press <em>March 1929</em></td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement to the Press <em>April 15, 1929</em></td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Lesson in Democracy I Did Not Receive <em>April 22, 1929</em></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview by the <em>Osaka Mainichi</em> <em>April 24, 1929</em></td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Years of the Brandlerites <em>April 25, 1929</em></td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface to <em>La Revolution Defiguree</em> <em>May 1, 1929</em></td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Basic, Fundamental Question <em>(May 10, 1929)</em></td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks of the American Opposition <em>(May 1929)</em></td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Capitulators of the Third Wave <em>(May 22, 1929)</em></td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radek and the Opposition <em>(May 26, 1929)</em></td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Political Situation in China and the Tasks of the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition <em>(June 1929)</em></td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bolshevik Oppositionists Need Help <em>(June 1, 1929)</em></td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why I Want to Come to London <em>(June 11, 1929)</em></td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once More on Brandler and Thalheimer <em>(June 12, 1929)</em></td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenacity, Tenacity, Tenacity! <em>(June 14, 1929)</em></td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Will the First of August Bring? <em>(June 26, 1929)</em></td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combatting Lies and Slanders <em>(June 1929)</em></td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prologue, <em>Mis Peripeacias en Espana</em> <em>(June 1929)</em></td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Publisher <em>(July 1929)</em></td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary Clarifications Concerning the First of August <em>(July 1929)</em></td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy or Revolutionary Politics? <em>(July 1, 1929)</em></td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Man Overboard <em>(July 3, 1929)</em></td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Revolutionaries Are Formed <em>(July 11, 1929)</em></td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Letter to the <em>Daily Herald</em> <em>(July 15, 1929)</em></td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sino-Soviet Conflict: A Press Statement <em>(July 22, 1929)</em></td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Wretched Document <em>(July 27, 1929)</em></td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sino-Soviet Conflict and the Opposition <em>(August 4, 1929)</em></td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Open Letter to the Editorial Board of <em>La Verite</em> <em>(August 6, 1929)</em></td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Declaration of <em>La Verite</em> <em>(August 1929)</em></td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Letter to the Editorial Board of <em>La Lutte de Classes</em> <em>(August 11, 1929)</em></td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Marx and Lenin Circle <em>(August 22, 1929)</em></td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions for the Leninbund <em>(August 24, 1929)</em></td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From a Letter to an Oppositionist in the USSR <em>(August 24, 1929)</em></td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Psychology of Capitulation <em>(September 1929)</em></td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comrade Sosnovsky's Letters <em>(September 1929)</em></td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Publisher <em>(September 1929)</em></td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.I. Myasnikov's Escape and His Ordeal <em>(September 1929)</em></td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radek and the Bourgeois Press <em>(September 1929)</em></td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense of the Soviet Republic and the Opposition <em>(September 7, 1929)</em></td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION TO
WRITINGS OF LEON TROTSKY
(1929-40)

The life and work of Leon Trotsky may be conveniently divided into three parts: from his birth in 1879 to the Russian Revolution in 1917, when he became a leader of the new Soviet government; from 1917 to 1929, when he was exiled to Turkey; his third and last period of exile, from 1929 to his assassination in Mexico in 1940. It is generally agreed that his writings in this exile period were the most mature expression of his ideas and philosophy.

With the publication of the twelve-volume *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1929-40)* it can be said that everything written by Trotsky in this period and published in any language during his lifetime or since is now available to the English-reading public. The *Writings* series has brought together many pamphlets, articles, and letters previously translated into English but difficult to locate because they appeared in periodicals unknown to the general reader or in internal bulletins restricted to the membership of various small political organizations; in addition, it includes many articles that had never been translated into English before, and many others that had not been published in any language anywhere.

Counting the twelve volumes in this series, the total of Trotsky’s published work from the eleven and a half years of his last exile runs between 9,500 and 10,000 printed pages—the equivalent of around twenty-eight average-sized volumes. A list of the titles will give some idea of their scope:

Books and pamphlets of the exile period, still in print and published while Trotsky was alive, are *My Life, The History of the Russian Revolution, The Young Lenin, The Revolution Betrayed, Their Morals and Ours,* and *Marxism in Our Time* (the
introduction to *The Living Thoughts of Karl Marx*). *The Case of Leon Trotsky* should be included even though it is Trotsky answering the questions of an international commission investigating the Moscow trials, rather than something written by Trotsky alone.

In addition to the uncompleted biography *Stalin*, posthumous books and pamphlets, entirely from the exile period, in chronological order of publication are *In Defense of Marxism*, Trotsky's *Diary in Exile—1935*, *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination*, *Leon Trotsky on the Jewish Question*, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, and *Leon Trotsky on France* (an expansion of the out-of-print *Whither France*?).

Other works, containing material from the exile period as well as material from preceding periods, are *The Permanent Revolution*, *The Stalin School of Falsification*, *Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions*, *Leon Trotsky on Literature and Art*, *Leon Trotsky Speaks*, *Lenin's Fight Against Stalinism*, *Leon Trotsky on China*, and *Political Portraits*.

Plus, of course, the twelve volumes of the *Writings*.

The above, it should be noted, is the *published* part of what Trotsky wrote in his last exile. He wrote much more, in the form of political letters to his cothinkers in several countries, discussing questions of revolutionary strategy and tactics. A small portion of these is included throughout the *Writings*, but the great majority is locked away in the "closed section" of the Trotsky archives at Harvard University as a result of a stipulation Trotsky made when he turned his papers over to Harvard in 1940. World War II was raging and Trotsky, seeking to protect the recipients of these letters and others mentioned in them, insisted that they not be made public until 1980. When Isaac Deutscher was working on his biography of Trotsky in 1959 he received special permission from Natalia Sedova, Trotsky's widow, to examine the closed section at Harvard. If his estimate (in *The Prophet Outcast*, 1963) was accurate, Trotsky's political correspondence will fill many thousands of printed pages.

The editors are grateful to the many translators who contributed to this series (identified in the "Notes and Acknowledgments" section in each volume) and to the many other people on
four continents—friends and strangers, experts and amateurs, too numerous to list here—who helped in the compilation of the notes about people and events of the thirties. We are unable to express adequately our debt to Louis Sinclair, without whose monumental *Leon Trotsky: A Bibliography* (Hoover Institution Press, 1972) this series would have been seriously incomplete and subject to more defects than it now has.

The Editors
July 1974
Leon Trotsky
PREFACE

The present volume covers the period from February 1929, when Trotsky reached Turkey as an exile from the Soviet Union, through the end of 1929.

His main political objectives during these months were: 1. to help circulate his version of the facts about the struggle inside the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist International from 1923 to 1929; 2. to stem the tendencies among important leaders of the Russian Left Opposition to surrender to the Stalinist bureaucracy; and 3. to promote the consolidation, on a revolutionary basis, of various Oppositional groups throughout the world as an international faction of the Communist International.

1. Trotsky managed to gain a worldwide audience for his account of the Stalin-Trotsky struggle when an American news syndicate serialized parts of a pamphlet which he wrote as soon as he got to Turkey; it is newly translated here into English, in full for the first time, as the first six articles in this volume. He also told the story in much greater detail in his autobiography My Life, which he completed in the summer of 1929.

2. The first defections from the Opposition came at the end of 1927, when the Left Oppositionists were expelled from the CPSU; Zinoviev and Kamenev immediately broke their bloc with Trotsky and renounced their ideas in order to seek readmission into the party. Then in February 1928, a month after Trotsky was banished to Alma-Ata, a "second wave" of capitulations began with the defection of Pyatakov, Antonov-Ovseenko, Krestinsky, and others. Despite this, and the arrests and banishment of Trotsky and others, the ranks of the Opposition seem to have stood firm and even to have grown during 1928.
Stalin did all he could to reverse this trend and to break up the Left Opposition; his best card was the “left turn” his regime began in 1928, which was rationalized by numerous former Left Oppositionists as Stalin’s acceptance of the Left Opposition program. In July 1929 Radek, Preobrazhensky, and Smilga led the third wave of the capitulations, and by October they were followed by another group of former Left Oppositionists headed by Smirnov. The main resistance to this course was led by Christian Rakovsky and a sizable group associated with him in the prison camps and places of penal exile.

More than a dozen of the articles and letters in this book answer the arguments of the capitulators, analyze the meaning and scope of the Stalinist left turn in both the Soviet Union and world politics, and strive to sustain political morale and tenacity among the diehard Oppositionists of the Rakovsky type. Among these are the pamphlet “A Wretched Document,” “On the Psychology of Capitulation,” “An Open Letter to the Bolshevik-Leninists Who Signed the August 22 Declaration,” and “On Socialism in One Country and Ideological Prostration,” all of which appear here in English for the first time.

3. While the conditions facing the Oppositionists in the Soviet Union were so difficult that their survival as an organized tendency was in question, the prospects of the Oppositionists elsewhere were good, in Trotsky’s opinion, provided they could achieve ideological clarification and homogeneity. With this in mind, he began a series of articles and letters to his cothinkers in several countries, raising what he considered to be the most pressing political and theoretical problems facing their movement.

The first thing the Left Oppositionists had to get clear, he wrote, was the irreconcilability of their positions and those of the Right Opposition, represented in the Soviet Union by Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky; in Germany by Brandler and Thalheimer; and in the United States by Lovestone. Trotsky’s views on this question—as in “Six Years of the Brandlerites,” and “Once More on Brandler and Thalheimer”—were acceptable to most Left Oppositionists, but they alienated others who felt that numbers were more important than principles and that all Oppositionists should get together in a common group against the Stalinists despite the differences among themselves.

The second thing Trotsky insisted on was the need for the Left Opposition to take a clear position on the fundamental questions
raised in recent years during the disputes in the Comintern over the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, the Anglo-Russian Committee of 1925-27, and economic-political policy in the Soviet Union following Lenin's death in 1924. No tendency could be regarded as serious, no tendency deserved the name of internationalist, if it ignored or evaded taking a position on the chief issues of the class struggle that had tested the various communist tendencies in the years leading up to 1929. This was the main thrust of his articles such as "Groupings in the Communist Opposition" and "Tasks of the Opposition."

Trotsky also believed that many of those who bore the Left Oppositionist label did so through accident or misunderstanding, that their adherence to the Left Opposition did it more harm than good, and that the sooner they were separated from the Left Opposition, the sooner it would begin to make real headway among the workers in the Communist parties. His contributions to this kind of clarification and demarcation will be found in his letters in this volume about France, where there were several groups in 1929 that considered themselves Left Oppositionists but could not find a basis for working together. In addition, he corresponded with the editorial board of *The Militant*, which had been initiated in 1928; the leaders of the German Leninbund, which considered itself an adherent of the Left Opposition in 1929; and Oppositionists in China, Italy, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere.

Trotsky's interventions had the desired effect of solidifying a cadre whose representatives were to come together in April 1930 to establish the International Left Opposition as a faction of the Comintern, dedicated to its regeneration and reform along Leninist lines. Later, in 1933, the ILO decided that the Comintern's bankruptcy in letting Hitler come to power without a serious struggle meant that the Comintern could no longer be reformed and needed to be replaced by a new revolutionary International. But it is important for the reader to bear in mind that Trotsky was adamantly opposed to forming new parties or a new International throughout 1929 and until 1933.

Besides encouraging the foundation of an Oppositional weekly in France (*La Verite*), Trotsky started a Russian-language periodical, *Biulleten Oppozitsii*, which was edited by him and his son Leon Sedov. In the *Biulleten* and other Oppositional papers, Trotsky also wrote at length on the most important developments
in 1929—the Sino-Soviet conflict over the Chinese Eastern Railroad that almost led to war in Manchuria; the constitutional crisis that brought Austria close to the verge of civil war; the "disarmament" proposals and conferences that were to litter the scene during the decade before World War II; the Comintern's designation of August 1 as an "international red day"; the defeat and degradation of the Russian Right Opposition; alarming symptoms in the Soviet economy; and the Stalinist execution of Jakob Blumkin, a GPU official who visited Trotsky in Turkey.

Considerably more than half of the selections in this volume are translated into English for the first time, primarily from the Biulleten Oppozitsii and material at the Haryard College Library. Acknowledgments about the articles and translations, and explanatory material about the persons and events mentioned in them, will be found in the section "Notes and Acknowledgments." Several of the articles were signed by pen names or were unsigned when first published. The date preceding each selection indicates when it was completed; if that is not known, the date when it was first published is given. All of the selections during Trotsky's first month in Turkey were written at the Soviet embassy in Constantinople; most of the others, starting a few weeks later, at Prinkipo. Translations originally done in the 1930s and 40s have been revised to correct obvious errors and achieve uniformity in style, spelling, punctuation, etc. "Other Writings of 1929" lists the books, pamphlets, and articles from that period which are not included in this volume because they are in print and available elsewhere.

The Editors
July 1974
CHRONOLOGY

—1929—

February 11—Trotsky and his family arrive in Constantinople.
February 17—Trotsky asks Germany for a visa, the first of a series of unsuccessful attempts to obtain asylum in Western Europe.

February—Leaders of the Right Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union are summoned before the Politburo and the Central Control Commission to explain their secret discussions with Kamenev.

February 25—Trotsky completes his pamphlet What Happened and How?

March—Trotsky begins analyzing the different tendencies among the various groups calling themselves Left Oppositionists throughout the world.

April 12—The German cabinet announces its denial of Trotsky's request for a visa.

April 23-29—The Sixteenth Conference of the CPSU adopts a program for an ambitious five-year plan and collectivization of the land. Stalin indicts leaders of the Right Opposition at the plenum of the Central Committee preceding the conference.

May 1—A Communist Party May Day demonstration is brutally repressed by the Berlin police.

May 8—The West European Bureau of the Communist International designates August 1 as a “red day.”

May 17-19—The Left Opposition in the United States holds its first national conference in Chicago and establishes the Communist League of America (Opposition).

May 28—The Congress of Soviets closes after approving the five-year plan.
May 30—The British Labour Party defeats the Conservatives in a parliamentary election; MacDonald becomes prime minister of the second Labour government on June 6.

June 2—Right Opposition leader Tomsky is removed as head of the trade unions.

June 15—The Soviet Supreme Council of National Economy decrees an “uninterrupted workweek” (360 workdays and 5 holidays).

July 3—Bukharin is removed as president of the Communist International.

July 3-19—The Tenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) reaffirms the ultraleft policy adopted by the Sixth World Congress in 1928.

July 10—Chinese authorities arrest Soviet officials and employees of the Chinese Eastern Railroad, leading to a break in diplomatic relations and the dispatch of both Chinese and Soviet troops to the Manchurian frontier.

July 11—The British Labour government announces its rejection of asylum for Trotsky.

July 14—Radek, Preobrazhensky, and Smilga lead four hundred former Left Oppositionists in the “third wave” of capitulations to Stalin.

July 22—Trotsky gives an American reporter a statement supporting the Soviet Union in the conflict with China.

July 24—U.S. president Hoover states that the Kellogg-Briand antiwar treaty, having been signed by sixty-two countries, is now in effect.

July—The Russian Left Opposition publishes the first issue of its magazine, Biulleten Oppozitsii (Bulletin of the Opposition), edited by Trotsky.

August 15—Soviet and Chinese troops fight along the Amur River.

August 15—The first issue of La Verite is published by French Oppositionists.

August 22—Rakovsky and other exiled Oppositionists issue a declaration in the form of an open letter to the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the CPSU.

August 30—The Soviet government accepts China’s proposals to settle all questions arising from the Chinese Eastern Railroad dispute.

September 5—French premier Briand outlines his proposal for a United States of Europe to the League of Nations at Geneva.
Chronology

September 25—Trotsky endorses the August 22 declaration by Rakovsky.

October 3—Bessenovsky, a Stalinist functionary in Paris, defects to the capitalists.

October 24—Wall Street crash signals the coming of the Great Depression of the thirties.

October—Smirnov and others capitulate in the “fourth wave.”

November 5—The British House of Commons approves the resumption of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

November 17—Bukharin is expelled from the Politburo and other right-wing leaders are warned following the November Central Committee plenum of the CPSU.

December 27—Stalin makes a speech to agricultural experts proclaiming a change from the policy of limiting the exploiting tendencies of the kulaks to a policy of liquidating the kulaks as a class.

December—Stalin’s fiftieth birthday is celebrated with much adulation and fanfare in the Soviet Union.

December—Blumkin is murdered by the GPU.
Л. Д. ТРОЦКИЙ

ЧТО И КАК ПРОИЗОШЛО?

ШЕСТЬ СТАТЕЙ
ДЛЯ МИРОВОЙ БУРЖУАЗНОЙ ПЕЧАТИ

ПАРИЖ
1929

Cover page of the pamphlet Chtо i Kak Pรอยозшло? (What Happened and How?).
Sensation is the inevitable shadow of politics. In the matter of my expulsion from the Soviet Union, this shadow has, however, acquired dimensions that are too grotesque. Moreover, sensationalism is inimical to the kind of politics that is directed toward great ends. My object in writing these lines is not to create more of a sensation but, on the contrary, to undercut this by providing public opinion with objective information—so far as objectivity is attainable in political struggle in general.

In order to blunt the edge of sensationalism, let me say at the outset what one must suppose is not necessary for those readers who are at all well informed, namely, that our attitude toward the October Revolution, Soviet power, Marxist doctrine, and Bolshevism remains unchanged. We do not measure the historical process by the yardstick of our personal fate.

It is true that I am now resorting to a way of communicating with the public that is rather exceptional from the standpoint of the methods to which I have been accustomed during my political life. But this flows from the exceptional nature of the conditions in which I am now placed.

An avalanche of guesses, inventions, and fantasies has piled up around the question of my personal fate—something I would feel quite untroubled about if it did not at the same time mean injury to the cause that I serve and have served. I have no reason to wrap my personal fate in mystery, especially since it has been bound up one way or another with interests of a general nature. On the contrary. Now more than ever it is in my interest to present matters as they really are—not only to my friends but to enemies as well. My object is not propaganda but information.
The precondition I posed to the press agency was complete freedom in stating my point of view. My articles were to be published as written or not at all.

I am writing in Constantinople, where the Soviet vessel *Ilyich* brought me on February 12 from Odessa. I did not choose this as a place of residence, despite the assertions of a number of newspapers. My closest friends in Germany and France were absolutely right in supposing that I was brought to Turkey against my will.

To the Turkish police officer who boarded the steamer at Buyukdere to check the passengers' papers—there were no passengers on the boat besides my family and the agents of the GPU—I handed the following statement for transmission to the president of the Turkish republic, Kemal Pasha:

"Dear Sir: At the gateway to Constantinople, I have the honor to inform you that I have arrived at the Turkish frontier not of my own choice and that the only reason I may cross this frontier will be through the use of force upon me. I request you, Mr. President, to accept from me the sentiments that are fitting on this occasion. L. Trotsky. February 12, 1929."

Since I was being expelled from the USSR despite my emphatic protests, I would naturally have preferred to go to a country with whose language, social life, and culture I was closely familiar. But the interests of exiles are rarely compatible with those of the people who exile them.

So it was in 1916, when the government of the French republic forcibly deported me to Spain, a country whose language I did not know. In its turn, the liberal Spanish government of Senor Romanones did not allow me the time to learn the language of Cervantes but hastened to arrest me without the slightest grounds and to deport me to the other side of the Atlantic. If gloating were a permissible feeling in politics, one might say that I was soon given unusual grounds for satisfaction: Malvy, the Radical minister of the interior who had me expelled from France, was himself expelled from France not long after by the government of Clemenceau. But there was more. The chief of the French political police, Monsieur Bidet—"Fauxpas," whose reports served as the basis for my expulsion from France, was himself arrested in 1918 in Russia, where he was carrying out a not altogether friendly mission. Brought before me at the Commissariat of War, M. Bidet replied to my question, "How did this happen?" with the rather vague but, in its way, magnificent
formula: “C'est la marche des evenements! [That's the way things go!]

The new epoch that began with the last war is preeminently one of great upheavals and sharp political turns. We have been witness to many surprises, and will be for a long time to come. In all of them, that classic formula of the police philosopher will come in handy: “C'est la marche des evenements!”

I will not hide the fact that I regard my expulsion from the Soviet Union as anything but history's final word. It is not, of course, just a matter of my personal fate. The ups and downs of history's route are tortuous, to be sure. But in the school of historical objectivity I have learned to make do with the paths presented by the actual course of development.

But let us first establish the facts that are needed in order to understand what has happened.

In January 1928 the Fifteenth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, in reality a congress of the bureaucrats in Stalin's faction, expelled the Opposition from the party and sanctioned the use of government repression against it.7 Soon afterward, many hundreds—and by now many thousands—of members of the Opposition were exiled to various parts of Siberia and Central Asia.

Among them were Christian Rakovsky, former chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukraine and ambassador to France, who has to his credit forty years of struggle in the ranks of the working class in France, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Russia; Karl Radek, one of the most remarkable international Marxist writers; I.N. Smirnov, a people's commissar up to the moment of his arrest and one of the oldest party builders; Smilga, one of the organizers of the October Revolution and the Red Army; Preobrazhensky, an economist with a profound education, who was a financial adviser in the negotiations with France; Muralov and Mrachkovsky, organizers of the Red Army and marshals of the revolutionary war; Beloborodov, people's commissar of internal affairs before being deported; Sosnovsky, who brilliantly served the party with his pen as journalist and social commentator; Kasparova, leader of the work of the party and Comintern among women of the East; Boguslavsky, former president of the "junior" Council of People's Commissars; and so on.8

The lives of these people, and those of dozens of other Oppositionists whom I have not named, are inseparably bound
up with the epic tale of three revolutions: those of 1905, February 1917, and October 1917. The personal fates of many of them might serve as the subject of dramas in the grand manner. More importantly, it is beyond dispute that in a political sense these exiles have rendered the Soviet republic infinitely greater services than have those who exiled them.

The place selected for my exile was Alma-Ata, the new capital of Kazakhstan, a malarial city of earthquakes and floods, at the foot of the Tyanshan range, about one hundred and fifty miles from the nearest railroad and twenty-five hundred miles from Moscow. Here my wife and son and I spent a year in the company of books—and nature, which in these regions is truly magnificent. It took newspapers and letters anywhere from twenty days to a month or two, sometimes longer, to arrive, depending on the time of year and the mood of the Moscow authorities.

Although we encountered secret friends at every step, we were completely isolated from the surrounding population, for anyone who tried to make contact with us was punished, sometimes quite severely. Our only links with the outside world were the hunting trips my son and I went on, accompanied by GPU agents, during which we lived the life of nomads on the salt flats and semidesert steppes for weeks on end, camping out under the stars or in Kirghiz kibitkas and traveling by camel. This region is famous for its abundance of wild goats, wild boar, ducks, geese, and other game, but also for poisonous snakes, scorpions, and spiders. In January this year I was informed by telegram that three tigers had appeared within a hundred and fifty miles of Alma-Ata and were coming up the Ili River from Lake Balkhash. My son and I wondered whether we should declare war—proclaiming it to be a defensive one, of course—or appeal to the Kellogg antiwar pact. The shrewd and experienced old tigers would surely have taken an attitude fully sympathetic with the Kellogg Pact—one need only refer to Clemenceau’s example to see that—after all, it is the strength of one’s claws that decides the outcome in the final analysis.

My son and I had not yet come to a decision regarding these Balkhash predators when our fate was suddenly altered by a new turn of events.

It began with our correspondence. During the first ten months of exile, our letters, though censored, nevertheless reached their destinations roughly fifty percent of the time. Correspondence
among the deportees acquired a very broad scope. Sometimes letters assumed the dimensions of political treatises, and were widely reproduced, reaching the political centers of the country and passing beyond its borders. They would be printed and disseminated in all sorts of ways. Toward the end of October last year a sudden change occurred. Our communications with cothinkers, friends, even relatives, were suddenly stopped short; letters and telegrams ceased to reach us at all. At the Moscow telegraph office, as we learned by special means, hundreds of telegrams addressed to me were piling up, especially during the days commemorating the October Revolution and other revolutionary anniversaries. The ring around us was closing in tighter and tighter.

It should be kept in mind that not only the rank and file but even functionaries in Stalin's apparatus found it hard to swallow these reprisals against leading figures of the October Revolution. They were appeased by those on top with the argument that harsh measures would assure full unanimity within the party and make it possible to work in peace. Stalin's faction believed, or at least promised, that sending the Opposition leaders into internal exile would bring the activities of the "Trotskyists" to an end.

But that was precisely what did not happen. The year following the Fifteenth Congress was the most troubled year of the party's existence. Indeed it was only after the Fifteenth Congress that wide layers of the party and working class began to take a real interest in the struggle going on at the top and realized that fundamental differences of principle must be at stake, since dozens, hundreds, and even thousands of people known throughout the country, or at least throughout their regions, districts, or plants, were willing to undergo expulsion from the party and deportation for the sake of their ideas. During 1928, despite continual waves of repression, the Opposition grew noticeably, especially at major industrial plants. This led to further intensification of repression and in particular to prohibition of correspondence by exiles, even among themselves. We expected other measures of the same sort to follow, and we were not mistaken.

On December 16 a special representative of the GPU arrived from Moscow and in the name of that institution handed me an ultimatum: to stop leading the struggle of the Opposition; otherwise, measures would be taken to isolate me from political
life entirely. Nothing was said about being shipped abroad. As far as I could tell, measures of a domestic nature were implied. I answered this "ultimatum" with a letter laying down basic principles, addressed to the Central Committee of the party and the presidium of the Comintern. It seems necessary at this point to quote some excerpts from that letter:

"The demand that I abstain from political activity is equivalent to demanding that I renounce the struggle for the interests of the international proletariat, a struggle which I have waged uninterruptedly for thirty-two years, throughout my conscious life. The attempt to represent this activity as 'counterrevolutionary' comes from those whom I accuse before the international proletariat of trampling upon the basic teachings of Marx and Lenin, of injuring the historical interests of the world revolution, of breaking with the traditions and heritage of October, and of unconsciously, and therefore all the more dangerously, preparing the way for Thermidor."

I omit the next part of the document, which lists our main differences on domestic and international questions. Further on, the letter states:

"A period of reaction can occur not only after a bourgeois revolution, but after a proletarian one as well. For six years we have been living in the USSR under conditions of mounting reaction against October, paving the way for Thermidor. The most obvious and complete expression of this reaction within the party is the hounding and organizational routing of the left wing.

"In its recent attempts to resist the openly Thermidorean elements, the Stalin faction is living off of the 'flotsam' and 'jetsam' of the Opposition's ideas. As far as creativity goes, it is impotent. The struggle against the left has deprived it of any stability. Its practical policies have no backbone; they are false, contradictory, and unreliable. The noisy campaign against the right danger remains three-quarters sham and serves above all as camouflage for the masses, to hide the real war of annihilation against the Bolshevik-Leninists."

My letter concludes:

"In the declaration we submitted to the Sixth [World] Congress . . . we answered the accusation of factional work with the statement that it could be ended only if Article 58, treacherously directed against us, were revoked and ourselves reinstated in the party, not as repentant sinners but as revolutionary fighters who do not betray their banner. And as if
in foreknowledge of the ultimatum handed me today, we wrote the following, word for word:

“‘Only completely corrupted bureaucrats could demand such a renunciation from revolutionaries’ (renunciation of political activity, i.e., of serving the party and the international proletariat). ‘Only contemptible renegades could give such a promise.’

“There is nothing I can change in those words.

“To each his own. You wish to continue to conduct affairs under the prompting of class forces hostile to the proletariat. We know our duty and will do it to the end. L. Trotsky.16 Alma-Ata, December 16, 1928.”
DEPORTATION FROM THE SOVIET UNION

February 25, 1929

To recapitulate: I had replied to the demand that I cease all political activity with the statement that only corrupted bureaucrats could make such a demand and only renegades could agree to it. The Stalinists themselves could hardly have expected a different answer. After that, a month passed without incident. Our connections with the outside world had been completely broken off, including the illegal ones organized by young cothinkers, who overcame the greatest difficulties and until the end of 1928 accurately supplied me in Alma-Ata with an abundance of information from Moscow and other centers. During January of this year we received only the Moscow newspapers. The more they wrote about the struggle against the right wing, the more certain we felt in expecting a blow against the left. That is Stalin's political method.

The GPU representative from Moscow, Volynsky, remained in Alma-Ata all this time, awaiting instructions. On January 20 he appeared at our house, accompanied by a large number of armed GPU agents, who occupied all entrances and exits, and he handed me the following extract from the minutes of the GPU special conference of January 18, 1929:

"Considered: the case of citizen Trotsky, Leon Davidovich, under Article 58/10 of the Criminal Code, on the charge of counterrevolutionary activity, expressing itself in the organization of an illegal anti-Soviet party, whose activity has lately been directed toward provoking anti-Soviet actions and making preparations for armed struggle against Soviet power. Resolved: Citizen Trotsky, Leon Davidovich, to be deported from territory of the USSR."

When I was asked to sign a statement acknowledging that I
Deportation from the Soviet Union

had been informed of this ruling, I wrote: “The GPU ruling, criminal in essence and illegal in form, has been announced to me, January 20, 1929. Trotsky.”

I called the ruling criminal because it accuses me of preparations for armed struggle against Soviet power, a deliberate lie. Such a formula, needed by Stalin to justify my deportation, in and of itself tends to undermine Soviet power in the most vicious way. For if it were true that the Opposition, led by people who helped organize the October Revolution and built the Soviet republic and Red Army, was preparing to overthrow Soviet power by force of arms, that in itself would signify a disastrous situation in the country. If that were so, even the most favorably disposed counterrevolutionary agent from the bourgeois world would have to say: “There is no need to be hasty about establishing economic ties with the Soviets; better to wait and see how the armed conflict turns out.”

Fortunately, however, the GPU formula is a barefaced police lie. We are wholly guided by the conviction that Soviet rule has profound vitality and great elasticity. Our course is one of internal reform. I take this opportunity to proclaim this to the whole world and by so doing to at least partially ward off the blow to the interests of the Soviet republic dealt by the GPU formula, dictated by Stalin, which is false through and through. However great may be the internal difficulties of the Soviet republic today, the result not only of the objective circumstances but also of the impotent policy of zigzags, all those who once again look forward to an early collapse of Soviet power are making grievous miscalculations, as they were before.

Mr. Chamberlain apparently entertains no such illusions. He goes by criteria of a more practical kind. If one can believe reports insistently repeated in the press, in particular the report in the American magazine The Nation, Mr. Chamberlain has expressed himself to the effect that correct diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union would be fully possible on the day after Trotsky had, as he put it, “been placed against a wall.” This lapidary formula does honor to the temperament of the Conservative minister, who when speaking of the American navy, at any rate, speaks more in the language of the vegetarian.

Although I am entrusted with no diplomatic powers, I nevertheless venture, in the interests of the cause (and partly in my own interests as well), to advise the British minister of foreign affairs not to insist on his demand too literally. Stalin has
shown his readiness to meet Mr. Chamberlain's wishes well enough by expelling me from the Soviet Union. If he did not do more, it was not because of a lack of willingness to please. It would be too foolish to make that a reason for punishing the Soviet economy and British industry. Beyond that, I might also point out that international relations are based on the principle of reciprocity. But this is a disagreeable subject and I prefer to drop it.

In my written acknowledgment that the GPU ruling had been made known to me I called it not only criminal in essence but also illegal in form. By this I meant that the GPU may offer a person the choice of leaving the country on pain of reprisals in one form or another if the person remains, but it may not actually deport someone without that person's agreement.

When I asked how I was to be deported and to what country, I received the answer that I would be informed in European Russia by a GPU representative being sent to meet me there. The whole next day was taken up with feverish packing, almost exclusively of manuscripts and books. Our two pointers looked on with alarm at this crowd of noisy people in the usually quiet household. I should note in passing that there was not even a hint of hostility on the part of the GPU agents. Quite the contrary.

At dawn on January 22 my wife, my son, and I, with the GPU escort, set off in a bus which drove us over a road covered with smoothly packed snow to the mountain pass of Kurday. There we encountered strong winds and heavy drifting of snow. The powerful tractor that was to tow us through the pass was sunk in over its head in snowdrifts along with the seven motor vehicles it was towing. During heavy drifting in this pass, seven men and a good many horses had frozen to death. We were obliged to transfer to sledges. It took us more than seven hours to cover about twenty miles. Along the drifted road we encountered many abandoned sleighs, their shafts sticking up, many loads of material for the Turkestan-Siberia railroad now under construction, many tanks of kerosene—all deep in the snow. Men and horses had taken refuge in the nearby winter camps of the Kirghiz.

On the other side of the pass we boarded a bus again, and at Pishpek (now Frunze), a railway car. The Moscow papers we met along the way showed that public opinion was being prepared for the deportation of the leaders of the Opposition from the country.

In the region of Aktyubinsk a communication by direct wire informed us that the place of exile was to be Constantinople. I
demanded a chance to see the two members of my family in Moscow. They were brought to the Ryazhsk station and placed under surveillance with us. The new GPU representative, Bulanov, tried to persuade me of the advantages of going to Constantinople. But I categorically refused. Bulanov engaged in negotiations with Moscow by direct wire. There everything had been foreseen except the possibility that I might refuse to leave the country voluntarily.

Our train is diverted from its route, slowly rolls back down the track, finally stops on an out-of-the-way side track near a dead little station, and there sinks into a coma between two stretches of thin woods. Day after day goes by. More and more empty tin cans accumulate around the train. Crows and magpies gather for the feast in larger and larger flocks. There are no rabbits about; a terrible epidemic that autumn had swept them away. So the fox had made a regular track by night, right up to our train.

The engine, with one car hitched to it, makes daily trips to a larger station to fetch the main meal. Grippe rages in our car. We reread Anatole France and Klyuchevsky’s history of Russia. The cold reaches 53 degrees below zero. Our engine keeps rolling back and forth to keep the wheels from freezing to the rails. Distant radio stations were calling back and forth, groping in the ether for news of our whereabouts. We did not hear their questions; we were playing chess. But even if we had heard them, we would not have been able to answer; brought to our location by night, we ourselves did not know where we were—only that it was somewhere in the region of Kursk.

Thus passed twelve days and nights. While there, we learned of new arrests—of several hundred people, including a hundred and fifty members of a so-called “Trotskyist center.” Among the published names were those of Kavtaradze, former chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars of Georgia; Mdivani, the former Soviet trade representative in Paris; Voronsky, the party’s best literary critic; and Drobnis, one of the most heroic figures of the Ukrainian revolution. All of them were central figures in the party, men who helped organize the October Revolution.

On February 8 Bulanov announced: “Despite the best efforts on Moscow’s part, the German government categorically refuses to admit you to Germany. I have been given final instructions to conduct you to Constantinople.”

“But I will not go voluntarily; and I will make a declaration to that effect at the Turkish border.”
“That will not change matters; you will be conducted into Turkey in any case.”

“Then you have made a deal with the Turkish police for my forcible deportation to Turkey.”

“We know nothing about that,” he replied. “We only carry out orders.”

After twelve days of standing still, our train was again under way. Modest as it was, the train began to grow longer as the escort increased. Throughout the trip, ever since Pishpek, we were not allowed to leave our car. Now we were going at full speed southward. The only stops were at small stations to take on water and fuel. These extreme precautions were prompted by recollections of the demonstration at the Moscow station at the time when I was deported from Moscow in January 1928; the demonstrators forcibly prevented the train from leaving for Tashkent on that occasion, and it had only been possible to deport me secretly the following day.

The newspapers received en route brought echoes of the big new campaign against “Trotskyists.” Between the lines certain hints slipped through of a struggle at the top over the question of my deportation. The Stalin faction was in a hurry. And they had reason enough: there were not only political difficulties to overcome but physical ones as well. The steamer *Kalinin* had been assigned to take us from Odessa, but it had been frozen in. All the efforts of the icebreakers were in vain. Moscow was standing at the telegraph wire, urging haste. The steamer *Ilyich* was made ready on short order. Our train arrived in Odessa on the night of February 10. Through the window I saw familiar places. I had spent seven years of my school life in this city. Our car was brought right up to the steamer. It was bitterly cold. Despite the lateness of the hour, the pier was surrounded by GPU troops and agents. Here we had to take leave of the two members of our family who had shared imprisonment with us for two weeks.

As we peered through the train window at the steamer awaiting us, we could not help remembering another boat that had once taken us to a destination not of our choosing. That was in March 1917, off Halifax, Canada, when British marines, before the eyes of a crowd of passengers, had carried me bodily off of the Norwegian steamer *Christianiafjord*, on which I had been traveling with the full necessary complement of documents and visas toward Christiania and Petrograd. Our family had been the
same then, only twelve years younger. My eldest son had been eleven at Halifax, and he had struck one of the British marines with his little fist before I could keep him from that gesture, by which he had hoped, naively, to win my freedom and above all to restore me to a vertical position. Instead of Petrograd my chance destination had then been a concentration camp.

The *Ilyich*, without cargo or other passengers, shipped out at about one in the morning. For sixty miles an icebreaker made passage for us. The gale that had been raging in the area only brushed us lightly with the last strokes of its wings. On February 12 we entered the Bosporus. To the Turkish police officer, who had been warned in advance that the steamer was carrying my family and myself, I handed the declaration that I was being brought to Constantinople against my will. It had no results. The steamer proceeded on its course. After a journey of twenty-two days, having covered a distance of four thousand miles, we found ourselves in Constantinople.
Leon Trotsky and Natalia Sedova being driven to the Soviet consulate on their arrival in Constantinople.
Trotsky and Sedova on a boat trip off the coast of Turkey.
HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN? 22

February 25, 1929

How was it possible for this to happen? That question may be answered in two different ways: either by describing the internal mechanism of the struggle between the ruling groups or by revealing the more profound underlying social forces. Each of these approaches has its rightful place. And they are not mutually exclusive; rather, they complement one another. It is natural for the reader to wish to know first of all how such a radical change in the leadership came about concretely, by what means Stalin managed to become master of the apparatus and direct it against others. Compared to the essential question of the realignment of class forces and the progression of the various stages of the revolution, the question of personal groupings and combinations is only of secondary significance. But within its limits it is completely legitimate. And it must be answered.

What is Stalin? For a concise characterization one would have to say: he is the most outstanding mediocrity in our party. He is gifted with practical sense, a strong will, and perseverance in the pursuit of his aims. His political field of vision is extremely narrow. And his theoretical level is equally primitive. His work of compilation, Foundations of Leninism, in which he made an attempt to give the theoretical traditions of the party their due, is full of sophomoric errors. His ignorance of foreign languages—he does not know a single one—compels him to follow the political life of other countries secondhand. His mind is stubbornly empirical and devoid of creative imagination. To the leading group of the party (in broader circles he was not known at all) he always seemed destined to play secondary or even more subsidiary roles. And the fact that today he is playing the leading
role is not so much a reflection of his own personality as a characterization of the present transitional period of unstable equilibrium. As Helvetius once said: "Every period has its great men, and if these are lacking, it invents them."

Like all empiricists Stalin is full of contradictions. He acts on impulse, without perspective. His political line is a series of zigzags. For each zig or zag he creates some ad hoc theoretical banality, or assigns others to do so. He has an extraordinarily unceremonious attitude toward facts and people. He never finds it awkward to call something white today which yesterday he called black. One could without difficulty compile an astounding catalogue of Stalin's contradictory statements. I will cite only one example, which will fit more easily in the framework of a newspaper article than others. I apologize in advance that the example concerns me personally. In recent years Stalin has concentrated his efforts on what is called the deglorification of Trotsky. A new history of the October Revolution was hastily worked up, along with a new history of the Red Army and a new history of the party. Stalin gave the signal for the revising of values by declaring on November 19, 1924: "Trotsky did not and could not have played any special role in the party or in the October insurrection." He began to repeat this assertion on every possible occasion.

Stalin was reminded of an article he himself had written on the first anniversary of the revolution. The article said literally: "All the work of practical organization of the insurrection was conducted under the immediate leadership of the chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, Trotsky. One may say with assurance that the swift passing of the garrison to the side of the Soviet and the capable organization of the work of the Military Revolutionary Committee, the party owes principally and primarily to Trotsky."

How did Stalin get out of this embarrassing contradiction? Very simply: by intensifying the stream of invective aimed at the "Trotskyists." There are hundreds of such examples. His comments on Zinoviev and Kamenev are notable for their equally glaring contradictions. And one may rest assured that in the near future Stalin will begin, in most venomous fashion, to express the very same opinions about Rykov, Bukharin, and Tomsky that until now he denounced as vicious calumny by the Opposition.

How does he dare indulge in such flagrant contradictions? The key to it is that he makes his speeches or writes his articles only
after his opponent has been deprived of the chance to reply. Stalin's polemics are only the belated echo of his organizational technique. What Stalinism is, above all, is the automatic working of the apparatus.

Lenin, in his so-called testament, commented on two characteristics of Stalin: rudeness and disloyalty. But only after Lenin's death did these develop to their fullest extent. Stalin is preoccupied with creating as poisonous an atmosphere as possible in the internal party struggle and intends by that means to confront the party with the accomplished fact of a split.

"This cook will prepare only peppery dishes," Lenin warned the party as early as 1922. The GPU decree accusing the Opposition of preparing for armed struggle is not Stalin's only dish of this kind. In July 1927, that is, at a time when the Opposition was still in the party and its representatives were still on the Central Committee, Stalin suddenly raised the question: "Is the Opposition really opposed to the victory of the USSR in the coming battles with imperialism?"

Needless to say, there was not the slightest foundation for such an insinuation. But the cook had already begun to prepare the dish he called Article 58. Since the question of the Opposition's attitude toward the defense of the USSR has international importance, I consider it necessary, in the interests of the Soviet republic, to quote excerpts from the speech in which I replied to Stalin's question:

"Let us leave aside for the moment the brazen impudence of the question," I said in my speech at the joint plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission in August 1927. "And let us not dwell at this time on Lenin's carefully weighed characterization of Stalin's methods—rudeness and disloyalty.' We will take the question as it has been posed and give an answer to it. Only White Guards could be 'opposed to the victory of the USSR in the coming battles with imperialism.' . . . What Stalin really has in mind is a different question, namely, 'Does the Opposition really think that the leadership of Stalin is incapable of assuring victory to the USSR?' . . . Yes, the Opposition thinks that the leadership of Stalin makes the victory more difficult. . . . All Oppositionists will, in the event of war, take up whatever post, at the front or behind the lines, the party assigns them to. . . . But none of them will renounce their right and duty to fight for the correction of the party's course. . . . To sum up: for the socialist fatherland? Yes! For the Stalinist course? No!"
How Could This Happen?

Even today, in spite of the changed circumstances, these words retain their full force and are equally binding now as then.

Together with the question of the Opposition's alleged preparations for armed struggle and our allegedly negative attitude toward the defense of the Soviet state, I am obliged to call attention to a third dish on Stalin's menu of specialties—the charge of terrorist acts. As I discovered on arriving in Constantinople, certain obscure reports have already appeared in the world press concerning alleged terrorist plots said to involve certain groups of the "Trotskyist" Opposition. The source of these rumors is obvious to me. In letters from Alma-Ata I frequently warned my friends that Stalin, having taken the road that he had, would find it an increasingly urgent necessity to discover "terrorist plotting" among the "Trotskyists."

To attribute plans for an armed uprising to the Opposition, which is led by a general staff of fully experienced and responsible revolutionists, was an unpromising task. A much easier job would be to attribute terrorist aims to some anonymous group of "Trotskyists." That evidently is the direction Stalin's efforts are taking today. By crying out an advance warning for all to hear, one may not render Stalin's plans altogether impossible of fulfillment, but at least one may make his task more difficult. That is why I am doing it.

Stalin's methods of struggle are such that as early as 1926 I felt obliged to say to him, during a meeting of the Politburo, that he was making himself a candidate for the role of gravedigger of the revolution and of the party. I repeat that warning today with redoubled emphasis. However, even today, we are as profoundly convinced as we were in 1926 that the party will get the better of Stalin and not Stalin of the party.
Stalin was elected general secretary while Lenin was still alive, in 1922. At that time the post had more of a technical than political character. Nevertheless, even then, Lenin was opposed to Stalin’s candidacy. It was precisely in this regard that he spoke of a cook with a preference for peppery dishes. But Lenin yielded on this point to other members of the Politburo, though with little enthusiasm: “We’ll try it and see.”

Lenin’s illness entirely changed the situation. Until then Lenin had stood at the central lever of power, heading up the Politburo. The secondary level of work, that of implementing central decisions, was entrusted to Stalin as general secretary. All of the other members of the Politburo were occupied with their own special functions.

Lenin’s removal from the scene automatically placed the central lever in Stalin’s hands. This was regarded as a provisional arrangement. No one proposed any changes because everyone hoped for Lenin’s rapid recovery.

During that time Stalin was feverishly active in selecting his friends for advancement within the apparatus. Recovering from his first stroke and temporarily returning to work in 1922-23, Lenin was horrified at how far the bureaucratization of the apparatus had gone and at how omnipotent it seemed in relation to the masses of the party.

Insisting that I should become his deputy in the Council of People’s Commissars, Lenin held discussions with me about waging a joint struggle against Stalin’s bureaucratism. The task was to carry this struggle through with the least possible number of convulsions and shocks to the party.
But Lenin's health again grew worse. In his so-called testament, written January 4, 1923, Lenin insistently counseled that the party remove Stalin from the central work because of his disloyalty and tendency to abuse his power. But again Lenin had to take to his bed. The provisional arrangement with Stalin at the helm was renewed. At the same time hopes for Lenin's recovery were fast fading. The prospect that he would have to withdraw from the work altogether brought the question of the party's leadership to the fore.

At that time no differences of a principled nature had yet taken shape. The grouping that opposed me had a purely personal character. The watchword of Zinoviev, Stalin, and Company was, "Don't let Trotsky take over the leadership of the party." In the course of the later struggle by Zinoviev and Kamenev against Stalin, the secrets of this earlier period were revealed by the participants in the conspiracy themselves. For a conspiracy it was.

A secret Politburo (the Septemvirate) was created consisting of all the members of the official Politburo other than myself, and, in addition, Kuibyshev, the present chairman of the Supreme Council of National Economy. All questions were decided in advance in this secret center, whose members were bound by mutual vows. They undertook not to engage in polemics against one another and at the same time to seek opportunities to attack me. There were similar secret centers in the local organizations, and they were bound to the Moscow Septemvirate by strict discipline. For communications, special codes were used. This was a well-organized illegal group within the party, directed originally against one person. People were selected for responsible positions in the party and state according to a single criterion: opposition to Trotsky.

During the prolonged "interregnum" created by Lenin's illness, this work was carried on untiringly but still cautiously and in disguised fashion, so that in the event of Lenin's recovery the mined bridges could be kept intact. The conspirators acted by hints. Candidates for posts were required to guess what was wanted of them. Those who "guessed" went up the ladder. Thus a special type of careerism came into being which later on acquired the public designation, "anti-Trotskyism." Lenin's death untied the conspirators' hands and allowed them to come into the open.

Party members who raised their voices in protest against this conspiracy became the victims of treacherous attacks based on
the most farfetched pretexts, often purely fabricated ones. On the other hand, morally unstable elements of the type which during the first five years of Soviet power would have been ruthlessly driven out of the party now bought insurance for themselves by nothing more than hostile remarks against Trotsky. Beginning in late 1923 the same work was carried out in all the parties of the Comintern: some leaders were dethroned and others appointed in their places exclusively on the basis of their attitude toward Trotsky. A strenuous, artificial process of selection was accomplished, selection not of the best but of the most adaptable. The general policy was to replace independent and gifted people with mediocrities who owed their positions entirely to the apparatus. And the highest expression of that mediocrity of the apparatus came to be Stalin himself.

By late 1923 three-quarters of the apparatus had already been picked over and lined up, ready to carry the fight into the ranks of the party. Every type of weapon was ready and in place, waiting for the signal to attack. Then the signal was given. The first two open "discussion" campaigns against me, in autumn 1923 and autumn 1924, coincided—in both instances—with my being taken ill, which prevented me from addressing any party meetings.

With furious pressure exerted by the Central Committee, the working over of the rank and file began from all directions at once. My old differences with Lenin, which preceded not only the revolution but the world war too and which had long since been dissolved in our joint work, were suddenly dragged up into the light of day, distorted, exaggerated, and presented to the ranks of the uninitiated in the party as matters of most pressing urgency. The ranks were stunned, thrown off balance, intimidated. Simultaneously the method of selecting personnel moved down a step. Now it became impossible to hold a post as factory manager, secretary of a shop committee, chairman of a county executive committee, bookkeeper, or recording secretary without recommending oneself by one's anti-Trotskyism.

I avoided entering into this fight as long as possible, since its nature was that of an unprinciplled conspiracy directed against me personally, at least in the first stages. It was clear to me that such a fight, once it broke out, would inevitably take on extremely sharp features and might under the conditions of the revolutionary dictatorship lead to dangerous consequences. This is not the place to discuss whether it was correct to try to maintain some
common ground for collective work at the price of very great personal concessions or whether I should have taken the offensive all along the line, despite the absence of sufficient political grounds for such action. The fact is that I chose the first way and, in spite of everything, I do not regret it. There are victories that lead into blind alleys, and there are defeats that open up new avenues.

Even after profound political differences had come to light, pushing personal intrigues way into the background, I tried to keep the dispute within the bounds of a discussion of principles and tried to counteract or prevent any forcing of the issue, to allow for the possibility that the conflicting opinions and prognoses might be tested against facts and experiences.

By contrast, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin, who at first cautiously concealed himself behind the other two, pressed the issue with all their might. They had no desire whatsoever for the party to take time and think over the differences and test them in the light of experience. When Zinoviev and Kamenev broke with Stalin, the latter automatically directed against them the same anti-"Trotskyist" slander campaign, with its overpowering force of inertia, that the three of them together had developed over a period of three years.

The foregoing is not a historical explanation of Stalin's victory, but simply a rough outline of how that victory was won. Least of all is it a complaint against intrigue. A political line that finds the cause of its defeat in the intrigues of its adversary is a blind and pathetic one. Intrigue is a particular kind of technical implementation of a task; it can only play a subordinate role. Great historical questions are resolved by the action of great social forces, not petty maneuvers.

Stalin's victory, in all its shakiness and uncertainty, expresses significant shifts that have occurred in class relations in the revolutionary society. It is the triumph or semitriumph of certain layers or groupings over others. It is the reflection of changes in the international situation that have taken place in the last few years. But these issues constitute a theme of such scope as will require separate treatment.

At this point only one thing should be stated. Despite all the mistakes and confusion of the world press, hostile to Bolshevism, in evaluating the various stages and events in the internal struggle in the USSR, it has on the whole managed to break through the outer husks to extract the social kernel of that
struggle—namely, that Stalin’s victory is the victory of the more moderate, more conservative, bureaucratic, property-minded, and nationally limited tendencies over the tendencies supporting the international proletarian revolution and the traditions of the Bolshevik Party. To that extent I have no reason to protest against the praise of Stalin’s realism so commonly encountered in the bourgeois press. How solid and lasting his victory will be and what direction future developments will take—that is something else again.
WHERE IS THE SOVIET REPUBLIC GOING?31

February 25, 1929

Since the October Revolution, this question has never left the columns of the world press. At the present moment it is being discussed in connection with my expulsion from the USSR, which the enemies of Bolshevism regard as a symptom of the long-awaited "denouement." That my expulsion has an importance that is not personal but political is not for me to deny. However I definitely would not advise anyone to jump to conclusions on this occasion about a "beginning of the end."

There is no need for a reminder that historical forecasts, unlike those of astronomy, are always conditional, containing options and alternatives. Any claims to powers of exact prediction would be ridiculous where a struggle between living forces is involved. The task of historical prediction is to differentiate between the possible and the impossible and to separate the most likely variants out from all those that are theoretically possible.

To be well founded, any answer to the question of where the Soviet revolution is going would have to be the result of an analysis of all its inner forces and of the world situation in which the revolution finds itself. A study of that kind would have to be a book. In Alma-Ata I began work on such a book, and I hope to complete it in the near future.

Here I can only indicate the lines along which the answer must be sought: Is it true that the Soviet Union is on the verge of annihilation? Have its internal resources been exhausted? What might follow if it were destroyed—democracy? dictatorship? restoration of the monarchy?

The course of the revolutionary process is much more complex than that of a mountain stream. But in both cases what may
seem a highly paradoxical change of direction is actually quite normal, that is, in conformity with natural laws. There is no reason to expect schematic or superficial conformity with such laws. One must proceed from the normality of nature as determined by the mass of the water's flow, the local geological relief, prevailing wind patterns, and so on. In politics that means being able to see beyond the highest upsurges of the revolution to forecast the possibility and even probability of sudden, sometimes prolonged periods of subsidence; and on the other hand, at times of greatest decline, for example, during the Stolypin counterrevolution (1907-1910), being able to distinguish what the preconditions are for a new upsurge.

The three revolutions Russia has experienced in the past quarter of a century in fact constitute stages of one and the same revolution. Between the first two stages twelve years passed; between the second and third—only nine months.

The eleven years of the Soviet revolution in their turn may be broken down into a series of stages, there being two main ones. Lenin’s illness and the opening of the struggle against “Trotskyism” can be taken, roughly, as the dividing line between them. In the first period, the masses played the decisive role. History knows of no other revolution setting such masses into motion as those roused by the October Revolution. Yet there are still eccentrics today who regard October as an adventure. Reasoning in this way, they reduce to nothing what they themselves defend. For of what value is a social system if it can be overthrown by an “adventure”? In reality the success of the October Revolution—the very fact that it held out through the most critical years against a host of enemies—was assured by the active intervention and initiative of the masses of town and countryside numbering in the millions. It was only on this foundation that a government apparatus and Red Army could be improvised. Such, at any rate, is the main conclusion I draw from my experience in this area.

The second period, which brought about a radical change in the leadership, is characterized by an unquestionable reduction in the level of direct mass intervention. The stream is once more contained within its banks. Over and above the masses the centralized administrative apparatus rises higher and higher. The Soviet state, like the army, becomes bureaucratized. The distance between the governing layer and the masses grows greater. The apparatus acquires a more and more self-sufficient
character. The government official is increasingly filled with the conviction that the October Revolution was made precisely in order to concentrate power in his hands and assure him a privileged position.

There is no need, I think, to explain that the actual, living contradictions in the development of the Soviet state that we are pointing to do not serve in any way as arguments in favor of the anarchist "rejection" of the state, that is, the unadorned and unproductive "rejection" of it in general.

In a remarkable letter dealing with the phenomenon of degeneration in the state apparatus and party, my old friend Rakovsky has shown in very striking fashion that, after the conquest of power, an independent bureaucracy differentiated itself out from the working-class milieu and that this differentiation was at first only functional, then later became social. Naturally, the processes within the bureaucracy developed in relation to the very profound processes under way in the country. On the basis of the New Economic Policy a broad layer of petty bourgeoisie in the towns reappeared or newly came into being. The liberal professions revived. In the countryside, the rich peasant, the kulak, raised his head. Broad sections of officialdom, precisely because they had risen up above the masses, drew close to the bourgeois strata and established family ties with them. Increasingly, initiative or criticism on the part of the masses was viewed by the bureaucracy as interference. The apparatus was able to exert pressure on the masses more easily because, as has been stated, the mood of reaction in the psychology of the masses themselves was expressed by an unquestionable reduction in the level of their political activity. It has happened not infrequently in recent years that workers have heard bureaucrats or the new property-owning elements shout peremptorily at them: "This isn’t 1918 any more." In other words, the relationship of forces has shifted to the disadvantage of the proletariat.

Corresponding to these processes were internal changes within the ruling party itself. It should not be forgotten for a moment that the overwhelming majority of the millions of party members today have only a vague understanding of what the party was in the first period of the revolution, to say nothing of the prerevolutionary underground. Suffice it to say that 75 to 80 percent of party members joined only after 1923. The number of members with prerevolutionary service records is less than 1 percent. Beginning in 1923 the party has been artificially diluted
with a mass of half-raw recruits, whose role it was to serve as pliable material in the hands of the apparatus professionals. This swamping of the revolutionary nucleus of the party was the necessary precondition for the victory of the apparatus over “Trotskyism.”

Let us note at this point that the bureaucratization of the party and government establishments produced a high incidence of corruption and arbitrariness. Our opponents point to these with malicious glee. It would have been unnatural for them to do otherwise. But when they try to explain these phenomena by the absence of parliamentary democracy, it is enough to reply by pointing to the long series of “Panamas,” beginning with the one which, though not the first, has become a pejorative term for everything of the kind, and ending with the latest “Panama” involving the Paris Gazette and the former French minister Klotz. If someone were to argue that France constitutes an exception and that, for example, in the United States corruption among politicians or government officials is unknown, we would try very hard to believe them.

But let us return to our subject. The majority of this officialdom which has risen up over the masses is profoundly conservative. They are inclined to think that everything needed for human well-being has already been done, and to regard anyone who does not acknowledge this as an enemy. The attitude of these elements toward the Opposition is one of organic hatred; they accuse it of sowing dissatisfaction toward them among the masses by expressing criticisms, of undermining the stability of the regime, and of threatening the gains of October with the specter of “permanent revolution.” This conservative layer, which constitutes Stalin’s most powerful support in his struggle against the Opposition, is inclined to go much further to the right, in the direction of the new propertied elements, than Stalin himself or the main nucleus of his faction. Hence the present struggle between Stalin and the right wing; hence, too, the prospect of a new purge in the party, not only of “Trotskyists,” whose numbers have grown considerably since the expulsions and deportations, but also of the most degenerate elements within the bureaucracy. Thus Stalin’s halfhearted policies have developed in a series of zigzags, with the consequence that the two wings of the party, left and right, have grown stronger—at the expense of the governing center faction.

Although the struggle against the right wing has not been
removed from the agenda, for Stalin the main enemy remains, as before, the left. Today this no longer needs to be proved. To the Opposition, this was obvious some time ago. As early as the first weeks of the campaign against the right wing, in a letter to my cothinkers from Alma-Ata on November 10 of last year, I wrote that Stalin’s tactical objective was, when the moment was right, “when the right wing had been sufficiently terrified, to turn his fire abruptly against the left. . . . The campaign against the right is only to build up momentum for a new onslaught against the left. Whoever fails to understand this, has understood nothing.” This prediction came true sooner and more completely than could have been expected.

When someone involved in a revolution begins to backslide without breaking from the revolution’s social base of support, the backslider is forced to call his decline a rise and pass the right hand off as the left. It is precisely for that reason that the Stalinists accuse the Opposition of “counterrevolution” and make desperate efforts to lump their opponents of the right and left together in one heap. The same purposes are to be served from now on by the use of the word “emigre.” In reality, there are two types of emigre today: one, driven out by the mass upsurge of the revolution; and the other, serving as an index of the success being enjoyed by forces hostile to the revolution.

When the Opposition speaks of Thermidor, drawing on the analogy of the classic revolution of the late eighteenth century, it has in mind the danger that, in view of the phenomena and tendencies already indicated, the Stalinists’ struggle against the left wing may become the starting point for a concealed change in the social nature of Soviet power.

The question of Thermidor, which has played such an important part in the struggle between the Opposition and the ruling faction, requires some further explanation.

The former French president Herriot recently expressed the opinion that the Soviet regime, which had relied upon violence for ten whole years, had by that very fact passed judgment against itself. During his visit to Moscow in 1924, Herriot, as I understood him at the time, tried a more sympathetic, though even then not very clear-cut, approach toward the Soviets. But now that a decade has passed, he considers it timely to withdraw his credit from the October Revolution. I confess I do not understand the political thinking of the Radical very well. Revolutions have never issued short-term promissory notes to anyone. It took the
Great French Revolution ten years, not to install democracy, but to bring the country to Bonapartism. Nevertheless it remains beyond dispute that if the Jacobins had not taken reprisals against the Girondists and had not shown the world an example of how to deal radically with the old order, all of humanity today would have been shorter by a head.

Revolutions have never yet passed by leaving no traces upon the fate of humanity. But by the same token, they have not always preserved the gains won at the time of their highest upward sweep. After certain classes, groups, or individuals have made a revolution, others begin to profit from it. Only a hopeless sycophant would deny the world-historical significance of the Great French Revolution, although the reaction which followed it was so deep that it led the country to the restoration of the Bourbons. The first stage on the road of reaction was Thermidor. The new officials and new property owners wanted to enjoy the fruits of the revolution in peace. The old Jacobin intransigents were an obstacle to them. The new proprietied layers did not yet dare to appear under their own banner. They needed a cover from within the Jacobin milieu itself. They sought out some leaders for the short term in the persons of certain Jacobins of the second and third rank. Swimming with the current, these Jacobins prepared the way for the coming of Bonaparte, who with his bayonets and his legal code solidified the new property system.

Elements of a Thermidorean process, to be sure one that is completely distinctive, may also be found in the land of the Soviets. They have become strikingly evident in recent years. Those who are in power today either played a secondary role in the decisive events of the first period of the revolution or were outright opponents of the revolution and only joined it after it was victorious. They now serve for the most part as camouflage for those layers and groupings which, while hostile to socialism, are too weak for a counterrevolutionary overturn and therefore seek a peaceful Thermidorean switching back onto the track leading to bourgeois society; they seek to “roll downhill with the brakes on,” as one of their ideologists has put it.

However, it would be a very great mistake to regard all these processes as having been completed. Fortunately for some and unfortunately for others, that point is still a long way off. The historical analogy is a tempting, and for that reason dangerous, method. To suppose that there is a special cyclical law of revolutions, which compels them always to pass from old
Bourbons to new, by way of a Bonapartist stage, would be to think too superficially. The course of any revolution is determined by the unique combination of forces on the national scene and in the whole international situation. It remains no less true that there are certain features common to all revolutions that do admit of analogy and in fact imperatively demand it if we are to base ourselves on the lessons of the past and not to start history over from scratch at each new stage. It is possible to explain in sociological terms why the tendency toward Thermidor, Bonapartism, and Restoration are to be found in every victorious revolution worthy of the name.

The heart of the matter lies in the strength of these tendencies, the way they are combined, the conditions under which they develop. When we speak of the threat of Bonapartism we do not in any way consider it a foregone conclusion, determined by some abstract historical law. The further fate of the revolution will be decided by the course of the struggle itself as the living forces of the society fight it out. There will still be ebbs and flows, whose duration will depend to a great extent on the situation in Europe and throughout the world. In an age like ours, a political trend can be regarded as hopelessly smashed to bits only if it fails to understand the objective causes of its defeat and feels itself to be a helpless chip of wood upon the flood—if a chip of wood could be said to have feeling.
“If Soviet power is faced with mounting difficulties; if the crisis of leadership in the dictatorship is growing increasingly acute; if the danger of Bonapartism cannot be excluded—would it not be better to take the road of democracy?” This question is either posed point-blank or persists as an underlying theme in a great many articles devoted to recent events in the Soviet republic.

It is not my object to get into a discussion here of what is best and not best. My aim is to disclose what is probable, that is, what flows from the objective logic of developments. And I have come to the conclusion that what is least probable or, more precisely, what is absolutely excluded is a transition from the Soviets to parliamentary democracy.

Many newspapers have explained to me politely and in popular language that my expulsion was the result of the lack of democracy in Russia and, consequently, that I should not complain. But first of all, I have complained to no one; and second, I have also had occasion to be expelled from several democracies. That adversaries of the Soviets should regard the present acute crisis of leadership in the USSR as the inevitable consequence of the rule of a dictatorship—a dictatorship for which I, of course, assume full responsibility—is quite in the order of things. In the most general sense this observation is true. I am not in the least prepared, on the basis of my being exiled, to overthrow historical determinism. But if the leadership crisis did not arise by chance from the dictatorship, the dictatorship itself also did not arise by chance from the short-lived democracy which replaced czarism in February 1917. If the dictatorship is guilty of repression and all the other evils, then why did
democracy prove itself powerless to preserve the country from dictatorship? And where is the evidence to show that it would now be able to hold dictatorship at bay, having taken its place?

To express my idea more clearly, I must expand the geographical frame of reference and at least recall to mind certain tendencies of political development in Europe since the war, which was not just an episode but the bloody prologue to a new era.

Almost all those who were leaders in the war are still alive. The majority of them said at the time that it was the last war, that after it would come the reign of peace and democracy. Some of them even believed what they were saying. But today not one of them would be so bold as to repeat those words. Why? Because the war brought us into an age of great tensions and great conflicts, with the prospect of more great wars. At this hour powerful trains are speeding toward each other down the tracks of world domination. We cannot measure our epoch by the yardstick of the nineteenth century, which was preeminently the century of expanding democracy. In many respects the twentieth century will differ from the nineteenth more than all of modern history has from that of the Middle Ages.

In a Vienna newspaper, Herriot recently enumerated the cases of democracy's retreat in the face of dictatorship. After the installation of revolutionary power in Russia and the defeat of the revolutionary movement in a number of countries, we witnessed the establishment of fascist dictatorships throughout all of southern and eastern Europe. How can this extinction of the "altar fires" of democracy be explained? It is sometimes said that in these cases we are dealing with states that are backward or immature. This explanation is hardly applicable to Italy. But even where it is true, it explains nothing. In the nineteenth century it was thought to be a law of history that all backward nations would rise up the stairs of democracy. Why then does the twentieth century drive these nations down the road to dictatorship? We think that the explanation emerges from the facts themselves. Democratic institutions have shown that they cannot withstand the pressure of present-day contradictions, be they international or internal or, most frequently, both kinds combined. Whether this is good or bad, it is a fact.

By analogy with electrical engineering, democracy might be defined as a system of safety switches and circuit breakers for protection against currents overloaded by the national or social struggle. No period of human history has been—even remotely—
so overcharged with antagonisms as ours. The overloading of lines occurs more and more frequently at different points in the European power grid. Under the impact of class and international contradictions that are too highly charged, the safety switches of democracy either burn out or explode. That is essentially what the short circuiting of dictatorship represents.

At the same time, the strength of the contradictions within each country and on a world scale is not declining but growing. There are hardly any grounds for consolation in the fact that the process has only taken hold on the periphery of the capitalist world. Gout may start in the little finger or big toe, but eventually it reaches the heart. Moreover, no matter what the state of affairs is in the countries where capitalism is strong and democracy is of long standing—a question that we cannot go into here—what we have pointed out thus far, we feel, throws sufficient light on the question posed in the title of this article.

When people counterpose democracy to the Soviets, what they usually have in mind is simply the parliamentary system. They forget about the other side of the question, the decisive one at that—namely, that the October Revolution cleared the path for the greatest democratic revolution in human history. The confiscation of the landed estates, the total elimination of the traditional class privileges and distinctions of Russian society, the destruction of the czarist bureaucratic and military apparatus, the introduction of national equality and national self-determination—all this was the elementary democratic work that the February revolution barely even addressed itself to before leaving it, almost untouched, for the October Revolution to inherit. It was precisely the bankruptcy of the liberal-socialist coalition, its incapacity for this work, that made possible the Soviet dictatorship, based on an alliance of the workers, peasants, and oppressed nationalities. The very same causes that prevented our weak and historically belated democracy from carrying out its elementary historical task will also prevent it in the future from placing itself at the head of the country. For in the intervening time, the problems and difficulties have grown greater and democracy weaker.

The Soviet system is not simply a form of government that can be compared abstractly with the parliamentary form. Above all it is a new form of property relations. What is involved at bottom is the ownership of the land, the banks, the mines, the factories, the railroads. The working masses remember very well what the aristocrat, the big landowner, the official, the loan shark, the
capitalist, and the boss were in czarist Russia. Among the masses there undoubtedly exists much highly legitimate dissatisfaction with the present situation in the Soviet state. But the masses do not want the landowner, the official, or the boss back. One must not overlook these “trifles” in intoxicating oneself with common-places about democracy. Against the landowner’s return, the peasants will fight today just as they did ten years ago, to the last drop of blood. The great proprietor can return to his estate from emigration only astride a cannon, and he would have to spend his nights out on the cannon as well. It is true that the peasants could reconcile themselves more easily to the return of the capitalist, since state industry thus far has provided the peasants with industrial products on less favorable terms than the merchant used to earlier. This, we should note in passing, is at the root of all the internal difficulties. But the peasants remember that the landowner and capitalist were the Siamese twins of the old regime, that they withdrew from the scene together, that during the civil war they fought against the Soviets together, and that in the territories occupied by the Whites the factory owner took back the factory, and the landowner, the land. The peasant understands that the capitalist would not come back alone, but with the landlord. That is why the peasant wants neither of them. And that is a mighty source of strength, even though in negative form, for the Soviet regime.

Things must be called by their right names. What is involved here is not the introduction of some disembodied democracy but returning Russia to the capitalist road. But what would Russian capitalism look like in its second edition? During the last fifteen years the map of the world has changed profoundly. The strong have grown immeasurably stronger, the weak incomparably weaker. The struggle for world domination has assumed titanic proportions. The phases of this struggle are played out upon the bones of the weak and backward nations. A capitalist Russia could not now occupy even the third-rate position to which czarist Russia was predestined by the course of the world war. Russian capitalism today would be a dependent, semicolonial capitalism without any prospects. Russia Number 2 would occupy a position somewhere between Russia Number 1 and India.

The Soviet system with its nationalized industry and monopoly of foreign trade, in spite of all its contradictions and difficulties, is a protective system for the economic and cultural independence of the country. This was understood even by many democrats who were attracted to the Soviet side not by socialism but by a
patriotism which had absorbed some of the elementary lessons of history. To this category belong many of the forces of the native technical intelligentsia, as well as the new school of writers who for want of a more appropriate name I have called the fellow travelers.

There is a handful of impotent doctrinaires who would like to have democracy without capitalism. But the serious social forces that are hostile to the Soviet regime want capitalism without democracy. This applies not only to the expropriated property owners but to the well-to-do peasantry as well. Insofar as this peasantry turned against the revolution, it always served as a support for Bonapartism.

Soviet power arose as the result of tremendous contradictions on the international and domestic scene. It is hopeless to think that democratic safety switches of a liberal or socialist type could withstand these contradictions, which during the past quarter century have built up to their highest tension; or that they could "regulate" the thirst for revenge and restoration that inspires the ousted ruling classes. These elements are stretched out in a long line, with the merchant and industrialist holding onto the kulak, the landlord holding onto the merchant, the monarchy tagging along behind them, and the foreign creditors bringing up the rear. And all of them are straining to take first place in the country in the event of their victory.

Napoleon correctly summed up the dynamics of the revolutionary age, dominated as it is by extremes, when he said, "Europe will be either Republican or Cossack." Today one may say with far more justification, "Russia will be either Soviet or Bonapartist."

What I have just said should indicate that I am not about to assert the existence of absolute guarantees for the permanent stability of Soviet power. If the Opposition thought that, there would be no sense in the struggle we are waging against the danger of Bonapartism. I am even less inclined to claim that the solidity of the Soviet system can remain unaffected by the particular policies of the present Soviet government. The bitterness of our internal struggle shows full well how dangerous we think Stalin's zigzag policies are for Soviet power. But the very fact of our struggle testifies also that we are far removed from the so-called attitude of pessimism. We proceed from the conviction that the Soviet system has great inner reserves and resources. The line of the Opposition is not toward the collapse of Soviet power but toward its strengthening and development.
Our conclusions may be formulated in the following brief propositions:

1. Independently of its socialist mission, the support for which lies first of all in the most advanced section of the industrial proletariat, the Soviet regime has profound social and historical roots in the masses of the people and constitutes insurance against a restoration and a guarantee of independent, i.e., noncolonized development.

2. The main historical struggle against the Soviet Union, and the main internal struggle against Communist rule, has been conducted, not in the name of replacing dictatorship by democracy, but of replacing the present transitional regime with the rule of capitalism, which would inevitably be a dependent and semicolonial one.

3. Under these circumstances, a switching over onto the track of capitalism could be accomplished in no other way than by a prolonged and cruel civil war, accompanied by open or disguised intervention from without.

4. The only political form such an overturn could take would be a military dictatorship, a contemporary variety of Bonapartism. But a counterrevolutionary dictatorship would have, lodged in its very foundations, the powerful mainspring of a new October Revolution.

5. Not only is the struggle of the Opposition waged solely and completely on Soviet foundations; it is also the direct continuation and development of the basic line of Bolshevism. The present stage of this struggle is not a decisive but, so to speak, a conjunctural one.

6. The further development of the Soviet system, and consequently the fate of the Opposition as well, depends not only on factors of a domestic nature but to a very great extent on the further evolution of the entire world situation. What direction will developments take in the capitalist world? How will the strongest states, in need of expansion, deploy themselves in the world market? What form will the reciprocal relations between European states take in the coming years—and of immeasurably greater importance, those between the United States and Europe, above all Great Britain?

There are a great many prophets who, without much thought, take up the question of the fate of the Soviet republic but remain silent on the dominant fate of capitalist Europe. Yet these two questions, although in an antagonistic way, are inextricably bound together.
ON THE SECRET BALLOT\textsuperscript{41}

February 27, 1929

On the question of the secret ballot, as far as I recall, it was stated clearly in my letter: it must be applied first in the party, then in the trade unions, then, according to the results obtained, in the soviets. The open ballot was introduced in order to keep the enemy in hand through the pressure of the public opinion of the workers and above all their vanguard. But at present the party bureaucracy is using this instrument against the masses in the party and, in the unions, turns it against the mass of workers in general. We can clearly see where things have come to, thanks to the following fact: in a whole number of regions, the party masses had understood for one, two, or three years that at the head of the regional committee of the party and of the regional executive committee of the soviets were to be found adventurers, disloyal elements, future traitors; they knew it and yet they kept silent. Given such a situation, a secret ballot is the first condition necessary for the reestablishment of democracy within the party.

In the unions, control must begin through organizations exclusively composed of industrial workers, through the most important political centers, through the most educated sections of the proletariat; it is necessary to proceed by extending this control in concentric circles. As for the soviets, it is necessary to be even more careful. I was not able to give a categorical opinion about the latter until after the experiment was made in the party and in the industrial unions (not those of the functionaries). Obviously, in the event that the data furnished by the experiment in the unions is favorable, the secret ballot could, at first, be applied only partially in the elections to the soviets, in no way obliging us to introduce it generally under any circumstances. It
goes without saying that we do not make a fetish of democratic forms. The protection of the dictatorship overrides all other considerations. But the dictatorship is threatened from two sides: externally by the counterrevolution which openly flaunts itself (SRism, Menshevism, anti-Semitism); internally by insinuating Thermidor. The bureaucracy uses the ideas and methods of the dictatorship to terrorize the moving force of this dictatorship: the vanguard of the proletariat. Once the masses seriously assert themselves, the first task on the agenda will be to take stock of the cadres, to cleanse them, renew them, and put them under the authority of the party. It may be that the secret ballot is the only avenue permitting us to approach this task. It is superfluous to add that the slogan of the secret ballot in no way has the character of a principle or of universality, obligatory on all occasions. It is an ad hoc slogan, derived from the crisis of the contradictions existing between the cadres and the party. But in the present situation it is a very important slogan.
WHAT IS THE IMMEDIATE AIM OF EXILING TROTSKY?\textsuperscript{44} 

March 4, 1929

The decision of the Special Council at the GPU to exile Trotsky accuses him of organizing "a counterrevolutionary party," whose activity has "lately" been directed toward "making preparations for armed struggle against Soviet power." The word "lately" is intended to indicate some radical change in the Opposition's policy and at the same time to serve as a justification for more drastic political repression against the Opposition.

Stalin has long been trying to bring "armed insurrection" into the matter. The principled position of the Opposition for radical reform of the party and the revolution was a considerable hindrance to Stalin's policy. In its struggle against the Stalinist regime, the Opposition more than once predicted that the bureaucratic usurpers would be increasingly compelled, with a view to self-justification, to cite the danger of armed uprising by the Opposition.

The clearest and most cynical disclosure of this perspective was made by Stalin himself at the August plenum of the Central Committee in 1927, when he said to the Opposition, "Do you really not understand that these cadres can be removed only by civil war?" This very apparatus (the "cadres") openly raised itself above the party, and any struggle for a change in the policy or composition of the apparatus was equated to civil war. The political position of Stalin reduces itself to essentially the same thing; the GPU translates it into the language of repression.

The exile of Trotsky and the possible exile of the better-known Oppositionists has as its immediate aim not only to isolate politically the leadership from the masses of worker Oppositionists, but also to prepare the conditions for new, fiercer repression.
of the growing Oppositionist ranks. At the Fifteenth Congress the Stalinists proclaimed the complete "liquidation" of the Opposition an accomplished fact, and promised just as complete "monolithism" of the party. But in the past year the Opposition has grown considerably and has become an important political factor in the life of the working masses.

Inevitably, in the course of 1928, the Stalinists had to strengthen the repressive measures which, however, revealed each day their bankruptcy in the struggle for a correct political line. The bare proclamation of the Opposition as a "counterrevolutionary party" is insufficient; no one will take it seriously. The more Oppositionists they expel and exile, the more of them there will be inside the party. At the November (1928) plenum of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party even Stalin recognized this. There remains only one thing for Stalin: to try to draw a line of blood between the official party and the Opposition. He absolutely must connect the Opposition with terrorist crimes, preparation of armed insurrection, etc. But precisely that road is blocked by the leadership of the Opposition. As has been shown by the shameful incident of the "Wrangel officer" whom Stalin tried to plant on the Opposition in the autumn of 1927, it was sufficient for a member of the Opposition to make a statement for Stalin's trick to rebound on his own head.45

But the main thing, the physical liquidation of the old revolutionaries, known to the whole world, would have presented political difficulties in itself.

Hence Stalin's plan: to introduce an accusation of "making preparations for armed struggle" as a precondition for a new wave of repression; on this pretext to hastily exile the Opposition and thereby free his own hands for criminal work against the young and rank-and-file Oppositionists whose names are not yet known to the masses, especially abroad. This is the kind of matter—the only kind—that Stalin thinks through to the end.

That is why after the exile of the leaders of the Opposition we must expect with certainty an attempt by the Stalin clique in one way or another to provoke one or another so-called oppositional group to an adventure, and in case of failure—to fabricate and plant on the Opposition a "terrorist act" or a "military plot." One such attempt was already made in recent weeks, constructed according to all the rules of Bonapartist provocation. When circumstances permit, we shall publish this unsuccessful attempt
at provocation in all its details. For the moment, it is sufficient to say that it is certainly not the last. There will be another. In this field Stalin will follow his plans to the end. And nothing else is left for him.

Such is the situation at this time. The impotent policy of turns and somersaults, the growing economic difficulties, the growth of distrust in the party for the leadership, have made it necessary for Stalin to stifle the party with a large-scale show. He needs a blow, a shake-up, a catastrophe.

To say all this aloud already means hindering the Stalinist plan to some extent. The defense of the Communist Party Opposition from Stalin’s frauds and “amalgams”\textsuperscript{46} is the defense of the October Revolution and the Comintern from the destructive methods of Stalinism. This is now the first duty of every genuine communist and revolutionary.

The path of the Bonapartist usurpers must be blocked. Their methods must be unmasked, their next steps must be prevented. A campaign of disclosure must be opened before the international working masses. The struggle of the Opposition here coincides with the struggle for the October Revolution.
PROTESTS TO THE GPU

March 5 and 8, 1929

March 5, 1929

To your demand today that I leave the consulate I make the following response:

Bulanov and Volynsky offered me in the name of the GPU, i.e., the Central Committee of the CPSU, the following terms for settlement in Constantinople:

a. GPU agents are locating an apartment in a private country home i.e., one whose layout provides at least minimal topographical guarantee that it will not be easy for White Guardists or foreign fascists to make an attempt on my life and get away with it.

b. Sermuks and Poznansky are to be brought here on the next steamship, i.e., in no more than three weeks.

c. Until their arrival I will live—depending on my choice—either in the consulate (which, according to the GPU, was preferable) or in a private residence of the type indicated above under the temporary protection of the GPU agents.

Not one of these conditions has been met.

a. Of the five or six apartments that have been indicated, only one of them meets specifications for security to some degree. But to get it into suitable condition would take from two to three weeks, and I am not at all sure that I can afford the financial demands of such a household.

b. Despite the explicit commitment, Sermuks and Poznansky have not been allowed to come.

c. Fokin left without fulfilling any of the obligations that, according to Bulanov, had been entrusted to him.

Meanwhile, Constantinople is swarming with White Russians. The White newspapers sell out here in quantities of over a thousand copies. References to the fact that “active” Whites have been deported are totally absurd. The most active, of course, are keeping under cover, not to mention that they can come from other places at any time and find shelter among the “inactive” Whites. For them, impunity is assured beforehand.
Under these conditions, Moscow’s refusal to fulfill its obligations to send Sermuks and Poznansky and your simultaneous demand that I leave the consulate building although you have not offered any suitable quarters represents a demand that I voluntarily open myself up to the blows of the White Guardists.

After you told me about Moscow’s refusal to fulfill the promise given concerning Sermuks and Poznansky, I stated that in order to avoid a world scandal for reason of “quarters,” I will try to summon friends from Germany or France who will help me get settled in private quarters or escort me to another country (in the event that I receive a visa).

Despite the fact that the persons I have sent for have not yet been able even to leave, you are presenting me with the new demand that I leave the consulate. This haste flies in the face of the most elementary requirements for my safety and that of my family.

I do not desire in any way to complicate a situation that is already complicated enough. I have no interest in remaining in the consulate even a day longer than necessary. However, I have no intention of waiving the most elementary requirements for the safety of my family. If you try to resolve the problem not on the basis of the agreement but by physically isolating me and my family, as you told me today, then I reserve for myself full freedom of action. The Central Committee of the CPSU will bear total responsibility for the consequences.

L. Trotsky

March 8, 1929

To GPU agent, Citizen Minsky:

In forcefully evicting us from the consulate under the existing circumstances, you are carrying out the instructions of the Thermidoreans, who consciously and with forethought want to subject me and my family to the blows of the enemies of the October Revolution.

You cannot help but realize this since you know all too well the circumstances in Constantinople.

Therefore not only Stalin and his faction but also you, his agents, will bear full and complete responsibility for the consequences.

L. Trotsky
INTERVIEW BY
THE DAILY EXPRESS49

March 16, 1929

"Does not Great Britain realize that her industrial success is now so in the balance that it depends entirely on how soon she throws aside her quarrel with Russia?

"America does, and if Great Britain is not careful she will find the ground cut away from under her feet, for second-comers will only get the crumbs."

When I asked him [Trotsky] for his views concerning the resumption of Anglo-Russian relations, he said:

"My views? Well, Great Britain is apparently blind, but she will get a serious knock very soon that will restore her sight when it's too late, and this knock will come from America.

"Great Britain's fear of communism reminds me of a child which closes its eyes when it is frightened. Yet she is big enough to act like a man and grapple with anything that she considers menaces her.

"With Anglo-Russian relations resumed she will still be able to say who shall enter her territory. Every government has this prerogative. Look at me. I am not wanted, so out I have gone."

"Then again, the fact of Great Britain being on friendly terms with Soviet Russia would give her an advantage in getting friendly considerations of her desires. But to continue her stand for reparation of alleged damages will only result in Great Britain being outrun by America.

"Russia has a score of millions on millions of pounds marked up against Great Britain, for blame for the bloody [counter] revolution attaches to her, or rather her soldiers and her gold. To persist in making Russia a debtor will never lead to any good, and the sooner this is realized so much the better for England."
I asked Trotsky where he was going after leaving Turkey.

"I have, as yet, had no reply from Germany. I suppose it's because of the cabinet crisis there, but I have no doubt they will give me a visa. I only sent in my request after Herr Loebe's favorable speech."

"Reports that I have applied to France, Czechoslovakia, and Holland are lies. I wonder what would be the result if I asked permission to go to England. You know I spent a happy period in London visiting the British museum in 1902, and I sometimes think I would like to see it again.

"Apparently the mere mention in the House of Commons of the possibility of my requesting a visa for England was sufficient to bring the House down in laughter. I have studied what appears to be the joke for some time, but I fail to see the point of it."

"Churchill never knew and never would understand Lenin; in short, what he has written on Lenin is pure bunkum."

In answer to my question whether he had given up active politics, he replied:

"Yes; active politics, but politics—well, I am a politician, and I am engaged in writing my autobiography which will be political.

"Henceforth I shall live by my pen. Offers from almost every country have been pouring in for my work."
WITHIN THE RIGHT-CENTRIST BLOC

March 20, 1929

We are sending you the latest information received about the situation created within and around the Politburo. We guarantee absolutely the accuracy of this information, verified for the most part in two or three different ways. Many of the remarks reported are cited word for word.

The report of the conversation between Kamenev and Bukharin was published on January 20. This document hastened the clash in the upper circles; it stunned the lower ranks. Its publication spoiled the game of combinations by Zinoviev and Kamenev. The Politburo met for three days on this subject. They quarreled over it finally. The Stalin faction decided to eliminate Bukharin, Tomsky, and Rykov from the Politburo at the next plenum. The Rights are preparing to exercise passive resistance. The Stalinists are crowing: they have achieved a complete and easy victory. Our (the Opposition's) pamphlet has been republished by the Central Committee, for everyone was saying, "We learn what is happening from the Opposition, not from the Central Committee." The political significance of this pamphlet and its popularity is immense. Everyone is saying, "Yes, the party has been blindfolded!" As a result of all this, the Politburo and the presidium of the Centrol Control Commission conducted a quite formal trial of the "trio." We give some details on this matter.

During December and January, Kamenev met Bukharin quite often at Pyatakov's. This is what Bukharin had to say about preparations for the forthcoming plenum: "The situation of our forces before the plenum was such that I was in Kislovodsk writing articles for Pravda, Rykov had to keep tabs on the
economic policy, while Uglanov, who was in a very pugnacious mood, was told to keep quiet so as not to give Stalin any excuse for interference in the Moscow organization. Uglanov couldn't stand it. He came forward at the Ninth Plenum of the Moscow Committee, was smashed, and, losing his head, said stupid things about his alleged errors, etc., etc. I learned that Rykov had completed his industrial theses for the plenum. I felt that Stalin would twist Rykov around his finger in the Politburo and make the already poor theses even worse. Since I could not attend the next session of the Politburo if I took the train, I left by airplane. We landed in Rostov. The local authorities met me with suspicious talk about the harm that might overtake me in a continued flight, etc., etc. I told them to go to the devil. We flew on. In Artemovsk we landed again. I had hardly left the cabin when I was handed a sealed envelope containing a dispatch from the Politburo ordering me categorically to discontinue my flight—because of my weak heart! I had hardly made myself known when GPU agents led the pilot away somewhere and before me came a delegation of workers who requested a report. I asked when the next train left. It appeared there wasn't any for twenty-four hours. I had to make the report."

Kamenev: "Then it is you who wrote the resolution on the struggle against the Right deviation?"

Bukharin: "Of course I did. I had to show the party that I was not a right-winger. I arrived in Moscow on Friday; the session of the Politburo had taken place Thursday. I went through the theses; they were obviously unsatisfactory, and I asked for a meeting of the Politburo. Molotov wouldn't agree. He insulted me, cried that I prevented harmonious work, told me to take care of my health, and more of the same. The Politburo was convened. I succeeded in putting through a number of amendments, but in spite of that the resolution still remains ambiguous. We drew a balance sheet. The Moscow organization was ruined; we decided to confront the issue, formulating eleven paragraphs of demands for the removal of the Stalinists. When these demands were shown to Stalin, he said there wasn't a single point that could not be realized. A commission was chosen (Rykov, Bukharin, Stalin, Molotov, Ordzhonikidze). One day passed, a second, a third. Stalin did not call a meeting of the commission. The plenum of the Central Committee opened. The first report was discussed; the second was about to be passed over. In the form of an ultimatum we demanded a meeting of the commission. When it met, Stalin
shrieked that he would not permit one individual to keep a whole plenum from working. What kind of ultimatums are these? Why should Krumin be removed?, etc., etc. I became angry, spoke sharply to him, and ran out of the room. In the corridor I met Tovstukha, to whom I handed my previously prepared letter announcing Tomsky’s and my resignations. Stalin followed me. Tovstukha handed him my declaration. He read it through and went back. Rykov told us later that his hands trembled; he was pale and offered to make concessions. He demanded that the declaration announcing my resignation be destroyed. They promised then to dismiss Kostrov, Krumin, and someone else. But I did not return to the plenum.”

Hereupon Bukharin showed Kamenev a sixteen-page document that he had written giving his evaluation of the economic situation. According to Kamenev, this document was further to the right than the April 1925 theses of Bukharin.

Kamenev asked, “What are you planning to do with this document?”

Bukharin replied, “I will supplement it with a chapter on the international situation and end it with the question of the inner-party situation.”

“But wouldn’t that be a platform?” asked Kamenev.

“Perhaps, but haven’t you also written platforms?”

Here Pyatakov intervened in the conversation by saying, “I would urgently advise you not to come out against Stalin, for he has the majority behind him. [The majority of functionaries of the Pyatakov type and worse!] Past experience teaches us that such steps end badly.” (An argument remarkable for its cynicism.)

To this Bukharin replied, “Of course this is true, but what shall we do?” (Poor Bukharin!)

After Bukharin had left, Kamenev asked Pyatakov why he gave advice that could only prevent the struggle from developing. Pyatakov answered that he seriously believed one cannot oppose Stalin. “Stalin is the only man who can still be obeyed. [Pearls, real pearls! The question is not what is the correct road, but rather of finding one who can be ‘obeyed,’ so that there shall not be any ‘bad’ consequences.] Bukharin and Rykov are mistaken if they think they will rule instead of Stalin. It is the Kaganoviches who will rule, and I do not want to and I will not obey Kaganovich.” 58 (It is not true, he will obey Kaganovich too.)

“Then what do you propose to do?”
“Well, I have been entrusted with the State Bank, and I shall take care to see that there is money in the bank.”

“As for me, I shall not worry about scholars entering the NTU [the Scientific-Technical Administration of which Kamenev is head]—that is not politics,” said Kamenev. Then they parted.

At the end of December, Zinoviev and Kamenev defined the situation as follows: “We must get to the helm. This can be achieved only by supporting Stalin. Therefore, no hesitation to pay him the full price.” (Poor fellows! They have already paid much but the rudder is still far off.) One of them—Kamenev, I think—approached Ordzhonikidze. They talked a lot about the correctness of the present policy of the Central Committee. Ordzhonikidze approved. When Kamenev declared that he could not understand why they were left in the Centro-Soyuz (where Zinoviev is working), Ordzhonikidze replied, “It is still too soon; the road must be opened. The Right will object.” (And according to the resolution the Right is the principal enemy.) Kamenev said that it was not absolutely necessary to give him a high post, that the simplest thing would be to put him in charge of the Lenin Institute (but that is the main source of the Stalinist falsifications!), that they must be permitted to write for the press, etc. Ordzhonikidze agreed and promised to raise the question in the Politburo.

Three days later Kamenev approached Voroshilov. For two hours he groveled before him and praised the policy of the Central Committee. Voroshilov did not respond with even a word (for which he is to be commended). Two days later Kalinin came to see Zinoviev and stayed for twenty minutes. He brought news of the deportation of Comrade Trotsky. When Zinoviev began to ask for details, he replied that the question was not yet decided and in the meantime it was not worth talking about. When Zinoviev asked about what was happening in Germany, Kalinin replied that he knew nothing: “We are up to our necks in our own affairs.” Later, as if in reply to Kamenev’s visit to Voroshilov, he said literally, “He [Stalin] babbles about left measures, but in a very short time he will be forced to apply a triple dose of my policy. That’s why I support him.” (That is correct! All his life Kalinin has never said and never will say anything more correct and appropriate.)

When the Zinovievists learned of the deportation of Trotsky, they got together. Bakayev insisted that they issue a protest. Zinoviev answered that there was no one to protest to, because
“there is no chief.” (Then to whom does Zinoviev intend to pay the full price?) That is how things were left. The next day Zinoviev went to see Krupskaya and said that he had heard from Kalinin of the exiling of L.D. Krupskaya said that she had heard about it too.

“What do you intend to do with him?” asked Zinoviev.

“Firstly you must not say you, but they, and secondly, even if we decide to protest, who will listen to us?”

Zinoviev told her of Kamenev’s conversation with Ordzhonikidze, of whom Krupskaya said, “Though he cries on everybody’s shoulder, you cannot have any confidence in him.”

Kamenev again met Ordzhonikidze, who told him that he was publishing a work on the struggle against bureaucracy and proposed that Kamenev help him with it. Kamenev agreed with alacrity, whereupon Ordzhonikidze invited him and Zinoviev to his house. During the visit little was said about his work. Ordzhonikidze told them he had raised the question in the Politburo and that Voroshilov had said: “No extension of their rights [that is, of Zinoviev and Kamenev]. Look what they want: the Lenin Institute! If they don’t like the Centro-Soyuz, perhaps they can transfer to some other institution. As for the printing of their articles, that is not forbidden, but that does not mean that everything can be printed.” (Oh, Voroshilov!)

“Well, and what did Stalin say?”

“Stalin said: ‘To extend their rights means to make a bloc. To make a bloc means to share half. I cannot share half. What will the Rights say?’” (But are not the Rights the “main enemy”?)

Kamenev: “Did he say that in the Politburo?”

Ordzhonikidze: “No, that was before the session.”

They left without anything coming of it. Zinoviev wrote a thesis two pages long (since Ordzhonikidze did not help him, a thesis must be written): “The kulak is growing stronger throughout the country, the kulak does not give the workers’ state any bread, the kulak shoots at the village correspondents, at the officials, and kills them. The Bukharin group, with its line, cultivates the kulak; therefore, no support to Bukharin. Today we support the policy of the majority of the Central Committee [the Stalin group], so long as Stalin fights against the Nepman, the kulak, and the bureaucrat.” (So Zinoviev has changed his mind; he no longer wants to pay the full price.)

Kamenev says, “It is impossible to come to an agreement with Stalin; the devil with them all. Eight months from now I will
publish a book on Lenin and then we shall see.” Zinoviev is of a different mind. He says, “We must not be forgotten, we must appear at every meeting, in the press, and so forth; we must knock on every door and push the party to the left.” (In reality no one has done as much harm to the left policy as Zinoviev and Kamenev.) And his articles are really published. After all, the editors of Pravda have adopted the advice of Voroshilov completely. They have again refused to publish one of his articles because it is said to express panic before the kulak. In recent days Zinoviev has appeared at party meetings, in the Centro-Soyuz, in the Plekhanov Institute, and elsewhere, to speak on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Communist International.

After we had published the famous document (the conversation between Kamenev and Bukharin), Kamenev was called to Ordzhonikidze’s, where, after certain reservations (hm! hm!), he confirmed in writing the accuracy of the report. Bukharin was also called to Ordzhonikidze’s and he confirmed it as well. Joint sessions of the Politburo and the presidium of the Central Control Commission were held on January 30 and February 9. The Right declared that the pamphlet was a “Trotskyite trick.” They did not deny the fact of the conversation. They expressed the opinion that “conditions for work are abnormal. Commissars—Krumin, Saveliev, Kaganovich, and others—have been placed over members of the Politburo [Bukharin and Tomsky]. The fraternal parties are led by shouting at them. [Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky have only now noticed that Stalin runs the ‘fraternal parties’ like an old Turkish guardian administered his province. It is no longer even necessary to shout at Thaelmann and Semard; a gesture is enough.] Twelve years after the revolution there is not a single elected secretary of a regional committee. The party has no part in the solution of problems. Everything is done from above.” These words of Bukharin were met with cries: “Where did you copy that? From whom? From Trotsky!” A resolution condemning Bukharin was proposed to the commission. But the Right refused to accept it, motivating their objection with the fact that they were already being “raked over the coals” enough in the districts.

At the joint session of the Politburo and the presidium of the Central Control Commission, Rykov read a long declaration of thirty pages, criticizing the economic situation and the inner-party regime. At the Moscow regional party conference, Rykov, Tomsky, and Bukharin were openly designated as the Right. But
very little was said of this in the press. The plenum of the Central Committee has been postponed to April 16, the conference [Sixteenth Party Conference] to April 23. It has not been possible to arrange a conciliation between Stalin and the Bukharin faction (although rumors to this effect are being insistently spread, doubtlessly in order that the nuclei shall defeat the left wing).
Dear Comrades:

I write to you in order to tell you again that Stalin, Yaroslavsky, and the others are deceiving you. They say that I made use of the bourgeois press in order to carry on a struggle against the Soviet republic, in whose creation and defense I worked hand in hand with Lenin. They are deceiving you. I used the bourgeois press in order to defend the interests of the Soviet republic against the lies, trickery, and perfidy of Stalin and Company.

They ask you to condemn my articles. Have you read them? No, you have not read them. They are giving you a false translation of separate fragments. My articles have been published in the Russian language in a special booklet in exactly the form in which I wrote them. Demand that Stalin reprint them without abbreviations or falsifications. He dare not do it. He fears the truth more than anything else. Here I want to summarize the contents of my articles.

1. In the resolution of the GPU on my deportation, it states that I am conducting “preparations for an armed struggle against the Soviet republic.” In Pravda (number 41, February 19, 1929) the statement about armed struggle was omitted. Why? Why did Stalin not dare repeat in Pravda what was said in the resolution of the GPU? Because he knew that no one would believe him. After the history of the Wrangel officer, after the exposure of the agent provocateur sent by Stalin to the Oppositionists with the proposal of a military plot, no one will believe that the Bolshevik-Leninists, desiring to convince the party of the correctness of their views, are preparing an armed struggle. That is why Stalin did not dare print in Pravda what was stated in the resolution of the GPU of January 18.

But if that is true, why introduce this obvious lie into the
resolution of the GPU? Not for the USSR but for Europe, and for the whole outside world. Through the Tass news agency Stalin daily and systematically cooperated with the bourgeois press of the whole world, propagating his slander against the Bolsheviki-Leninists. Stalin can in no other way explain this banishment and his innumerable arrests, except by accusing the Opposition of preparing an armed struggle. With this monstrous lie he has done enormous harm to the Soviet republic. The whole bourgeois press has discussed the fact that Trotsky, Rakovsky, Smilga, Radek, I.N. Smirnov, Beloborodov, Muralov, Mrachkovsky, and many others who built the Soviet republic and defended it, are now preparing an armed struggle against Soviet power. It is obvious how such an idea must weaken the Soviet republic in the eyes of the whole world. In order to justify his repressions, Stalin is compelled to compose these monstrous legends, doing incalculable harm to Soviet power. That is why I considered it necessary to appear in the bourgeois press and say to the whole world: It is not true that the Opposition intends to wage an armed struggle against Soviet power. The Opposition has waged and will wage a ruthless struggle for Soviet power against all its enemies. This declaration of mine has been printed in newspapers with a circulation of tens of millions in all the languages of the world. It will serve to strengthen the Soviet republic. Stalin wants to strengthen his position at the expense of the Soviet republic. I want to strengthen the Soviet republic by exposing the lies of the Stalinists.

2. Stalin and his press have for a long time been propagating the statement all over the world that I maintain that the Soviet republic has become a bourgeois state, that the proletarian power is wrecked, etc. In Russia, many workers know that this is a vicious slander, that it is built on falsified quotations. I have exposed these falsifications dozens of times in letters which have been circulated from hand to hand. But the outside bourgeois press believes them, or pretends to believe them. All these counterfeit Stalinist quotations appear in the columns of the newspapers of the world as a demonstration of the assertion that Trotsky considers the fall of Soviet power inevitable. Thanks to the enormous interest of international public opinion and especially that of the broad popular masses in what is being created in the Soviet republic, the bourgeois press, impelled by its business interests, its desire for circulation, the demands of its readers, was compelled to print my articles. In those articles I said to the whole world that Soviet power, in spite of the
misleading policies of the Stalin leadership, is deeply rooted in
the masses, is very powerful, and will outlive its enemies.
You must not forget that the overwhelming majority of the
workers in Europe, and especially in America, still read the
bourgeois press. I made it a condition that my articles should be
printed without the slightest change. It is true that certain papers
in a few countries violated this condition, but the majority
fulfilled it. In any case all the papers were compelled to publish
the fact that, in spite of the lies and slanders of the Stalinists,
Trotsky is convinced of the deep inner power of the Soviet regime
and firmly believes that the workers will succeed by peaceful
measures in changing the present false policy of the Central
Committee.
In the spring of 1917 Lenin, imprisoned in Switzerland,
employed a "sealed train" of the Hohenzollerns in order to get to
the Russian workers. The chauvinist press attacked Lenin,
going so far as to call him a German agent and address him as
Herr Lenin. Imprisoned by the Thermidoreans in Constantinople,
I employed the bourgeois press as a sealed train in order to speak
the truth to the whole world. The attacks of the Stalinists against
"Mr. Trotsky," stupid in their intemperance, are nothing but a
repetition of the bourgeois and Social Revolutionary attacks upon
"Herr Lenin." Like Lenin I regard with tranquil contempt the
public opinion of the philistines and bureaucrats whose spirit
Stalin represents.
3. I told in my articles, distorted and falsified by Yaroslavsky,
how, why, and under what circumstances I was banished from
the USSR. The Stalinists are propagating rumors in the
European press to the effect that I was permitted to leave Russia
at my own request. I exposed this lie. I told how I was sent over
the border forcibly after a preliminary agreement between Stalin
and the Turkish police. And here I acted not only in the interests
of my own personal defense against slander, but first of all in the
interests of the Soviet republic. If the Oppositionists really
desired to leave the borders of the Soviet Union, that would be
understood by the whole world as a sign that they considered the
situation of the Soviet government hopeless. We have not the
shadow of such a thought. The Stalinist policies have dealt a
terrible blow not only to the Chinese revolution, the British
working-class movement, and the entire Comintern, but also to
the internal stability of the Soviet regime. That is indisputable.
However, the situation is not in the least hopeless. The
Opposition in no case intends to fly from Soviet Russia. I
categorically refused to cross the border, proposing instead that they should imprison me. The Stalinists did not dare resort to that measure; they were afraid that the workers would insistently demand my liberation. They preferred to make a bargain with the Turkish police, and they transported me to Constantinople by main force. This I explained to the whole world. Every thinking worker will say that if Stalin through Tass daily feeds the bourgeois press with slanders against the Opposition, then I was obliged to publish a refutation of these slanders.

4. In tens of millions of newspapers I told the whole world that it was not the Russian workers who exiled me, nor the Russian peasants, nor the Soviet Red Guards, nor those with whom we conquered power and fought shoulder to shoulder on all fronts in the civil war. It was the bureaucrats who exiled me, people who have got the power into their hands and converted themselves into a bureaucratic caste bound together by a solidarity of privilege. In order to defend the October Revolution, the Soviet republic, and the revolutionary name of the Bolshevik-Leninists, I told the whole world the truth about Stalin and the Stalinists. I reminded them again that Lenin in his maturely considered testament described Stalin as disloyal. That word is understood in all the languages of the world. It means an untrustworthy or dishonest man who is guided in his activities by bad motives, a man whom you cannot trust. That is how Lenin characterized Stalin, and we see again how correct Lenin’s warning was. There is no worse crime for a revolutionist than to deceive his party, to poison the mind of the working class with lies. And that is at present Stalin’s chief occupation. He is deceiving the Comintern and the international working class, attributing to the Opposition counterrevolutionary intentions and activities in relation to Soviet power. Exactly because of his inward inclination to that kind of activity, Lenin called Stalin disloyal. Exactly for that reason, Lenin proposed to the party that Stalin be removed from his post. So much the more necessary now, after all that has happened, to explain to the whole world what Stalin’s disloyalty consists of—that is, his perfidy and dishonesty in relation to the Opposition.

5. The slanderers (Yaroslavsky and the other agents of Stalin) are raising a hullabaloo on the subject of American dollars. Otherwise it would hardly be worthwhile to stoop to this rubbish. But the most vicious bourgeois newspapers take satisfaction in spreading Yaroslavsky’s dirt. In order to leave nothing unclear I will therefore tell you about the dollars.
I gave my articles to an American press agency in Paris. Lenin and I, dozens of times, have given interviews and written expositions of our views on one question or another to such agencies. Thanks to my expulsion and the mysterious circumstances of it, the interest in this matter throughout the world was colossal. The agency counted on a good profit. It offered me half the income. I answered that I personally would not take a cent, but that the agency should deliver, at my direction, a half of its income from my articles, and that with this money I will publish in the Russian language and in foreign languages a whole series of Lenin's writings (his speeches, articles, letters) which are suppressed in the Soviet republic by the Stalinist censorship. I will also use this money to publish a whole series of important party documents (reports of conferences, congresses, letters, articles, etc.) which are concealed from the party because they clearly demonstrate the theoretical and political bankruptcy of Stalin. This is the "counterrevolutionary" (according to Stalin and Yaroslavsky) literature that I intend to publish. An accurate account of the sums expended in this way will be published when the time comes. Every worker will say that it is infinitely better to publish the writings of Lenin with money received in the form of an accidental contribution from the bourgeoisie than to propagate slanders against the Bolshevik-Leninists with money collected from the Russian workers and peasants.

Do not forget, comrades: the testament of Lenin remains as before a counterrevolutionary document in Russia, for the circulation of which you are arrested and exiled. And that is not accidental. Stalin is waging a struggle against Leninism on an international scale. There remains hardly one country in the world where at the head of the Communist Party today stand those revolutionists who led the party in the days of Lenin. They are almost all expelled from the Communist International. Lenin guided the first four congresses of the Comintern. Together with Lenin I drew up all the fundamental documents of the Comintern. At the Fourth Congress, in 1922, Lenin divided equally with me the fundamental report on the New Economic Policy and the perspectives of the international revolution. After the death of Lenin, almost all the participants, at any rate all without exception of the influential participants of the first four congresses, were expelled from the Comintern. Everywhere in the world at the heads of the Communist parties stand new, accidental people, who arrived yesterday from the camp of our
opponents and enemies. In order to adopt an anti-Leninist policy, it was necessary first to overthrow the Leninist leadership. Stalin has done this, relying upon the bureaucracy, upon new petty-bourgeois circles, upon the state apparatus, upon the GPU, and upon the financial resources of the state. This has been carried through not only in the USSR, but also in Germany, in France, in Italy, in Belgium, in the United States, in the Scandinavian countries—in a word, in almost every country in the world.

Only a blind man could fail to understand the meaning of the fact that the closest colleagues and comrades-in-arms of Lenin in the Soviet Communist Party and the whole Comintern, all the leaders of the Communist parties in the first hard years, all the participants and leaders of the first four congresses, almost to a man, have been removed from their posts, slandered, and expelled. This mad struggle against the Leninist leadership was necessary to the Stalinists in order to carry through an anti-Leninist policy.

When they were hounding the Bolshevik-Leninists, they reassured the party by saying that it would now be monolithic. You know that the party is now more divided than ever. And this is not the end. There is no salvation on the Stalinist road. You can adopt either an Ustrialovist policy—that is, a consistently Thermidorean policy—or a Leninist policy. The centrist position of Stalin inevitably leads to an accumulation of enormous economic and political difficulties and to the continual decimation and destruction of the party.

It is still not too late to alter the course. It is necessary to abruptly change the policy and the party regime in the spirit of the Opposition platform. It is necessary to put an end to the shameful persecution of the best revolutionary Leninists in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and in the whole world. It is necessary to restore the Leninist leadership. It is necessary to condemn and root out the disloyal, that is, untrustworthy and dishonest, methods of the Stalin apparatus. The Opposition is ready with all its might to help the proletarian kernel of the party to fulfill this vital task. Rabid persecution, dishonest slanders, and governmental repressions cannot dim our loyalty to the October Revolution or to the international party of Lenin. We will remain true to them both to the end—in the Stalinist prisons and in exile.

With Bolshevik greetings,
Leon Trotsky
Dear Friends,

I am still deprived of opportunity to carry on any kind of systematic work. Up to now I still remain insufficiently acquainted with the publications of the European opposition. I am therefore compelled to postpone a general evaluation of oppositional tendencies to a later time. We are heading for such difficult times that every cothinker, every potential cothinker, is precious to us. It would be an unpardonable mistake to reject a cothinker, all the more so a group of cothinkers, by a careless appraisal, by biased criticism, or by exaggerating differences.

Nevertheless I consider it absolutely necessary to express a few general considerations which are, in my opinion, decisive in evaluating this or that oppositional group or tendency.

The Opposition is now taking shape on the basis of principled ideological demarcation and not on the basis of mass actions. This corresponds to the character of our era. Similar processes occurred within the Russian social democracy during the years of the counterrevolution and within the international social democracy during the war years. Mass actions tend as a rule to wash away secondary and episodic disagreements and to aid the fusion of friendly and close tendencies. Conversely, ideological groupings in a period of stagnation or ebb tide disclose a great tendency toward differentiation, splits, and internal struggles. We cannot leap out of the period in which we live. We must pass through it. A clear, precise ideological differentiation is unconditionally necessary. It prepares future successes.

We have more than once appraised the general line of the Comintern leadership as centrisn. Clearly, centrisn, all the more
so centrist armed with the entire arsenal of repressions, must repel into opposition not only consistently Marxist elements but also the more consistent opportunists.

Communist opportunism expresses itself in the urge to reestablish under present-day conditions the prewar social democracy. This is to be seen with especial clarity in Germany. Today’s social democracy is infinitely removed from Bebel’s party. But history testifies that Bebel’s party became converted into the present-day social democracy. This means that Bebel’s party had already become absolutely inadequate in the prewar epoch. All the more hopeless is the attempt to reconstitute Bebel’s party, or even a left wing of this party, under the existing conditions. Yet, so far as I am able to judge, the efforts of Brandler, Thalheimer, and their friends are aimed in this direction. In France Souvarine is apparently pulling in the same direction, even if less consistently.

I consider that there are three classic questions which provide the decisive criterion for evaluating tendencies in world communism. These questions are: 1) the policy of the Anglo-Russian Committee; 2) the course of the Chinese revolution; 3) the economic policy of the USSR, in conjunction with the theory of socialism in one country.

Some comrades may be astonished that I omit reference here to the question of the party regime. I do so not out of oversight, but deliberately. A party regime has no independent, self-sufficient meaning. In relation to party policy it is a derivative magnitude. The most heterogeneous elements sympathize with the struggle against Stalinist bureaucratism. The Mensheviks, too, are not averse to applauding this or that attack by us against the bureaucracy. This supplies the basis, incidentally, for the silly charlatanism of the Stalinists, who try to draw a close resemblance between our policy and that of the Mensheviks. For a Marxist, democracy within a party or within a country is not an abstraction. Democracy is always conditioned by the struggle of living forces. By bureaucratism, the opportunist elements in part and as a whole understand revolutionary centralism. Obviously, they cannot be our cothinkers. A semblance of solidarity stems here from ideological confusion or most frequently from malicious speculation.

1. On the Anglo-Russian Committee I have written a great deal. I don’t know how much has been published abroad. I am informed that rumors have been circulated abroad to the effect
that I opposed the breakup of the Anglo-Russian Committee and yielded only to the pressure of Zinoviev and Kamenev. As a matter of fact, just the opposite is true. The Stalinist policy on the Anglo-Russian question is a classic example of the policy of *centrism sliding to the right*, holding the stirrups for outright betrayers and receiving only kicks and blows in return. For a European Communist, there are great difficulties in the Chinese and Russian questions, owing to the peculiar conditions in China and Russia. It is otherwise with the question of the political bloc with the leaders of the British trade unions. Here we have a basic problem of *European politics*. The Stalinist course on this question constitutes the most flagrant, cynical, and ruinous violation of the principles of Bolshevism and the theoretical ABC of Marxism. The experience of the Anglo-Russian Committee has reduced almost to zero the educational value of the great strikes of 1926 and has retarded for years the development of the British labor movement. Whoever has still failed to understand this is not a Marxist, not a revolutionary politician of the proletariat. The protests of such an individual against Stalinist bureaucracy are of no value in my eyes. The opportunist course of the Anglo-Russian Committee could be carried out only in struggle against the genuine revolutionary elements of the working class. And this is, in its turn, inconceivable without the use of coercion and repression, especially in a party with such a revolutionary past as the Bolshevik Party.

2. On the *Chinese question* I also wrote a great deal in the last two years. I shall perhaps succeed in gathering all these writings into a single volume. The study of the problems of the Chinese revolution is a necessary condition for the education of the Opposition and the ideological demarcation within its ranks. Those elements who have failed to take a clear and precise position on this question reveal thereby a national narrowness which is in itself an unmistakable symptom of opportunism.

3. Finally, the *Russian question*. Because of the conditions created by the October Revolution the three classic tendencies in socialism—1) the Marxist tendency; 2) the centrist tendency; and 3) the opportunist tendency—are most clearly and precisely expressed under the Soviet conditions, i.e., filled with the most incontestable social content. In the USSR we see a *right wing* which is tied up with the skilled intelligentsia and the petty proprietors; the *center* which balances itself between the classes on the tightrope of the apparatus, and the *left wing* which
Groupings in the Communist Opposition

represents the vanguard of the proletarian vanguard in the epoch of reaction. Naturally, I do not mean to say by this that the left wing is free from mistakes or that we can get along without serious, open internal criticism. But this criticism must have a clear class basis, i.e., it must rest on one of the above three historical tendencies. Attempts to deny the existence of these tendencies and their class character, attempts to rise above them, will unfailingly end in a miserable shipwreck. This path is most frequently taken by rightist elements who are not yet self-conscious or who are interested in keeping their own left wing from being scared off prematurely.

So far as I know, Brandler and Thalheimer have all these years considered as absolutely correct the policy of the Central Committee of the CPSU on economic questions. That's how matters stood until the zigzag to the left. In the very nature of things they must now sympathize with the program which was openly pursued in 1924-27 and which is now represented by the wing of Rykov, Bukharin, and others. Souvarine apparently also inclines in the same direction.

I cannot of course raise here in its full scope the economic question of the USSR. The statements in our platform retain their full force. It would be quite fruitful if the Right Opposition gave a clear and precise criticism of our platform on this question. In order to facilitate this work, let me advance here a few basic considerations.

The Rights believe that if the individual peasant enterprises were given more elbowroom, the current difficulties could be overcome. I do not undertake to deny this. Staking everything on the capitalist farmer (a Europeanized or Americanized "kulak") will undoubtedly yield its fruits, but these will be capitalist fruits, which would in one of the very next stages lead to the political collapse of Soviet power. In 1924-26 only the first steps were taken toward staking everything on the capitalist farmer. Nevertheless this led to an extreme growth of the self-assertion of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, to its seizure of many lower soviets, to the growth of the power and self-confidence of the bureaucracy, to increased pressure upon the workers, and to the complete suppression of party democracy. Those who do not understand the interdependence of these facts are generally able to understand nothing in revolutionary policy. The course toward the capitalist farmer is absolutely incompatible with the dictatorship of the proletariat. Here one must choose.
Let us, however, take the purely economic aspect of the question. Between industry and peasant economy there is dialectic interaction. But the driving force is industry, as the far more dynamic factor. The peasant needs manufactured goods in return for grain. The democratic revolution under the leadership of the Bolsheviks gave land to the peasants. The socialist revolution under the same leadership still gives the peasants less goods and at higher prices than did capitalism in its time. Precisely for this reason, the socialist revolution, in contrast with its democratic basis, remains under threat. To the scarcity of manufactured goods the peasant responds by a passive agricultural strike; he does not bring the grain in his possession to the market, nor does he increase his acreage. The Rights hold it necessary to give greater leeway to capitalist tendencies in the village, to take less from it, and to lower the tempo of industrial growth. But after all this means that the quantity of agricultural commodities on the market would increase while the quantity of manufactured commodities would decrease still further. The disproportion between the two, which is at the bottom of the current economic crisis, would become even greater. A possible way out would be to export the farmer's grain and to import in exchange for it European manufactured goods for the farmer, i.e., for the well-to-do peasant. In other words, instead of a smychka (a linking together) between the cooperative peasant economy and socialist industry this means the establishment of a smychka between an export farmer economy and world capitalism. The state becomes converted not into a builder of socialist economy but into an intermediary between domestic and world capitalism. Needless to say, both of these contractors would very quickly elbow the intermediary aside, beginning of course with the monopoly of foreign trade. For the free development of a farmer economy, receiving from abroad what it requires in exchange for grain exports, presupposes a free circulation of commodities and not a foreign circulation monopolized by the state.

The Rights sometimes say that Stalin has applied the platform of the Opposition and has demonstrated its inadequacy. The truth is that Stalin became frightened when he bumped his empiric forehead against the consequences of the "farmer" (kulak) course, which he so blindly fostered in 1924-27. The truth is that in executing a leap to the left, Stalin made use of slivers of the Opposition's program. The platform of the Opposition excludes first of all the course toward a shut-in, isolated economy.
It is absurd to try to separate the Soviet economy from the world market by a brick wall. The fate of the Soviet economy (including agriculture) will be decided by the general *tempo* of its development, and not at all by its degree of “independence” from the world division of labor. All the economic plans of the Stalinist leadership have been up to now built on the *reduction of foreign trade* in the course of the next five to ten years. This cannot be called anything except petty-bourgeois cretinism. The Opposition has nothing in common with such an approach. But this approach does flow from the theory of socialism in one country.

Stalin’s attempt to increase industrialization brings him outwardly closer to the Opposition. But only outwardly. Socialist industrialization presupposes a vast and thoroughly thought-out plan in which the direction of internal development is tied up closely with an ever-growing utilization of the world market and with an irreconcilable defense of the monopoly of foreign trade. Only in this way is it possible not to liquidate or remove but only to soften the contradictions of socialist development in a capitalist encirclement; only in this way is it possible to strengthen the economic power of the Soviet republic, improve the economic relationships between city and country, and reinforce the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Such are the three basic criteria for the internal demarcation of the Opposition. These three criteria are taken from the living experience of three countries. Naturally, each of the backward countries has its own peculiar problems and the attitude towards them will determine the position of every single group and every individual communist. Some of these new questions can tomorrow come to the forefront and push all others aside. But *today* the three cited questions seem to me decisive. Without taking a clear and precise position on these questions, it is impossible to find one’s place among the three basic groupings of communism.

That is all I am able to say now about the questions you raise. Should it turn out that because of my inadequate knowledge of available literature I failed to understand Brandler, Souvarine, and their cothinkers, then I will naturally make haste to introduce into my appraisal such corrections as flow from those facts and documents which are called to my attention.

L. Trotsky
Dear Comrades,

Two irreconcilably opposed tendencies are usually listed under the label of opposition: the revolutionary tendency and the opportunist tendency. A hostile attitude toward centrism and toward the "regime" is the only thing they have in common. But this is a purely negative bond. Our struggle against centrism derives from the fact that centrism is semi-opportunist and covers up full-blown opportunism, despite temporary and sharp disagreements with the latter. For this reason there cannot even be talk of a bloc between the Left Opposition and the Right Opposition. This requires no commentary.

But this does not mean that only opportunist elements have rallied to the banner of the Right Opposition, or that all of them are hopeless. Political groupings do not arise at a single stroke. In the early stages there always are many misunderstandings. Workers who are dissatisfied with party policy quite often find doors very different from the ones they looked for. This must especially be borne in mind with regard to Czechoslovakia, where the Communist Party is passing through a very acute crisis. My unfamiliarity with the Czech language has unfortunately prevented me from following the internal life of the Czechoslovak party. But I do not doubt that the so-called Right Opposition embraces today many different moods and tendencies which will begin crystallizing only in the near future. The direction of this crystallization depends in a large measure upon the activity of the Leninist wing.

Such an appraisal has nothing in common with Souvarine's viewpoint which denies altogether the existence of principled—
that is, class—tendencies within communism. No, the existence of the right, the center, and the left is a fact corroborated by great, world-historic events. Those who ignore the existence of these tendencies and the irreconcilable struggle between them fall into hopeless doctrinairism and at the same time cover up the rightist tendency, which serves as a direct bridge to the social democracy.

A clear Marxist demarcation of these three tendencies does not, however, demand that we look upon these tendencies as finished or ossified. Not a few personal regroupments will take place. Broad circles of workers who gravitate toward communism have not yet begun to crystallize; because of tradition they remain in the old frameworks or they fall into indifference.

There are many indications that all the parties of the Communist International are approaching a critical moment. The existing factions in communism are only preparatory in character. They are the instruments for more profound groupings within the Communist parties and the working class as a whole. For this reason, in particular, the active intervention of the Leninist Opposition in the internal life of the Czechoslovak Communist Party is of enormous significance.

However, the Left Opposition is itself far from unanimous. In almost every country there are two and even three groups that proclaim their solidarity with the Left Opposition of the CPSU. This is a reaction to the insane and criminal regime established in the Communist International since the autumn of 1923 and which has aimed to transform the world party of the proletariat into a caricature jesuitical order. All the sicknesses which have been driven internally are now coming to the surface. Aiding this is the environment of political reaction not only in the capitalist world but also in the USSR.

There is of course nothing gratifying in the fact that the Left Opposition is split into several groups. But facts must be taken as they are. If the reasons for the division are understood, then it will be possible to find the ways to surmount it.

The unity of the Opposition cannot be obtained by abstract sermons on unity or by mere organizational combinations. Unity must be prepared theoretically and politically. This preparation must make clear which groups and elements really stand on common grounds and those which list themselves among the Opposition only out of misunderstanding.

The platform is, or rather ought to be, the most important
criterion. This criterion will be the more reliable, all the more each group, independently of its present strength, draws effective political conclusions in day-to-day struggles. I have in mind first of all the national platform. For unless the Opposition constantly intervenes in the life of the proletariat and the life of the country, it must inescapably remain a barren sect. At the same time, however, it is necessary also to elaborate an international platform of the Opposition, which will serve as a bridge to a future program of the Communist International. For it is absolutely self-evident that the regenerated Communist International will require a new program. It can be prepared only by the Opposition. This must be undertaken right away.

Indisputably, the questions of the policy of the CPSU, the Chinese revolution, and the Anglo-Russian Committee are the three basic criteria for the internal groupings in communism, and consequently in the Opposition as well. Of course, this does not mean that correct answers to these three questions alone suffice for us. Life does not stop. One must keep in step with it. But without a correct answer to the three foregoing questions it is impossible today to hold a correct position on any other question. In the same way, without a correct understanding of the 1905 revolution it was impossible to have a correct approach either to the problems of the epoch of reaction or to the revolution of 1917. He is hopelessly lost who sidesteps the lessons of the Chinese revolution, the lessons of the British strikes and the Anglo-Russian Committee. The great lessons of these events must be assimilated precisely in order to take a correct position on all the issues of proletarian life and struggle.

The instrument for elaborating the international platform must be an international organ of the Opposition, appearing at first as a monthly or biweekly. Today this is the most unpostponable and urgent task. This organ under a firm and unswervingly principled editorial board should be in the beginning open to all groups which consider themselves in the Left Opposition or which are trying to draw close to it. The task of this organ is not to shore up old barriers but to expedite a regroupment of forces on a much broader basis. If the division within the Left Opposition cannot as yet be overcome within the national framework, then we can already today prepare to overcome it on an international plane.

Given a clear and precise line by the editorial board, such a periodical should also have a department devoted to free
discussion. In particular, this organ must exercise international control over differences of opinion among the various national groups of the Left Opposition. Such careful and conscientious control will enable us to separate actual disagreements from fictitious ones, and to unite the revolutionary Marxists, sifting out the alien elements.

Because of its purpose this periodical must appear in several world languages. This will hardly be possible for us in the immediate future and a practical compromise will be necessary. Articles might be printed in the language of a country that is directly involved, or in the language in which these articles are written. The most important articles might be accompanied by brief digests in other languages. Finally, national organs of the Opposition might print translations of the most important articles in their columns.76

Some comrades say and write that the Russian Opposition is doing too little in the way of the organizational leadership of the international Left Opposition. I believe that behind this reproach there lurks a dangerous tendency. We are not preparing to reproduce in our international faction the morals and methods of the Zinovievist and Stalinist Comintern. Revolutionary cadres in each country must take shape on the basis of their own experiences and they must stand on their own feet. The Russian Opposition has at its disposal—today one might almost say that this is fortunate—notwithstanding its financial resources. It is solely and exclusively a question of ideological influence, interchange of experiences. Given a correct international leadership of the faction, this can naturally lead to a rapid growth of the Opposition in each country. But each national section must seek for the sources of its influence and strength not above but below, among its own workers, by rallying the youth to its side, by tireless, energetic, and truly self-sacrificing work.

G. Gourov [Leon Trotsky]
WHAT WE INTEND TO PUBLISH FIRST

March 1929

The press has already made it known that Comrade Trotsky has established a fund for the publication of works by Lenin and important party documents whose publication is forbidden in the Soviet Union by the Stalin apparatus and punished as a "counterrevolutionary" crime. Here is a list of the works that will appear first. This is by no means a complete list. But we hope to be able to complete it in the very near future.

1. Proceedings of the Bolshevik Party Conference in March 1917. This is a historic document of immeasurable importance. It portrays the positions of Stalin, Molotov, Rykov, and others among the present leadership on the eve of Lenin's arrival in Russia. These proceedings contain an unpublished speech by Lenin delivered on the day of his arrival at the last session of the conference. In this speech Lenin adopted an intransigent stance against the conference, threatening to break with its leaders, i.e., Stalin, Rykov, Kamenev, and others. In the years 1923-27, Stalin repeated almost literally all of the arguments he had developed during the March Conference in order to defend an opportunist political line and applied them to the German revolution, the Anglo-Russian Committee, and the Chinese revolution. Thus one can clearly see the enormous theoretical and political interest of this document from the historic past of our Russian party.

2. Proceedings of the November 1, 1917, meeting of the Petrograd Committee. This meeting was devoted to the question of the coalition with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. Lenin and Trotsky spoke at this meeting. The proceedings contain the stenogram of a speech by Lenin of programmatic importance and
catch the essence of two key speeches by Trotsky. It was in this very speech of Lenin's that he stated there has been "no better Bolshevik" than Trotsky. These proceedings had already been set in type, but then, on Stalin's orders, they were removed from the volume of proceedings of the Petrograd Committee for the year 1917. We have in our possession the corrected proofs with annotations by the leaders of the Bureau of Party History. We hope to publish a photographic reproduction of this remarkable document, which has been maliciously concealed from the International.

3. Proceedings of the Conference of Military Delegates to the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party. This conference was devoted to a discussion of the fundamental questions of military policy and organization of the Red Army. Opponents of Trotsky's policy line, directed from the wings by Stalin, subjected the military leadership to severe criticism. At the time, Trotsky was at the front. Lenin intervened in order to resolutely defend Trotsky's military policy. All this adequately explains why the proceedings of this historic session are hidden both from the International and the CPSU.

4. Correspondence of Lenin, Trotsky, and others active in military work during the civil war—and after it, on economic questions, etc. Although Lenin's notes and rough drafts of an incidental character, which are often devoid of political importance, are published, his letters from the time of the civil war are carefully hidden from the party because, on the basis of these letters, one could determine with certainty the relative importance and political role of many of the present leaders. There are countless letters of this sort. We hope to publish several hundred of them in the very near future as well as Lenin's notes and telegrams, along with the necessary commentary.

5. Lenin's letters on the nationalities question, directed against Stalin's national policy.

6. Lenin's letters on the questions of the monopoly of foreign trade, the State Planning Commission (Gosplan), etc. All of these letters are either clearly directed against Stalin's political line, or else strike at the roots of the legends about "Trotskyism" created by Stalin.

7. Speeches and fragments of speeches by delegates to the Fifteenth Congress, censored from the proceedings by the Stalinists for the simple reason that the majority of these speeches constitute a total justification (devastating to Stalin) of the cor-
rectness of the Opposition’s point of view on the Chinese question and others.


These are the first of our projected publications. They will run to several hundred pages. But this is only the beginning. From friends in the USSR we hope to receive supplementary documents, which we will discuss in due time. These publications will appear in Russian and in the principal languages of the world.
COMMUNISTS AND
THE BOURGEOIS PRESS

March 1929

First of all it is necessary to recall that the general problem of writing for the bourgeois press has its origin in the fact that a wide layer of the more poorly paid journalists, disgruntled at being exploited, are attracted to the Socialist Party, and sometimes even to the Communist Party. Forced to adapt themselves, in their work for the bourgeois press, to the views of their publishers and the tastes of the public, elements of this sort live double lives, and bring duplicity and outright moral corruption into the ranks of the proletarian party. From this there follows an imperative necessity to protect the party from contamination by the hired journalists of the bourgeoisie—people who by virtue of their adaptability and agility easily take over responsible positions in the proletarian party, crowding out the workers, but who at moments of crisis invariably reveal their lack of firmness and betray the cause of the proletariat. Such are the real social bases underlying the question of collaboration with the bourgeois press; and it is in this way that the problem actually arises.

It does not follow from this, however, that one can or ought to erect impenetrable barriers between the proletarian party and the bourgeois press under any and all conditions. It is enough to cite several of the most striking historical facts in this regard from the rich store of the past. Marx wrote regularly for the New York Tribune. Engels contributed a number of articles to the English bourgeois press. Lenin wrote an article on Marx and Marxism for the Liberal-Populist publication Granat's Encyclopedic Dictionary. Trotsky, with the consent of the Politburo, wrote an article on Lenin in 1926 for the reactionary Encyclopedia Britannica. None of these cases have anything in common with the kind of
work for the bourgeois press in which the Communist is forced to play a part, dissemble, deny one's convictions, or endure insults against one's own party, silently submitting to the publishers and blending indistinguishably with them.

In the first stages of a revolutionary movement, especially when the proletarian party does not yet have an influential press of its own, it may become politically necessary for Marxists to write for the bourgeois press. In China, for example, even though the Communist Party's long stay in the Kuomintang had disastrous consequences for the revolution and the party, nevertheless properly organized contributions to the left Kuomintang publications by Chinese Communists could have had very significant propaganda value.

The same could be said of India, where the formation of "worker-and-peasant" (in fact, bourgeois) parties of the Kuomintang variety paves the way for defeats of the most terrible kind for the proletariat. Even so, total and unconditional independence for the Indian Communist Party does not rule out revolutionary agreements with other mass organizations or the utilization of national-democratic newspapers by Marxists—under supervision by the party.

How is this problem solved by the European Communist parties today? It has been stood on its head. Although Communists may not be writing for bourgeois publications today, the Communist publications are for the most part run by second-rate bourgeois journalists. The explanation for this is that the apparatus of the press and party, materially independent of the party membership itself, has grown to monstrous proportions upon a narrow internal, organizational base and now not only provides employment for the Communist journalists already at hand but also attracts bourgeois journalists, most often incompetents who are unable to make successful careers in the capitalist press. In particular, this explains the extremely low level of the Communist party press, its lack of principles, the absence of any independent views or individual merit in it, and its readiness at any moment to call black white and vice versa.

In this area, as in others, the Western Communist parties suffer not so much from the difficulties intrinsic to revolutionary parties of the proletariat in capitalist countries as from the ills that the Communist Party of the USSR had to combat only after winning power (careerism, the assumption of protective coloration by enemies of the revolution, etc.). Without having power, the West-
ern Communist parties have the disorders that afflict ruling parties—reflecting those of the Stalinized CPSU.

The Opposition finds itself in an altogether exceptional situation. It is the immediate and direct representative today of only a small minority of the working class. It does not have any mass organizations or government resources behind it. At the same time, the Opposition still has its moral authority among the masses and its ideological capital, because, in every country, the Opposition includes elements that led the Comintern during the period of its first four congresses, and in the Soviet republic includes those who, side by side with Lenin, founded and led that republic.

The Opposition is mechanically cut off from the broad masses by the Stalinist repressive apparatus, which makes use of the victories of the world bourgeoisie over the proletariat and the pressures of the new propertied elements in the USSR for this purpose.

If we leave aside certain isolated and ambiguous statements in the democratic and social democratic press about the deportations of Oppositionists, etc., if we take the overall evaluation of the struggle between the Opposition, the centrists, and the right wing made by the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois press, a very clear picture emerges. According to its custom, the bourgeois press translates this struggle over principles into the language of personalities and says: Stalin is unquestionably right against Trotsky, and Rykov is probably right against Stalin. But that is not all. During all these years of struggle, the bourgeois press has used the terminology of the Stalinist press to characterize the Opposition (robbing the peasant, restoring War Communism,\(^52\) trying to start a war or provoke revolutionary adventures, refusing to defend the USSR, and, finally, preparing for armed struggle against Soviet power). Pretending to believe this slander, the bourgeois press skillfully uses it to fight against communism in general and against its most resolute and uncompromising wing, the Opposition, in particular. Tens of millions of workers throughout the world have had this slander, fabricated by the Stalin faction, passed on to them through the pages of the bourgeois and social democratic press.

It is an elementary historical fact that the Stalin faction has collaborated closely with the world bourgeoisie and its press in the struggle against the Opposition. This collaboration could be seen especially plainly in the case of Trotsky's deportation to
Turkey and Stalin's agreement with the most reactionary elements in the German government on not allowing Trotsky to enter Germany. Let us note at this point that the most "left wing" of the Social Democrats agree (verbally) to let Trotsky be admitted to Germany—on the condition that he refrain from political activity; that is, they impose the same demand upon him that Stalin did at Alma-Ata. As for England and France, even without a formal agreement Stalin could count on support from their governments and such organs of the press as Le Temps and The Times, which categorically opposed admitting Trotsky. In other words, Stalin had a *de jure* agreement with the Turkish police and part of the German government and a *de facto* agreement with the bourgeois police of the world. The substance of this agreement is: to seal the lips of the Opposition. The bourgeois press, regardless of certain isolated and episodic exceptions, fundamentally gives its blessings to this agreement. That is essentially the lineup of forces. Only the blind could fail to see it. Only well-paid bureaucrats could deny it.

There is an obstacle preventing this united front from achieving full success in its aim of condemning the Opposition to silence, however—that is the fact, as we have mentioned, that the Opposition is headed, in many countries, especially in the USSR, by revolutionists who are known to broad masses of working people and whose ideas, politics, and destinies these masses have a sincere interest in. Added to this is the element of political sensation created by the dramatic forms in which the struggle against the Opposition has been carried out. These circumstances give the Opposition an opportunity on certain occasions to crack the united front between the Stalinist press and the bourgeois press. Thus, the deportation of Comrade Trotsky gave him the chance to state, through the pages of the bourgeois press numbering millions of copies, that the Opposition is fighting against Stalinist national socialism and for the cause of international revolution; that the Opposition will be in the front ranks defending the USSR against its class enemies; and that the accusation of preparing for an armed uprising against Soviet power or of terrorist assassination attempts is nothing but a foul Bonapartist machination.

It would of course be absurd to argue that the Opposition, even on a single occasion, could present its actual program in full in the pages of the bourgeois press. But it is a major gain just to have refuted the most poisonous of the Thermidorean lies in
publications circulating in tens of millions of copies, and thereby to have encouraged a certain number of the workers who read these articles to find out for themselves the genuine views of the Opposition. To have rejected such an exceptional opportunity would have been foolish and pathetic doctrinairism. The charge of collaboration with the bourgeois press is not only obscene; it is simply stupid, coming from those who turn Oppositionists over to the bourgeois police.

There is no need to repeat or elaborate upon the fact that it is now more important than ever for the Opposition to establish, strengthen, and develop its own press, and not only to link this press as closely as possible with the revolutionary vanguard of the working class but to make it organizationally and financially dependent on that vanguard as well. In this work we cannot allow even a hint of the habits and practices of the social democratic and semiofficial Stalinist presses, which settle matters by salary and career considerations. The revolutionary commitment and ideological toughness of the editors and staff of the Opposition press must be constantly verified in the strictest possible way.

Individual instances of collaboration with the bourgeois press, which by their very nature can only be episodic and of secondary significance, must be under the strict supervision of the Opposition, organized on a national and international scale. Creating this kind of an organization is the central task of the moment. Only if this is accomplished will we be able to speak seriously about saving the Comintern, which is falling apart under the centrists and right-wing Communists, or of reviving and strengthening it under the banner of Marx and Lenin.
Many reporters have already come to question me about my plans and intentions. Since it is physically and materially impossible for me to grant so many interviews, I ask them to take note of the following:

In the immediate future I will remain in Constantinople, since the government of Turkey is creating no obstacle to my remaining.

Although this has not been requested of me, I declared that I did not wish to involve myself in the internal affairs of the country. For its part, the government has done everything possible to facilitate my stay in Turkey.

I am spending my time preparing several books for publication in German, French, and American editions. Some of them, like my autobiography and Lenin and the Epigones, are new works. Others have already appeared in Russia and need to be translated and adapted for European and American readers.

Because Stalin has held my former assistants in internal exile, despite his official promise to allow them to join me in Turkey, I have had to obtain new assistants who are sufficiently qualified for the work, with the help of the publishers involved.

I intend to establish residence with my family and my coworkers in the Constantinople area in order to devote myself peacefully to my work.

To the question of whether I will go to some European country for the medical attention I need, my reply is that the immediate prospects seem to be somewhat dimmed by the attitude of the Social Democratic government of Germany, which found it necessary to consider the matter for two months only to reply in
the negative. I believe that an openly bourgeois government would not have proven so disturbed or so indecisive. My experience in government had already taught me that in practical questions—both large and small—it is better to deal with the boss than with his agents. Nevertheless, I hope that there will be some government in Europe that will permit me to enjoy the democratic right of asylum, even if only for medical treatment.

The question of my return to Russia continues to be posed in the same terms. I am always at the disposal of the Soviet republic and the October Revolution, and my adversaries understand, as well as my friends do, that my exile cannot be permanent.
A LESSON IN DEMOCRACY
I DID NOT RECEIVE

The Story of a Visa

April 22, 1929

I have already related, in my articles for the world press, the fact that after I emphatically refused to go to Turkey, the train carrying me toward Odessa was held over en route for twelve days and that during this time, according to Bulanov, the GPU representative in charge, the Soviet government tried to obtain for me the right to enter Germany. In expectation of a favorable reply and with the object of avoiding further delays, the GPU even worked out the route by which I would supposedly travel to Berlin. On February 8, I was informed that this entire plan had fallen through, owing to the unyielding resistance of the German government. Such at any rate was the understanding of the matter with which I arrived in Constantinople. Here, in one of the Berlin papers, I read the speech of the president of the Reichstag, delivered on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Weimar National Assembly. It closed with these words: “Vielleicht kommen wir sogar dazu, Herrn Trotzki das freiheitliche Asyl zu geben. (Lebhafter Beifall bei der Mehrheit.) [Perhaps we shall even arrive at the point of granting Mr. Trotsky the democratic right of asylum. (Vigorous applause from the majority.)]”

The statement by the president of the German Reichstag had been preceded by a semiofficial report in the German press to the effect that actually the Soviet government had not applied for a visa for Trotsky. Loebe’s words were a complete surprise to me, since everything that had gone before had given me reason to believe that the German government had decided the question of my admission to Germany in the negative. Such at any rate had been the categorical assertion of the agents of the Soviet government. If it had not been for Loebe’s speech I would naturally not
have applied to the German government, only to receive a certain refusal. It is too obvious that such a refusal would quickly be turned into a "precedent," making it easier for other governments to refuse me in turn. But there before me lay Loebe's speech, which put the whole question in a new light.

On February 15, I called in the GPU representative who had escorted me to Constantinople and said to him: "I must draw the conclusion that the information given me was false. Loebe's speech was made on February 6. We sailed from Odessa for Turkey only on the night of February 10. Consequently, Loebe's speech was known to Moscow at the time. I recommend that you telegraph Moscow at once suggesting that on the strength of Loebe's speech they make an actual request that Berlin grant me a visa. That would be the least discreditable way of winding up the intrigue that Stalin has apparently built up around the question of my admission to Germany."

Two days later the GPU representative brought me the following reply: "In answer to my telegram to Moscow, I have had confirmation that the German government categorically refused a visa for you as early as the beginning of February. A new application would be pointless. As for Loebe's speech, it was simply irresponsible in character. If you wish to verify this, you can apply for a visa yourself."

This version did not seem credible to me. I judged that the president of the Reichstag ought to know the intentions of his own party and government better than the agents of the GPU did. The same day I wired Loebe to inform him that on the strength of his statement I was applying to the German consulate for a visa. The democratic and social democratic press took great satisfaction in pointing out for all to see that a believer in revolutionary dictatorship was now obliged to seek asylum in a democratic country. Some even expressed the hope that this lesson would teach me to value the institutions of democracy more highly. Nothing remained but for me to wait and see how this lesson would work out in practice.

Meanwhile, of course, I could not allow any ambiguity or lack of clarity on the question of my attitude toward democracy. I supplied the necessary explanations on this point to a representative of the German social democratic press who called on me. These I will quote in the form in which I wrote them down immediately after the interview:

"As I am now applying for admission to Germany, where the
majority of the government consists of Social Democrats, I am chiefly interested in making clear my attitude toward the social democracy. Obviously on this question nothing has changed. My attitude toward the social democracy remains what it was. Moreover, my struggle against the centrist faction of Stalin is only a reflection of my general struggle against the social democracy. Neither you nor I have any need of vagueness or of leaving things unsaid.

"Some social democratic publications are trying to find a contradiction between the principles I hold in regard to democracy and my application for admission to Germany, i.e., to a democratic republic. There is no contradiction here. We do not at all 'deny' democracy as the anarchists 'deny' it (verbally). Bourgeois democracy has advantages in comparison with the forms of the state that preceded it. But it is not eternal. It must give way to socialist society. And the bridge to socialist society is the dictatorship of the proletariat.

"In all capitalist countries, communists take part in the parliamentary struggle. Making use of the right of asylum does not differ in principle in any way from the utilization of the right to vote, of freedom of the press and assembly, and so on.

"You are interested in my struggle for democracy in the party, the trade unions, and the soviets. Social democratic publications have from time to time attempted to portray this as a step toward bourgeois democracy on my part. This is a monumental misunderstanding, the roots of which are not hard to disclose. The social democratic formula of today goes like this: 'Stalin is right against Trotsky; Bukharin is right against Stalin.' The social democracy stands for the restoration of capitalism in Russia. But one can take this road only by pushing the proletarian vanguard into the background and suppressing its independent activity and critical voice. Stalin's regime is the necessary result of his political line. Since social democracy approves of Stalin's economic policy, it ought to reconcile itself to his political methods as well. It is unworthy of a Marxist to speak of democracy in general.' Democracy has a class content. If a policy aimed at restoring capitalism is what is needed, then that is incompatible with democracy for the ruling proletarian class.

"An actual transition back to capitalism could only be secured through the dictatorial power of the bourgeoisie. It is ridiculous to demand the restoration of capitalism and at the same time to sigh for democracy. That is sheer fantasy."
I do not know whether this interview ever appeared in the German social democratic press. Apparently not. I am also unaware of what effect it had on the voting of the social democratic ministers. At any rate, the democratic right of asylum, as I understand it, does not consist in a government's allowing people to enter its territory only if they hold views similar to its own. Even Nicholas II and Sultan Abdul Hamid\textsuperscript{86} did that. Nor does it consist in a democracy's admitting exiles only with the permission of the government that exiled them. The right of asylum (on paper) consists in a government's giving refuge even to its opponents, provided they undertake to observe the country's laws. I of course could enter Germany only as an irreconcilable opponent of the Social Democratic government.

The defense of my interests vis-a-vis the German government was taken up by a lawyer, Kurt Rosenfeld\textsuperscript{87}, a left Social Democrat by party membership. He did this on his own initiative, out of ideological conviction, and without any profit to himself. I gratefully accepted the services he offered, regardless of his membership in the Social Democratic Party.

I received from Dr. Rosenfeld a telegram asking what restrictions I would agree to abide by during my stay in Germany. I replied: "I intend to live in complete isolation, outside of Berlin; not to speak at public meetings under any circumstances; and to confine myself to literary work within the bounds of German law."

Thus it was no longer a question of the democratic right of asylum but of the right to reside in Germany on an exceptional basis. The lesson in democracy that my opponents were going to accord me was given a restrictive interpretation from the very outset. But this was not the end of it. A few days later I received another telegraphic inquiry: Would I agree to come to Germany only for purposes of medical treatment? I wired in reply:

"I request that I be given at least the opportunity to stay in Germany for a course of treatment absolutely necessary for my health."

Thus the right of asylum at this stage had shrunk to the right of treatment. I named several well-known German physicians who had treated me during the previous ten years, whose aid I now needed more than ever before. Members of the German press in Constantinople seemed to think that my admission was assured. As we shall see, I regarded the question less optimistically, but nevertheless I did not consider success ruled out.
Toward Easter, the German press sounded a new note: in government circles, it was stated, the opinion was held that Trotsky was *not really so ill* as to absolutely require the help of German doctors and German health resorts. On March 31, I telegraphed Dr. Rosenfeld:

"According to the newspaper reports, my illness is not sufficiently hopeless to obtain my admission to Germany. I wonder whether Loebe offered me the *right of asylum* or the *right of interment*? I am willing to submit to any examination by any medical commission. I undertake to leave Germany at the close of the health-resort season."

Thus, in the course of a few weeks, the democratic principle was three times truncated. The right of asylum was at first reduced to the right of residence on a specially restricted basis, then to the right of treatment, and finally, to the right of interment. But this meant that I could appreciate the advantages of democracy in full measure only as a corpse.

Earlier, on March 19, in a letter to Dr. Rosenfeld, I had, among other things, written the following:

"Allow me to inform you briefly—as the representative of my interests, and not as a member of the Social Democratic Party—how I view the situation. Prompted by Loebe's speech, I applied to the German government a month ago. There is still no answer. Stalin apparently arranged matters with Stresemann in such a way that I would not be admitted to Germany regardless of whether the Social Democrats should want to admit me or not. The Social Democratic majority in the government will leave this question hanging in midair until the next governmental crisis. I would have to wait patiently all the while, bound hand and foot; that is, I would be forced to disavow the attempts of my friends to win me the right of asylum in France or in other countries. After another two or three weeks, public opinion will have lost interest in this question. Thus, I would lose not only the coming health-resort season but also the possibility of moving to another country altogether. That is why, in the present situation, a formal refusal would be preferable from my point of view to any further postponement of the decision."

There was still no answer. Once again I telegraphed Berlin: "Regard the absence of reply as a disloyal form of refusal." Only after this, on April 12, that is, after two months, did I receive a communication that the German government had denied my application for admission. There was nothing left but to tele-
A Lesson in Democracy I Did Not Receive

A Lesson in Democracy I Did Not Receive

graph the president of the Reichstag, Loebe, which I did on the following day: "Regret have not received the possibility for practical education in the advantages of the democratic right of asylum."

Such is the brief and instructive history of this affair.

Stalin demanded, through Stresemann, that I not be admitted to Germany, and he got his way, in the name of the friendship of the Soviet government. Thaelmann demanded that I be denied admission to Germany—in the interests of Thaelmann and the Communist International. Hilferding demanded that I not be admitted, because I had had the imprudence to sketch a political portrait of Hilferding in my book against Kautsky and because that portrait bore too painful a resemblance to the original. Hermann Mueller had no reason to refuse Stalin a favor over a question like this. Under these conditions, the platonic defenders of the principles of democracy could with impunity write articles and make speeches in favor of my being granted the right of asylum. They had nothing to lose in this, and I had nothing to gain. In exactly the same way, democratic pacifists speak out against war on every occasion in which it is not on the agenda.

According to what I am told, Chamberlain has displayed special energy in regard to the question of my visa. This honorable gentleman has more than once expressed the opinion that in the interests of democracy I should be placed against a wall. They say that in addition to general considerations of conservatism, Chamberlain has certain personal motives. It is possible that I actually did refer, without due respect, to his political genius in my book on Britain. Since special negotiations have been under way in Paris all this time, neither Stresemann nor Hermann Mueller had any reason to cause Chamberlain any vexations. Moreover, Chamberlain would not have wanted them to do anything that went against their political preferences. Thus everything fit together more neatly than could have been imagined.

As if that were not enough, we have last of all, from Stalin and Thaelmann, the first successful application of a united-front policy on a broad international scale. Through the GPU, on December 16, Stalin proposed that I renounce my political activity. The same condition was advanced by the Germans as something taken for granted during the discussion of the asylum issue in the press. This means that the government of Stresemann and Mueller likewise regards as dangerous and harmful the ideas against which Stalin and Thaelmann are fighting. Stalin, by diplomatic
means, and Thaelmann, by means of agitation, demanded that the Social Democratic government refuse me admission to bourgeois Germany—presumably in the interests of the proletarian revolution. On the other flank, Chamberlain insisted that I be denied a visa—in the interests of the capitalist order. Thus, Hermann Mueller was able simultaneously to satisfy both his partners on the right and his allies on the left. The Social Democratic government became the connecting link in an international united front against revolutionary Marxism. In order to find the fitting imagery for this united front one need only turn to the first lines of the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels: “All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter (communism): Pope and czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police spies.” The names are different, but the substance is the same. The fact that today the German police are Social Democrats alters the situation but little. Essentially they are protecting the same thing as the Hohenzollern police.

Of course it is understood that if the right of asylum had been accorded me, that in itself would not in the least mean a refutation of the Marxist class theory of the state. All that needs to be said on this point may be found in the quotation from my interview with the German social democratic correspondent given above. The regime of democracy does not derive from self-sufficient principles but from the real requirements of the dominant classes. But democracy has an inner logic of its own. By the force of this logic, it necessarily includes the right of asylum. The granting of refuge to a proletarian revolutionist in no way contradicts the bourgeois character of democracy. But there is no need to go into these arguments now, for in Germany, under the rule of the Social Democrats, no right of asylum has been found to exist. After the Stalinists, who had broken with Marxism and the October Revolution, expelled me from the Soviet republic, the German Social Democrats refused me a visa precisely because I represent the principles of Marxism and the traditions of the October Revolution.

What was involved, on this occasion, was only a single individual. But social democracy—this extreme left wing of the bourgeois world—did not hesitate even for a moment to trample underfoot one of the “principles” of pure democracy. And how will things stand when practical decisions need to be made on the question of private ownership of the means of production? How
will those ill-fated and tattered principles of democracy fare at times like that? We have already seen how in the past and will see it again in the future more than once. The episode of my visa, a completely secondary matter in the long run, brings into sharp relief a fundamental problem of our era and at one blow topples the myth, false and reactionary through and through, that a peaceful transition to socialist society is possible. This is the only lesson to be drawn from my recently conducted experiment. This is a serious lesson and it will find its way into the consciousness of the masses of workers.
INTERVIEW BY
THE OSAKA MAINICHI

April 24, 1929

1. You ask about my health. It is more or less satisfactory, with some worse periods. I need medical attention.

2. Yes, I consider the antagonism between America and England basic. The interrelations between the U.S. and Japan in this connection are of secondary significance. In other words: the U.S. will at any given period determine its relations to Japan from its relations with Great Britain. This on the whole means, if you like, a lessening of the contradictions between Washington and Tokyo. But individual periods of sharpening are not excluded, again depending on the relations between Tokyo and London. Do I consider war inevitable? Without making fruitless guesses about timing, I must say that never in human history was the world heading with such blind stubbornness toward a military catastrophe as now, ten years after the Great War, in the epoch of the League of Nations, the Kellogg Pact, etc., etc. This is not a hypothesis, not an assumption, but a conviction, or rather an unshakable certainty.

3. The talk of a Fourth International which I am supposed to be founding is utter rubbish. The Social Democratic International and the Communist International both have deep historical roots. No intermediate (Two-and-a-Half) or additional (Fourth) Internationals are required. There is no room for them. The Stalin course of the Comintern is a course in the direction of a Two-and-a-Half International. Centrism stands between the social democracy and communism. But centrism is unstable, even when it rests on the resources of a state apparatus. It will be ground away between the millstones of social democracy and communism. After struggle, friction, splits, etc., there will remain two Interna-
tionals: the Social Democratic one and the Communist one. I participated in the foundation of the latter, am fighting for its traditions and for its future, and do not intend to yield it to anyone.

4. You ask why a number of states have closed their doors to me. Probably so as to help Marxists explain to the working masses more clearly what capitalist democracy is. The Norwegian government based its decision on considerations about my safety. I do not find this argument convincing. I am a private individual, and the question of my safety is my personal affair. I have enemies, and I also have friends. My settling in Norway or some other country would in no way put responsibility for my safety on the government of that country. The only government with full knowledge of the situation that deliberately took on itself such responsibility is the government of the Stalin faction which expelled me from the USSR.

5. Citing my words that it is in vain that its enemies await a quick overthrow of the Soviet regime, you ask whether I admit "the possibility of an overthrow of the Soviet regime, if not soon, then not very far off"? I consider that with a correct policy it is possible to ensure the stability of the Soviet regime until the inevitable socialist revolution in Europe and throughout the world, after which the Soviet regime will gradually have to give way to a stateless communist society. But history is accomplished through class struggle. That means that neither absolutely hopeless nor absolutely assured positions exist. In the mechanics of the struggle an enormous role is played by the leadership. If the line of the last five years should continue, the dictatorship would sooner or later be undermined. But under the Opposition's lash the Stalinist apparatus is tossing from side to side and thus making the party think and make comparisons. Never has policy in the USSR turned to such an extent round the ideas of the Opposition as now, when the leaders of the Opposition are in jail or exiled.


7. Would I carry on the struggle against the Right? Of course. Stalin is fighting the Right under the lash of the Opposition. He is fighting that fight as a centrist, compelled by means of splits on the right and left to ensure his intermediate position both from the proletarian line and from the openly opportunist. This zigzag
fight of Stalin in the last analysis only strengthens the Right. The party can be protected from shocks and splits only by a revolutionary position.

8. Mentioning the stabilization of capitalism, you ask where are the perspectives for world revolution? These perspectives are growing from that very stabilization. U.S. capitalism is the most revolutionary factor of world development. We will observe great perturbations of the world market, deep economic conflicts, marketing crises, unemployment and the shocks it brings with it. Add to that the prospect of inevitable military clashes. I would greatly prefer a peaceful transformation of society, without the overhead costs of revolution, but looking around at what is happening I cannot condemn myself to blindness. And only someone hopelessly blind can believe in a peaceful transformation.
Dear Comrade Souvarine,

I received your letter of April 16. It surprised me a little. You write that you expected a different conduct from me with regard to oppositional groups abroad. In your opinion I ought not have expressed my views at once, but should have observed, studied, and sought to gather together groups and individuals capable of thinking and acting as Marxists. You reproach me for having left no time for "study, reflection, and discussion." And you warn that I shall have cause to regret my hastiness.

I believe that your criticism, which is quite friendly in tone, discloses the entire erroneousness of your present orientation. You cannot be unaware that up to now I have not expressed myself on a single one of the controversial internal questions which divide the French, German, Austrian, and other oppositional groupings. I have been too much removed in recent years from the internal life of the European parties and I actually did need time to gain more detailed information concerning both the general political situation as well as the oppositional groupings. If I did express myself concerning the latter, it was only in connection with those three questions which are fundamental for our period, namely: the domestic policy in the USSR, the guiding line in the Chinese revolution, and the course of the Anglo-Russian Committee. Isn't it rather strange that precisely upon these questions you propose that I do not hurry, that I take my time, inform myself, and reflect? Meanwhile, you do not at all renounce your right to express yourself publicly on these three questions in a spirit directly contrary to those decisions which constitute the very basis of the Leninist Left Opposition.
In the press I announced my complete readiness to correct or change my appraisal of the Brandler group or your group if any new facts or documents were called to my attention. Subsequently the Brandler group sent me, very kindly, files of their publications. In the March 16 issue of *Arbeiter Politik* I read Thalheimer's report on the Russian discussion. Truly I needed no time for "study" or "reflection" in order to state that the Brandler-Thalheimer group stands on the other side of the barricades. Let us recall the facts.

1. In 1923 this group was unable either to understand or to utilize an exceptional revolutionary situation.

2. In 1924 Brandler tried to see a revolutionary situation lying directly ahead and not behind.

3. In 1925 he decided that there had been no revolutionary situation at all, but that there was an "overestimation" on the part of Trotsky.

4. In 1925-26 he considered that the course toward the kulak, the Stalin-Bukharin course of that time, was correct.

5. In 1923-25 Thalheimer as a member of the programmatic commission supported Bukharin against me on the question of the character of the program (a bare schema of *national* capitalism instead of a theoretical generalization of *world* economy and *world* policy).

6. Brandler and Thalheimer have nowhere, to my knowledge, raised their voices against the theory of socialism in one country.

7. Brandler and Thalheimer tried to worm their way into the party leadership by assuming a protective Stalinist coloration (like Foster in America).97

8. On the question of the Chinese revolution Brandler and Thalheimer dragged at the tail of the official leadership.

9. The same on the question of the Anglo-Russian Committee.

And so I have before me an experience of six years. You cannot be unaware that I did not rush to condemn Brandler. After the fearful collapse of the German revolution in 1923 I took up conditionally the defense of Brandler, arguing that it was unfair to make him a scapegoat when the Zinoviev-Stalin leadership of the Comintern as a whole was responsible for the German catastrophe. I came to a negative political appraisal of Brandler only when I became convinced that he lacked the desire or the ability to learn even from the greatest events. His retrospective appraisal of the 1923 German situation is completely analogous to the criticism which the Mensheviks made of the 1905
revolution in the years of reaction. I had ample time to "reflect" on all this.

Thalheimer's entire report on the Russian discussion is summed up in a single phrase: "Trotsky's program calls for a tighter financial squeeze on the peasantry." Throughout his report Thalheimer plays variations on this theme. Can there be a more shameful position for a Marxist? For me the very question begins by a denial of the conception of the peasantry as a whole. Under discussion is the class struggle within the peasantry. The Opposition put forward the demand that 40 to 50 percent of the peasantry be freed of taxes in general. Since 1923 the Opposition has warned that the lag in industry would signify a spreading price gap and consequently the most profound and ruinous exploitation of the lowest peasant ranks by the kulaks, themiddlemen, and the traders.

The middle peasantry is a social protoplasm. It develops invariably and uninterruptedly in two directions: toward capitalism through the kulaks, and toward socialism through the semiproletarians and the agricultural laborers. Irrevocably lost are those who ignore this fundamental process, those who talk about the peasantry in general, those who do not see that there are two hostile faces to the "peasantry." The problem of Thermidor and Bonapartism is at bottom the problem of the kulak. Those who shy away from this problem, those who minimize its importance and distract attention to questions of party regime, to bureaucratism, to unfair polemical methods, and other superficial manifestations and expressions of the pressure of kulak elements upon the dictatorship of the proletariat resemble a physician who chases after symptoms while ignoring functional and organic disturbances.

At the same time Thalheimer repeats like a trained parrot that our demand for a secret ballot in the party is "Menshevism." He cannot be ignorant of the fact that worker members in the CPSU are afraid to speak out and vote as they think. They are afraid of the apparatus which transmits the pressure of the kulak, the functionary, the spetz, the petty bourgeois, and the foreign bourgeoisie. Of course, the kulak, too, wants a secret ballot in the soviets, for he is also hindered by the apparatus which is in one way or another under the pressure of the workers from the other side. Herein precisely are the elements of dual power, covered up by the centrist bureaucracy which maneuvers between the classes and which, precisely for this reason, undermines all the more the
position of the proletariat. The Mensheviks want the secret ballot for the kulak and the petty bourgeois in the soviets—against the workers, against the Communists. I want the secret ballot for the worker Bolsheviks in the party against the bureaucrats, against the Thermidoreans. But since Thalheimer belongs among those who do not see classes, he identifies the demand of the Leninist Opposition with the demand of the Mensheviks. With such nonsense he seeks to mask his purely bourgeois position on the peasant question.

Naturally, an attempt will be made to use the secret ballot not only by the Bolshevik-Leninists but also by their opponents who wormed their way into the party. In other words, the class struggle within the Communist Party which is at present suppressed under the lid of the Bonapartist apparatus will break out into the open. This is just what we need. The party will see itself as it actually is. This will be a signal for the genuine self-cleansing of the party—in contrast to the fraudulent bureaucratic purges that the apparatus is once again contemplating in the interests of self-preservation.

Only after cleansing the party in the way indicated above will it be possible to introduce the secret ballot into the proletarian trade unions. Only in this way will it be possible to determine the actual strength of Menshevik, Social Revolutionary, and Black Hundred influences in the trade unions, which for many years have been reduced to anonymity under the bureaucracy. It is impossible to maintain a genuine dictatorship of the proletariat without seriously probing into the class as a whole. Today the sicknesses have been driven so deep internally that they can be brought into the open only by emergency measures. One of them—of course, it is not the only one—is the demand for the secret ballot in the party, and later in the trade unions.

So far as the soviets are concerned, we will decide this question only after we have passed through the experience with the party and proletarian trade-union organizations.

On all the basic questions of the world revolution and the class struggle, Brandler and Thalheimer have associated themselves with Stalin and Bukharin who have received the support of the social democracy precisely on these questions (China, the British trade unions, the peasantry). But the demand for the secret ballot for the proletarian vanguard and against the apparatus, which is introducing Menshevism by methods of terror, is proclaimed by
Thalheimer to be—Menshevism. Is a more wretched ideological bankruptcy conceivable?

I have no doubts that in Brandler's group and on its periphery there are many workers who have been repelled from the party by the disreputable administration of Thaelmann and Company, and who have stumbled into the wrong door. The Leninist Opposition must aid these workers to orient themselves in the situation. But this can be achieved only by methods of irreconcilable and merciless struggle against the political course of Brandler and Thalheimer and all groupings which solidarize with them or actually support them.

The Stalinist course in the Comintern has yet to speak its final words. We are only just entering the phase of crises, splits, groupings, and paroxysms. Ahead lies work of many years’ duration. Not all will measure up to it. You refer to the vacillations of Radek, Smilga, Preobrazhensky. I am sufficiently acquainted with this. This is not the first day, nor the first month, nor even the first year that they have vacillated. Noteworthy in the extreme is the fact that these comrades either vacillated or took a wrong position on the basic questions of the world revolution. Radek defended a false line on the questions of China and the Anglo-Russian Committee, and until 1927 he doubted that a different economic policy was generally possible from the one pursued by Stalin and Bukharin. Preobrazhensky held a flagrantly false position on the Chinese question and on the question of the Comintern program (a conciliationist attitude toward nationalistic socialism). Smilga together with Radek opposed the withdrawal of the Communist Party from the Kuomintang and was against the slogan of the dictatorship of the Chinese proletariat in the period of the revolution and later, in the period of the counterrevolution, was against the slogan of the Constituent Assembly. The current party-organizational vacillations of the above-named comrades derive from a lack of clarity and from the ambiguity of their general theoretical and political position. It was ever thus, and always will be.

Lenin taught us not to be afraid even when very influential and honored comrades withdrew, split, or deserted. In the last analysis what decides is the correct political line. To stay on the correct line in the period of political ebb, in face of the offensive of the bourgeoisie, the social democracy, and the right-center bloc in the Comintern (all these are phenomena of one and the same order)—this is today the chief duty of a proletarian revolutionist.
A correct evaluation of the epoch and its driving forces, a correct forecast of the future, will compel all the genuinely revolutionary elements of the working class to regroup themselves and to unite around the Bolshevik banner. That is how I view the situation.

I would be very glad if you found it possible to solidarize yourself with the foregoing views, since that would enable us to work in the same ranks. And I take clearly into account how beneficial to the cause such a collaboration would be.

With comradely greetings,

L. Trotsky
This work retraces the stages of the six-year struggle that the leadership faction in the USSR has been carrying out against the Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninist) in general, and against the author in particular.

A large part of this work is devoted to refuting the gross accusations and slanders directed against me personally. What entitles me to impose upon the patience of the reader with these documents? The fact that my life is rather closely linked to the events of the revolution could not in itself justify the publication of this book. If the Stalin faction's fight against me were only a personal struggle for power, the recounting of this fight would contain nothing instructive: parliamentary history abounds with struggles between groups and individuals seeking power for its own sake. My reason is completely different: it is that the fight between individuals and groups in the USSR is inseparably bound up with the different stages of the October Revolution.

Historical determinism never manifests itself with such force as in a revolutionary period. Such a period, in effect, lays bare class relations and drives conflicts and contradictions to their greatest degree of sharpness. And in such periods, the battle of ideas becomes the most direct expression of opposing classes or opposing factions of one and the same class. In the Russian Revolution, the struggle against "Trotskyism" has assumed precisely this character. The bond that joins what are at times essentially scholastic arguments to the material interests of certain social classes or social layers is, in this case, so striking that the day will come in which this historical experience will
occupy a special chapter in the academic handbooks on historical materialism.

Because of Lenin's illness and death, the October Revolution falls into two periods that become increasingly distinct the longer we are removed from them. The first period was the epoch of the conquest of power, of the establishment and consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of its military defense, of steps essential to finding its economic road. At that time the whole party was aware that it was the prop of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was from this awareness that it drew its inner confidence.

The second period is characterized by the presence of elements of a growing dual power within the country. The proletariat, which had conquered power with the October Revolution, was pushed aside, forced into the background, as a result of a series of objective and subjective factors of both an internal and external nature. Beside it, behind it, and at times even in front of it, other elements, other social layers, factions from other classes, began to push themselves up. These elements secured a good part, if not of the power itself, at least of the influence over the power. These other layers—the state functionaries, the professional union and cooperative functionaries, people from the liberal professions, and middlemen—increasingly formed an interlinking system. At the same time, by their conditions of existence, their habits and way of thinking, these layers stood apart from the proletariat, or moved away more and more. Ultimately, the party functionaries should be counted among them as well, inasmuch as they form a definitely constituted caste, which assures its own permanence more through the state apparatus than by internal party means.

Because of its origin and traditions, and the sources of its strength, Soviet power continues to rest on the proletariat, even though less and less directly. But through the medium of the social layers enumerated above, it is falling increasingly under the influence of bourgeois interests. This pressure makes itself felt all the more since a large part of not just the state apparatus, but the party apparatus as well, is becoming, if not the conscious agent, then at least the effective agent of bourgeois conceptions and expectations. However weak our national bourgeoisie may be, it is conscious, and rightly so, of being a part of the world bourgeoisie, and it serves as the transmission belt of world imperialism. But even the subordinate base of the bourgeoisie is far from being negligible. To the extent that agriculture develops
on an individual market basis, it inevitably brings forth a sizable rural petty bourgeoisie. The rich peasant or the peasant seeking only to enrich himself who hurls himself against the barriers of Soviet legality is the natural agent of Bonapartist tendencies. This fact, illustrated by the whole evolution of modern history, is verified once again in the experience of the Soviet republic. Such are the social origins of the elements of dual power that characterize the second chapter of the October Revolution, the period following the death of Lenin.

It goes without saying that even the first period, from 1917 to 1923, is not homogeneous from beginning to end. There, too, we had not only forward movement, but setbacks as well. There, too, the revolution made important concessions: on the one hand to the peasantry, on the other to the world bourgeoisie. Brest-Litovsk was the first setback for the victorious revolution, after which the revolution resumed its forward march. The policy of commercial and industrial concessions, however modest its practical results have been up to the present time, constituted a serious tactical retreat on the level of principle. However, the greatest overall retreat was the New Economic Policy—NEP. By reestablishing a market economy, NEP re-created conditions that threatened to revive the petty bourgeoisie and to convert certain groups and elements within it into middle bourgeoisie. In short, NEP contained the possibilities of dual power. But these did not yet exist except as an economic potential. They commanded a real strength only during the second chapter of the history of October, which generally is considered to have begun with Lenin’s illness and death and the beginning of the campaign against “Trotskyism.”

It goes without saying that in themselves the concessions to the bourgeois classes are not yet a violation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In general, there are no historical examples of a chemically pure form of class rule. The bourgeoisie rules by leaning on other classes, subjugating them, corrupting them, or intimidating them. Social reforms in favor of the workers in themselves do not in any way constitute a violation of the absolute sovereignty of the bourgeoisie of a country. Of course, each individual capitalist may have the feeling that he is no longer complete master in his own house—that is in his factory—compelled as he is to recognize the legal limits of his economic dictatorship. But these limitations have no other purpose than to support and maintain the power of the class as a whole. The
interests of the individual capitalist constantly come into conflict with the interests of the capitalist state, not just on questions of social legislation, but on questions of taxes, public debt, war and peace, etc. The interests of the class as a whole have the upper hand. They alone decide what reforms can be made and to what extent they can be carried out without shaking the foundations of its rule.

The question is posed in similar fashion for the dictatorship of the proletariat. A chemically pure dictatorship could exist only in an imaginary world. The proletariat in power is obliged to reckon with the other classes in proportion to their strength domestically or in the international arena, and it must make concessions to the other classes in order to maintain its rule. The whole question is in knowing what are the limits to these concessions and what is the degree of consciousness with which they are made.

There were two aspects to the New Economic Policy. First of all, it flowed from the necessity for the proletariat itself to use the methods developed by capitalism to run industry and, in general, the entire economy. Second, it was a concession to the bourgeoisie, and in particular the petty bourgeoisie, in that it allowed them to function economically within their characteristic methods of buying and selling. In Russia, because of its predominantly rural population, this second aspect of NEP was of decisive importance. Given the halt in the revolutionary development of other countries, NEP, which represented a deep and lasting setback, was unavoidable. We put it into effect under Lenin’s leadership with complete unanimity. This retreat was called a retreat before the whole world. The party, and through it the whole working class, understood very well what this meant in a general sense. The petty bourgeoisie got the chance to accumulate wealth—within certain limits. But power, and consequently the right to determine these limits of this accumulation, remained as before in the hands of the proletariat.

We mentioned above that there is an analogy between the social reforms in the interests of the proletariat that the ruling bourgeoisie finds itself obliged to make and the concessions the proletariat in power makes to the bourgeois classes. However, if we wish to avoid making mistakes, we must put this analogy into a well-defined historical framework. Bourgeois power has existed for centuries; it has an international character; it rests upon a vast accumulation of wealth; it has a powerful system of institutions, connections, and ideas at its disposal. Centuries of
domination have created a kind of instinct for domination, which in difficult circumstances has often served as an unerring guide for the bourgeoisie. For the proletariat, centuries of bourgeois domination have been centuries of oppression. It has neither historical traditions of rule, nor, even less, an instinct for power. It came to power in one of the poorest and most backward countries in Europe. Under present historical circumstances, at the present stage, this means that the dictatorship of the proletariat is infinitely less secure than bourgeois power. A correct political line, a realistic appreciation of its actions, and particularly of the unavoidable concessions that must be made to the bourgeoisie, are life-and-death questions for Soviet power.

The chapter of the revolution following Lenin's death is characterized by the development of socialist forces as well as capitalist forces within the Soviet economy. The outcome depends on their dynamic interaction. The balance is controlled less by statistics than by the daily evolution of economic life. The present deep crisis, which has taken the paradoxical form of a scarcity of agricultural products in an agrarian country, is sure, objective proof that the basic economic balance has been upset. Since the spring of 1923, at the Twelfth Party Congress, the author of this book has warned of the potential consequences of a false economic policy: the lagging of industry leads to a "scissors effect," that is, a disproportion between the prices of industrial and agricultural products, a phenomenon that in turn brings the development of agriculture to a halt. That these consequences have been realized does not in itself mean that the fall of the Soviet regime is unavoidable or, even worse, imminent. What it means is that a change in economic policy is necessary—and that it is most imperative.

In a country where the basic means of production are state property, the policy of the government leadership plays a direct and for a certain period a decisive role in the economy. Therefore the question boils down to whether that leadership is capable of understanding the necessity for a change in policy, and whether it is in a position to carry out such a change in practice. We return, thus, to the question of determining to what degree state power still rests in the hands of the proletariat and its party, that is, to what degree state power continues to be the power of the October Revolution. One cannot answer this question a priori. Politics is not governed by mechanical laws. The power of the
different classes and parties reveals itself in struggle. And the
decisive struggle is yet to come.

Dual power, that is, the parallel existence of power or quasi
power wielded by two antagonistic classes—as, for example,
during the Kerensky period\textsuperscript{102}—cannot perpetuate itself over a
long period of time. Such a crisis situation must be resolved in
one way or the other. The assertion of the anarchists and would­
be anarchists that the USSR is a bourgeois state here and now
cannot be better refuted than by the attitude taken toward this
question by the bourgeoisie itself, both domestic and foreign. To
go further than recognizing the existence of elements of dual
power would be theoretically incorrect and politically dangerous.
It would even be suicidal. The problem of dual power consists for
the moment in knowing to what extent the bourgeois classes have
rooted themselves in the Soviet state apparatus, and to what extent
bourgeois ideas and tendencies have rooted themselves in
the apparatus of the proletarian party. For on this question of
degree depends the party's freedom to maneuver and the ability
of the working class to take the necessary defensive and offensive
measures.

The second chapter of the October Revolution is not character­
ized simply by the development of the economic status of the
petty bourgeoisie in the towns and in the countryside, but by an
infinitely sharper and more dangerous process of theoretical and
political disarmament of the proletariat, hand in hand with a
growth in the self-confidence of the bourgeois layers. In keeping
with the stage that these processes are passing through, the
political interest of the growing petty-bourgeois classes has been
and still is to mask their advance, as far as possible, by
camouflaging their progress under Soviet protective coloring and
by presenting their victories as integral parts of socialist
construction. Certain advances by the bourgeoisie on the basis of
NEP, however important, were unavoidable and, moreover, were
necessary for the progress of socialism as well. But these same
economic gains by the bourgeoisie can acquire a totally different
importance and constitute a very different sort of danger
depending on whether the working class and, above all, its party
have a more or less correct conception of the processes and
dislocations that are taking place in the country, and are more or
less solidly at the helm. Politics is concentrated economics. At the
present stage, the economic question in the Soviet republic more
than ever is reduced to a question of politics.
The defect in the post-Lenin political policies is not so much having made new, important concessions to various bourgeois social layers at home, in Asia, and in the West. Certain of these concessions were necessary or unavoidable, if only by reason of previous mistakes. The new concessions made to the kulaks in April 1925—the right to lease land and employ labor—were of this type. Some of these concessions were in themselves wrong, harmful, or even disastrous—like the capitulation to the agents of the bourgeoisie in the British labor movement and, worse yet, the capitulation to the Chinese bourgeoisie. But the principal crime of the post-Lenin (and anti-Leninist) political policies was to present grave concessions as victories for the proletariat, and setbacks as advances; to interpret the growth of internal difficulties as a triumphant advance toward a socialist society on a national scale.

This work, treacherous to the core, of disarming the party theoretically and stifling the vigilance of the proletariat was carried out over the course of six years under the guise of the struggle against “Trotskyism.” The cornerstones of Marxism, the basic methodology of the October Revolution, the principal lessons of the Leninist strategy, were submitted to a rude and violent revision in which the crying need of the renascent petty-bourgeois functionary for order and tranquility found its expression. The idea of permanent revolution, that is, of the real and unbreakable link between the fate of the Soviet republic and the march of the proletarian revolution on a world scale, more than anything irritated all the new, conservative social layers who held a deep conviction that the revolution that had raised them to a leading position had accomplished its mission.

My critics in the camp of democracy and social democracy explain to me with great authority that Russia is not “ripe” for socialism, and that Stalin is completely correct in leading Russia back to the capitalist road by a zigzag course. It is true that what the social democrats call with real satisfaction the “restoration of capitalism,” Stalin himself calls “building socialism on a national scale.” But since they have the same process in view, the difference in terminology should not blind us to the basic identity of the two. Even admitting that Stalin is carrying out his task with full knowledge of what he is doing, which could not for a moment possibly be the case, he would, nevertheless, be obliged to call capitalism socialism, in order to lessen friction. The less he
understands basic historical problems, the more he can proceed in this manner with confidence. His blindness in this respect spares him from having to lie.

The question, however, is not at all one of knowing whether Russia is capable of building socialism on its own. This question does not exist for Marxism in general. Everything that has been said on this subject by the Stalinist school on the theoretical plane is on the order of alchemy and astrology. As a doctrine, Stalinism would, at the most, make a good exhibit for a museum of natural history dedicated to theory. The essential question is whether capitalism is capable of leading Europe out of its historic impasse, whether India can free itself from slavery and misery without leaving the framework of peaceful capitalist development, whether China can attain the level of culture of Europe and America without revolution and without wars, whether the United States can reach the limits of its productive forces without shaking Europe and without laying the basis for a catastrophe for all humanity in the form of a terrible war. This is how the ultimate fate of the October Revolution is posed. If we admit that capitalism continues to be a progressive historical force, that it is capable by its own means and methods of resolving the basic problems that are on the historical agenda, that it can raise humanity to still higher levels, then there can be no question of transforming the Soviet republic into a socialist country. Then it would follow that the socialist structure of the October Revolution would be inevitably doomed to destruction, leaving behind nothing but the heritage of its democratic agrarian reforms. Would this retreat from the proletarian revolution to the bourgeois revolution be carried out by the Stalin faction, or by a faction of this faction, or even by a general political changing of the guard—or more than one—if necessary? These are all secondary questions. I have already written many times that the political form of this regression would in all probability be Bonapartism and not democracy. Now it is essential to know whether capitalism as a world system is still progressive. It is precisely on this point that our social democratic adversaries demonstrate a pitiable, archaic, and impotent utopianism—not a progressive, but a reactionary utopianism.

Stalin’s politics are “centrist”—that is, Stalinism is a tendency that balances between social democracy and communism. The principal “theoretical” efforts of the Stalin school, which appeared only after Lenin’s death, have tended to separate the
fate of the Soviet republic from world revolutionary development in general. This is the equivalent of wanting to separate the October Revolution itself from the world revolution. The "theoretical" problem of the epigones has taken the form of counterposing "Trotskyism" to Leninism.

In order to divorce themselves from the international character of Marxism while remaining faithful to it in words until further orders, it was necessary for them first of all to direct their fire on those who were the supporters of the ideas of the October Revolution and proletarian internationalism. At that time, Lenin was the foremost among these. But Lenin died at the turning point of the two stages of the revolution. Thus he was not able to defend his life's work. The epigones cut up his books into quotations and with this weapon set out to attack the living Lenin at the same time that they raised him from the tomb not only in Red Square but in the consciousness of the party as well. As if he had foreseen the fate that would befall his ideas after a short time, Lenin begins his book *State and Revolution* with the following words, devoted to the lot of the great revolutionaries:

"After their death, attempts are made to turn them into harmless icons, canonize them, and surround their names with a certain halo for the 'consolation' of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping them, while at the same time emasculating and vulgarizing the real essence of their revolutionary theories and blunting their revolutionary edge."

It is only necessary to add that N.K. Krupskaya once had the audacity to fling these prophetic words in the face of the Stalin faction.

The second task of the epigones was to represent the defense and development of Lenin's ideas as a doctrine hostile to Lenin. The myth of "Trotskyism" rendered this historical service. Is it necessary to repeat that I do not claim, and have never claimed, to have created my own doctrine? My theoretical training is in the school of Marx. As far as revolutionary methods are concerned, I passed through the school of Lenin. Or if one wishes, "Trotskyism" for me is a name affixed to the ideas of Marx and Lenin by the epigones, who wish to break with these ideas at all costs but do not yet dare do so openly.

This book will reveal part of the ideological process by which the present leadership of the Soviet republic has changed its theoretical clothing to conform to the change in its social nature.
I will show how the same people have rendered diametrically opposed opinions of the same events, the same ideas, the same political activists, while Lenin was alive and then after his death. In this book I am obliged to present a large number of citations, which, I may add in passing, is contrary to my usual method of writing. However, in a struggle against political people who suddenly and craftily deny their most recent past at the same time that they swear fidelity to it, it is not possible to do without citations, for these serve as clear and irrefutable evidence in the case at hand. If the impatient reader objects to being obliged to make part of his journey by short marches, he would do well to consider that if he had collected the citations, separating out the most informative ones and establishing the requisite political connection between them, that would have demanded infinitely more work than attentively reading these characteristic excerpts from the struggle between two camps—at the same time so near and so steadfastly opposed.

The first part of this book is a letter to the Bureau of Party History that I wrote on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution. With protests, the institute returned my manuscript, which would have acted as a disruptive element in the business of concocting the unheard-of falsifications of history that this institution devotes itself to in its struggle against "Trotskyism."

The second part of the book consists of four speeches that I delivered before the highest bodies of the party between June and October 1927, that is, in the period of the most intense ideological conflict between the Opposition and the Stalin faction. If I have chosen the stenograms of these four speeches from among many documents of the last few years, it is because they give in condensed form a sufficiently complete exposition of the conflicting ideas and because in my opinion their chronological continuity allows the reader to approximate the dramatic dynamism of the struggle itself. I should add, moreover, that the frequent analogies with the French Revolution are intended to aid the historical orientation of the French reader.

I have made considerable cuts in the texts of the speeches to remove repetitions, which in spite of everything are more or less unavoidable. I have made all the necessary clarifications in the form of introductory notes to the speeches themselves, which are published for the first time in this edition. In the USSR they are still illegal writings.
Finally, I am including a small pamphlet that I wrote in Alma-Ata in 1928, in response to the objections raised by a well-disposed adversary. I believe that this document, which has been widely circulated in manuscript form, provides the necessary conclusion to the book as a whole by introducing the reader to the very last stage of the struggle just before my banishment from the USSR.

This book covers the very recent past, and at that with the sole aim of relating it to the present. More than one process that is brought up here has not yet been completed, more than one question is not yet resolved. But each coming day will bring additional verification of the ideas in conflict. This book is dedicated to contemporary history, that is, to politics. It looks upon the past solely as a direct introduction to the future.
Dear Comrade Souvarine,

I want to try once again, even if in a few words, to explain myself in complete frankness—though I must say that your letters disappoint rather than revive my hopes in the possibility or probability of collaboration. One would have to say that you have made it a rule to avoid principled questions, in social as well as in fundamental matters, and that you focus all your attention on psychological and personal aspects. In your first letter you advise me to wait and think things over, while at the same time predicting that I will regret my hastiness. In your second letter you accuse me of having an abstract attitude toward individuals. Your observations permit me to express myself quite frankly in return. You replace, or you propose to replace, the selection of individuals on the basis of strict political criteria with a selection based on personal quality or talent. In all your judgments you make abstractions out of fundamental political tendencies, that is, out of potential social lines, and you replace all that with a qualitative assessment of the persons, groups, ways, and means involved. That does not and cannot lead anywhere. You complain of the error made by the representatives of the Russian Opposition. I admit that incorrect actions were taken. But I am sure that you exaggerate because straying from the political line has the fatal consequence of falsifying one’s sense of proportion. You have in fact drifted from the political line. No one can recover it, least of all you. If nothing serious had happened to you, I would have had to read scarcely ten lines of your letter to determine your politics. Men of politics who are mature and experienced and know what they want understand each other at the drop of a
word. They know whether they are on the same side or in enemy camps. But you avoid all the questions it is necessary to begin with. Is it because you instinctively fear your Achilles’ heel will be discovered, that is, that you have no political line? You decline all responsibility for Brandler. Have you taken the uncompromising position against him that his opportunistic line requires? No! You attack those who share my ideas because they are too docile or not independent enough, or for other faults, real or fictitious, but purely personal or psychological. The political line remains outside your field of vision. Even in a personal letter you speak only of Brandler’s “contradictions.” Such and such contradiction can exist in a person who shares your ideas as well as in one you are fighting against. Before speaking of contradictions, it is necessary to get down to the question of determining—on the basis of essential facts—which camp Brandler belongs to: the side of our friends or the side of our enemies. You avoid this basic, fundamental question. Why? Because you have not settled the question of which camp you belong to.

All these indications are most alarming. You are enmeshed in a path that leads to the right.

The extent to which this process has affected you, I do not know, or rather I resolve not to say. Does it have to be considered a lost cause? That is the only reason I am writing you this letter. Without the slightest irony—on the contrary, with all the seriousness the gravity of the situation requires—I return your advice: take your time. Don’t rush to a decision before you examine your thoughts thoroughly. Don’t be too hasty in sending the printer each transitory phase of your current thinking. Don’t be too quick to tie yourself to a small error today only to find yourself backing it up more firmly tomorrow, thus committing a greater error, one that may become irreparable.

I am not sending a copy of this letter to anyone because despite the wretched impression the last letter you wrote made on me, I don’t want to give up the hope of working with you without having tried everything along this line and without adding the above warning, which I address to you very sincerely.
To the American Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition)
Editors of The Militant

Dear Friends,

I follow your journal with great interest and am delighted with its fighting spirit. The history of the origin of the American Opposition is itself highly characteristic and instructive. After five years of struggle against the Russian Opposition, it required a journey of members of the Central Committee of the American party, and even of its Political Committee, to a congress in Moscow in order for the first time to find out what so-called "Trotskyism" is. This single fact is an annihilating indictment against the regime of party police rule and poisonous falsification. Lovestone and Pepper did not create this regime, but they are its staff lieutenants. I proved Lovestone guilty of gross ideological distortion (see my pamphlet Europe and America). Under a fairly normal regime that alone would have been enough to finish a man, if not for good, for a long time, or at least to compel a retraction and apology. But under the present regime, to reinforce their positions, the Lovestones need only persistently repeat falsifications that have been exposed. They do this with utter shamelessness, imitating their present teachers, or rather their administrative bosses. The spirit of the Lovestones and Peppers is exactly contrary to the spirit of the proletarian revolutionary. The discipline toward which we strive—and we strive toward an iron discipline—can be based only upon consciously won convictions that have entered into our flesh and blood.
I haven't had the opportunity for close contact with the other leaders of the American Communist Party—except, to be sure, Foster. He always impressed me as being more trustworthy than Lovestone and Pepper. In Foster's criticisms of the official leadership of the party there was always much that was true and to the point. But as far as I understand him, Foster is an empiricist. He does not want to, or is not able to, carry his thinking through to the end and make the necessary generalizations that follow from his criticisms. Because of that it has never been clear to me in what direction Foster's criticism is pushing him: to the left or to the right of official centrism. We must remember that in addition to the Marxist Opposition there is an opportunist opposition (Brandler, Thalheimer, Souvarine, and others). Apparently it is this same empiricism that suggests to Foster the whole form of his activity, which consists in leaning on Satan for a struggle against the lesser devils. Foster tries to cover himself with the protective coloration of Stalinism, and by this deceitful route to move toward the leadership of the American party. In revolutionary politics the game of hide-and-seek has never yet given serious results. Without a general principled position on the fundamental questions of the world revolution, and first of all on the question of socialism in one country, you cannot have serious and lasting revolutionary victories. You can have only bureaucratic successes, such as those Stalin has. But these temporary successes are paid for by the defeats of the proletariat and by the disintegration of the Comintern. I don't think Foster will achieve even those second-rate aims that he is pursuing. The Lovestones and Peppers are much better suited to carry through a policy of bureaucratic centrism; lacking character, they are ready in twenty-four hours to put through any zigzag whatever, according to the administrative necessities of the Stalinist staff.

The work to be achieved by the American Opposition has international historic significance, for in the final analysis all the problems of our planet will be decided upon American soil. There is much in favor of the idea that from the standpoint of revolutionary succession, Europe and the East stand ahead of the United States. But a course of events is possible which may alter this sequence in favor of the proletariat of the United States. Moreover, even if you assume that America, which now shakes the whole world, will itself be shaken last of all, the danger remains that a revolutionary situation in the United States may
catch the vanguard of the American proletariat unprepared, as was the case in Germany in 1923, in Britain in 1926, and in China in 1925-27. We must not for a minute lose sight of the fact that the power of American capitalism rests more and more upon the foundation of the world economy, with its contradictions and its crises, military and revolutionary. This means that a social crisis in the United States may arrive a good deal sooner than many think, and have a feverish development from the start. Hence the conclusion: it is necessary to prepare.

As far as I can judge, your official Communist Party inherited not a few characteristics of the old Socialist Party. That became clear to me at the time Pepper succeeded in dragging the American Communist Party into the scandalous adventure with La Follette's party.109 This shabby policy of parliamentary opportunism was disguised by "revolutionary" chatter to the effect that the social revolution will be achieved in the United States not by the working class but by the ruined farmers. When Pepper elaborated this theory to me on his return from the United States, I thought that I was dealing with a curious case of individual aberration. Only with some effort did I realize that this was a whole system, and that the American Communist Party had been dragged into this system. Then it became clear to me that this small party could not develop without deep internal crises, which would immunize it against Pepperism and other evil diseases. I cannot call them infantile diseases. On the contrary, these are senile diseases, diseases of bureaucratic sterility and revolutionary impotence.

That is why I suspect that the Communist Party has taken on many of the qualities of the Socialist Party, which in spite of its youth had struck me as decrepit. For the majority of these socialists—I have in mind the top strata—their socialism is a side issue, a secondary occupation accommodated to their leisure hours. These gentlemen devote six days of the week to their liberal or business professions, rounding out their fortunes well enough; on the seventh day they consent to occupy themselves with the salvation of their souls. In a book of my memoirs I have tried to sketch this type of socialist Babbitt. Evidently not a few of these gentlemen have succeeded in masquerading as communists. These are not intellectual opponents, but class enemies. The Opposition must steer its course, not to the petty-bourgeois Babbitts, but to the proletarian Jimmie Higginsest,110 for whom the idea of communism, once they are imbued with it, becomes the
content of their entire life and activity. There is nothing more disgusting and dangerous in revolutionary activity than petty-bourgeois dilettantism, conservative, self-satisfied, and incapable of sacrifice in the name of a great idea. The advanced workers must firmly adopt one simple but invariable rule: Those leaders or candidates for leadership who, in peaceful, every-day times, are incapable of sacrificing their time, their talents, and their money to the cause of communism, are the most likely, in a revolutionary period, to turn traitor or to turn up in the camp of those who wait to see on which side the victory lies. If elements of this kind are at the head of the party, they will undoubtedly bring it to disaster when the great test comes. And those brainless bureaucrats who simply hire out to the Comintern as though to a notary, and obediently adapt themselves to each new boss, are no better.

Of course the Opposition, that is, the Bolshevik-Leninists, may have their fellow travelers who, without devoting themselves wholly to the revolution, offer this or that service to the cause of communism. It certainly would be wrong not to make use of them; they can make a significant contribution to the work. But fellow travelers, even the most honest and serious, should make no pretense to leadership. The leaders must be bound in all their daily work with those they lead. Their work must proceed before the eyes of the ranks, no matter how few the ranks may be at the given moment. I wouldn’t give a cent for a leadership that could be summoned by cable from Moscow, or from anywhere else, without the ranks ever noticing it. Such a leadership guarantees failure in advance. We must steer our course to the young worker who desires to understand and to fight, and is capable of enthusiasm and self-sacrifice. These are the people from whom we must attract and educate the genuine cadres of the party and the proletariat.

Every member of the Opposition should be obligated to have under guidance several young workers, youth from fourteen to fifteen years of age and older; to remain in continual contact with them, help them in their education, train them in questions of scientific socialism, and systematically introduce them to the revolutionary politics of the proletarian vanguard. Oppositionists who are themselves unprepared for such work should entrust the young workers they have recruited to more developed and experienced comrades. We don’t want those who are afraid of rough work. The profession of a revolutionary Bolshevik imposes
obligations. The first of these obligations is to win over the proletarian youth, to clear a road to its most oppressed and neglected strata. They stand first under our banner.

The trade-union bureaucrats, like the bureaucrats of pseudo-communism, live in an atmosphere of aristocratic prejudices of the upper strata of the workers. It would be tragic if the Oppositionists were infected even in the slightest degree with these qualities. We must not only reject and condemn these prejudices; we must burn them out of our consciousness to the last trace. We must find the road to the most unprivileged and downtrodden strata of the proletariat, beginning with the Negroes, whom capitalist society has converted into pariahs, and who must learn to see in us their brothers. And this depends entirely upon our energy and devotion to this work.

I see from Comrade Cannon's letter that you intend to give the Opposition a more organized form. I can only welcome that news. It is wholly in line with the views expressed above. A well-formed organization is necessary for your work. The absence of clear organizational relations results from intellectual confusion, or leads to it. The cry about a second party and a Fourth International is merely ridiculous and should be the last thing to stop us. We do not identify the Communist International with the Stalinist bureaucracy, that is, with the hierarchy of Peppers in different stages of demoralization. At the foundation of the International there lies a definite set of ideas and principles, conclusions from the whole struggle of the world proletariat. We, the Opposition, represent those ideas. We will defend them against the monstrous mistakes and violations of the Fifth and Sixth Congresses and against the usurping apparatus of the centrists, one wing of which is going over to the Thermidoreans. It is all too clear to a Marxist that, in spite of the enormous material resources of the Stalinist apparatus, the present ruling faction of the Comintern is politically and theoretically dead. The banner of Marx and Lenin is in the hands of the Opposition. I have no doubt that the American contingent of the Bolsheviks will occupy a worthy place under that banner.

With hearty Opposition greetings,

L. Trotsky
Dear Friend:

1. The latest press dispatches tell of Preobrazhensky's arrival in Moscow for negotiations with the Central Committee. There is not the slightest doubt that these capitulators and compromisers of the third wave will be treated as fools. What kind of participation in the party different from that of Zinoviev are they dreaming of? Marked as a capitulator, Zinoviev sits on his hands, afraid to move, not knowing what to expect. We, meanwhile, are actively though slowly preparing for the future, forming cadres of young Bolsheviks. What position between us and the Zinovievists do the new capitulators expect to occupy? It is doubtful they themselves have any clear idea. They must hope that Yaroslavsky will brainwash them, after which they will have to crawl out of the swamp onto a clean spot, by no means increasing their authority.

They assert that the disagreements have almost disappeared. How do they explain the rabid character of the repressions? Exile and hard-labor prisons for Bolsheviks in the absence of very deep and irreconcilable disagreements could only be the result of completely unprincipled bureaucratic banditry. According to Radek and others, that is exactly the policy of the Stalinists. But in that case, how do they dare murmur of a bloc with these political bandits who, without principled grounds, are holding our comrades in hard-labor prisons, condemning them to banishment and sometimes to death?

We never characterized the Stalinists as mercilessly and annihilatingly as Radek does, beyond himself, simply because he has gone astray in a forest of three trees, crawls out, falls down,
flounders, tries to get up, and falls down again. We have thought, and still do, that the Stalinists are not mindless political bandits, for they have profound and principled reasons for their merciless persecution of us. It is a poor politician who takes a political line piecemeal, not asking which elements are carrying out that line and for what reasons. Caught in an economic blind alley, the Stalinist cadres, gritting their teeth, are carrying out a left zigzag which by force of circumstances and of the struggle itself has pushed them much further to the left than they wish. Ninety percent of those cadres are dreaming of returning at the first opportunity to a more "healthy," "normal," "national" course, and hate us to the death exactly because by our uncompromising attitude we prevent their doing this. A capitulation of the Opposition would mean: (a) condemning ourselves to a Zinovievist vegetable existence—nature knows no more shameful state, and (b) an immediate swerving of the Stalinists to the right.

2. The problems of the Comintern do not in the least interest the advocates of capitulation "in one country." The national-socialist program of the Comintern worries them very little. They reconcile themselves with light hearts to the policy of adventurism which, in Berlin as in Canton, is an attempt to restore the revolutionary reputation of centristm. In the meantime, the continual persecution of the Opposition is hopelessly shattering the cadres of the Comintern. Everything is being trampled on and defiled by the boot of bureaucratism. How shall we remedy this affliction? It is quite simple: capitulate before that same boot.

3. A revolution is a mighty devourer of people. Of the older generation there is an enormous percentage of desolate souls among the ruling majority—and no small percentage among the Oppositionists. The reaction is in full swing in the party and the Comintern, reflecting the general shift of class forces on a world scale. In such circumstances, withdrawals and capitulations inevitably become the norm. Bolshevism, from 1907 to 1910 and again from 1914 to 1917, experienced a whole series of such departures, splits, group and individual capitulations. Only by way of such self-cleansing and self-clarification was it able to grow and strengthen itself for the October victory. We are not in the least frightened by the withdrawal of comrades, even those with the most "respected" names. By the example of their wavering we will teach steadfastness to the youth.

4. What a pitiful and cowardly falsity in the endorsements by these new capitulators of Yaroslavsky's declarations regarding
the impermissibility of employing the bourgeois press. Was it necessary to stoop to such triviality? Through Tass press agency the Stalinists are circulating in the bourgeois press of the whole world a monstrous lie and slander against us, gradually preparing a justification for bloody repressive measures. And we must not dare to tell the truth about ourselves in that very press?!! The Stalinists bargain with bourgeois police and reactionary diplomats to prevent our admission into any country. They compel the Norwegian Communists along with the reactionaries to destroy the right of asylum. They compel the official Communist press to accompany this reactionary police act with wild persecution and slander, which creeps into the pages of the whole bourgeois press. And we must modestly remain silent, in keeping with a 1905 resolution which was adapted to the conditions of a revolutionary party, not to the reactionary work of a Thermidorean bureaucracy attacking us in sacred unity with the capitalist police of all Europe!

5. It is clear that before us is the perspective of prolonged struggle and educational work. It will be necessary to renew our cadres. Let those who do not measure up to the work withdraw. After drifting and hesitating, some will come back to us. In the interval, we shall become stronger. We must educate a new generation in the spirit of steadfast Bolshevik implacability. Along with work among the masses on the basis of our platform, we must deepen educational activity among the youth, without being afraid to exert ourselves for even a single individual. We need to deepen propaganda work on an international scale. Every serious Bolshevik must have around him some young people whom he will initiate, day by day, into the sphere of the fundamental problems of Marxism and of international revolution.

6. At present I am occupied mainly with preparing a series of books for publication which will appear simultaneously in a number of languages. This work now takes up almost all my time and does not allow me to come to close grips with today's problems. Nevertheless, I think this is the most economical way. Instead of taking every separate problem from the beginning each time, we have to establish a serious ideological basis and publish the most important works and documents of the Opposition, to serve as future reference.

Such work helps to preserve the heritage of the Marxist ideology of Bolshevism against revisionism, slander, and
thoughtless vacillation. Epochs of reaction are always the periods for the deepening of theory.

7. There is hardly much new I can report to you about the European and American Oppositions. Here we are faced with a gigantic collective work of theoretical self-clarification and gathering of forces, in every country and on an international scale. For this purpose an international bulletin is projected, which then should be turned into a journal published in several languages.
RADEK AND THE OPPOSITION

May 26, 1929

During the last few weeks there has been considerable talk in the world press about the "disintegration" of the Russian Opposition, and Comrade Radek has often been called the leader of the group that is joining Stalin. The uninformed—and they are the majority in the West—may conclude from this that Radek has only lately turned from the Opposition to the apparatus centrists. In reality, Comrade Radek's vacillation has been going on for about a year and a half. It would be still more correct to say that Comrade Radek's path, from the year 1923, has crossed with the line of the Opposition only to turn from it to the right or to the left—mostly to the right—and then again to meet with it. Up till 1926 Radek held that it would be impossible to carry through any economic policy other than that of Stalin and Bukharin. Up till 1927 Radek was under the illusion that it would be possible to collaborate with Brandler and his group. Radek was against the Chinese Communist Party leaving the Kuomintang. After the British general strike, Radek was against the dissolution of the Anglo-Russian Committee. After the right and left Kuomintang had betrayed the revolution, Radek was against the slogan of the proletarian dictatorship and for that of the "democratic" dictatorship, interpreting that slogan in the same way Stalin, Bukharin, and Martinov did. In 1923-24 Radek argued that the theory of the permanent revolution was basically the same as Lenin's strategic line. In 1928 he attempted to establish a complete contradiction on this question between Lenin and Trotsky. He had to repeat, with minor reservations, Zinovjev's hackneyed arguments. On the other hand, on the question of Thermidor and two parties, Radek took an ultraleft position in
1927. He attempted several times to proclaim that Thermidor had already been "accomplished." For a time he refused to sign the platform only because it stood too categorically for a single party. There is nothing unnatural in this combination of ultraleft conclusions and right premises. On the contrary, the history of the Comintern is replete with such combinations. Nor is there anything unnatural in Radek's moving so easily from ultraleft deductions on the question of Thermidor and two parties to the road of unprincipled conciliation toward the left-centrist zigzag. We have seen in other countries, particularly in Germany, how easily people who have accused the Russian Opposition of "not going far enough," and who have proclaimed dozens of times that Thermidor was already "accomplished," move with their light baggage to the camp of the social democrats.

To be sure, none of us means to put Radek on the same plane as these weathervanes. Radek has to his credit a quarter of a century of revolutionary Marxist work. Not only is he incapable of supporting the social democrats, but it is doubtful that he can join the Stalinists. At any rate, he will not be able to live with them. He is too much of a Marxist for that, and, above all, too much of an internationalist. Radek's misfortune lies where his strength does: in his excessive impulsiveness.

Radek is unquestionably one of the best Marxist journalists in the world. It is not only the precision and strength of his style. No, it is first of all his ability to react with amazing quickness to new phenomena and tendencies and even to their first symptoms. This is Radek's strong point. But the strength of a journalist becomes a source of weakness in a politician. Radek exaggerates and anticipates too much. He uses a yardstick when it is only a matter of inches. Therefore he almost always finds himself to the right or to the left—much more often to the right—of the correct line.

As long as we lived in Moscow, Radek's impulsiveness was often of service to the Opposition. At almost every session he would bring up suggestions for decisive changes in the policy of the Opposition—in general or in this or that question. He usually met with friendly resistance and was soon reconciled. But under his exaggerated and dangerous innovations one could often find some valuable observation or new impression. That is why Radek's participation was always beneficial to the collective work. And none of us thought of making a list of Radek's numerous zigzags—to the right as well as to the left; though more often to
the right than to the left. The trouble is, however, that since 1928
the leading group of the Opposition has been dispersed. All of us
were separated from one another by enormous distances and left
on our own. Clearly under such circumstances Radek’s extreme
impulsiveness would serve him badly.

Since February 1928 Comrade Radek has made a very abrupt
turn on the question of Thermidor and “two parties.” He did not
foresee the possibility of resistance to the Right on the part of the
centrists, just as those who first heard about Thermidor from us
and immediately began to vow it was already “accomplished” did
not. Since Radek, however, does not merely repeat general, empty
phrases, but tries to observe facts and understand them, he went
to the opposite extreme. The Stalinists began to seem to him,
after February 1928, to be Marxist, and Thermidor almost a
myth. Had we all been in Moscow, Radek would probably have
calmed down after his first exaggerations—until he had a new
inspiration. But Radek was in Siberia. He sent letters and theses
to a number of comrades. Everyone jumped on him. The
correspondence was intercepted by the GPU and turned over to
the Central Committee. Yaroslavsky reported Radek’s views at
meetings, muddling the whole situation for lack of understanding
and by telling malicious lies. Thus Radek became a captive of his
own impulsive character. He began to alter the facts in his effort
to bolster his position. He was forced more and more to color
Stalin’s zigzag in order to justify his own.

This, as stated before, has been going on for about a year and a
half. In July of last year Radek wrote his draft of an appeal to the
Sixth Congress. At that time the exiles were still permitted to
correspond somewhat freely; the Stalinists hoped that the split
would manifest itself more quickly that way. Through an
exchange of telegrams between the colonies of the Oppositionists
a kind of vote took place on the two texts of the appeal to the
Sixth Congress. Radek gathered half a dozen votes. My draft was
signed by several hundred. In the end Radek also attached his
name to the collective declaration.

On July 17, 1928, I subjected the draft of Radek’s theses to an
analysis in a letter I sent to the exiles and to Moscow. I consider
it timely to publish this analysis now.116 The reader will become
convinced through that, I hope, that in 1929 Radek has added
little to his mistakes of 1928. At any rate, these individual or
group zigzags, even when made with the best of intentions,
cannot turn the Opposition from its path.
Postscript, July 7, 1929

From Radek's letter published in Pravda it can be seen that he has gone much further—or has fallen much lower—than I had supposed. Now he sorrowfully explains that his irresistible attraction to Stalinist centrism prevents him living under the same roof as the Bolshevik-Leninists. Literally, Radek cannot live a whole year without complementing one of his ultraleft errors with a symmetrical error on the right! During 1927 he waged against me, inside the Opposition, a persistent struggle on the question of our attitude to the ultralefts (Sapronov, V.M. Smirnov, and others) who a priori had taken a position on the question of two parties. At that time Radek declared that we had no differences with the ultralefts and that not only should we not attack them but on the contrary should fuse with them in a single organization. In general, no one as yet had accused Radek of being persistent and serious. But this time, on the question of unity with the Democratic Centrist group, he gave proof of incontestable persistence which lasted from October 1926 right up to February 1928, i.e., a whole fifteen months, an interval absolutely unprecedented for Radek! Now Radek has turned inside out and he asserts that it is necessary to separate from the self-styled Bolshevik-Leninists because they are completely contaminated with Decemism. At present, it is not with Stalin that Radek has differences but with Sapronov. It can be predicted, without too much risk of error, that having torn himself away from the Leninist Opposition it is doubtful whether Radek will follow the Stalinist line any length; it is more probable that he will oscillate once more toward Brandlerism and Rykovism to end up in opposition to Stalin—this time, however, from the right. That is his unfortunate fate!
THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN CHINA AND THE TASKS OF THE BOLSHEVIK-LENINIST OPPOSITION

June 1929

At the February [1928] Plenum of the ECCI and the Sixth Congress of the Comintern a basically false evaluation of the situation in China was made. So as to cover up for the terrible defeats, it was declared that the revolutionary situation is maintained ("between two waves"), and that as before the course is toward armed uprising and soviets.

In fact, the second Chinese revolution of 1925-27 ended in a series of crushing defeats, without having completed its tasks. Now we have an interrevolutionary period, under the complete sway of bourgeois counterrevolution and with a strengthening of the position of foreign imperialism.

It is impossible to predict how long the interrevolutionary period will last, since it depends on many factors, internal and international. But the rise of a third revolution is inevitable; it is absolutely and completely grounded in the conditions of the defeat of the second revolution.

The tasks of the Chinese Communist Opposition, i.e., the Bolshevik-Leninists, are to understand the causes of the defeats clearly, to evaluate correctly the present situation, to regroup the staunchest, bravest, and most tested elements of the proletarian vanguard, to seek again the paths to the masses on the basis of transitional demands, and in all fields of social life to prepare the working class for the third Chinese revolution.

The second Chinese revolution was defeated in three stages in the course of 1927: in Shanghai, Wuhan, and Canton. All three defeats were the direct and immediate consequence of the basically false policy of the Communist International and the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.
The completely opportunist line of the Comintern found its expression in the four questions which determined the fate of the Chinese revolution:

1. *The question of the party.* The Chinese Communist Party entered a bourgeois party, the Kuomintang, while the bourgeois character of this party was disguised by a charlatan philosophy about a “workers’ and peasants’ party” and even about a party of “four classes” (Stalin-Martinov). The proletariat was thus deprived of its own party at a most critical period. Worse yet: the pseudo-Communist Party was converted into an additional tool of the bourgeoisie in deceiving the workers. There is nothing to equal this crime in the whole history of the world revolutionary movement. The responsibility falls entirely on the ECCI and Stalin, its inspirers.

Since even now in India, Korea, and other countries “workers’ and peasants’” parties, i.e., new Kuomintangs, are still being instituted, the Chinese Communist Opposition considers it necessary, on the basis of the experience of the second Chinese revolution, to declare:

*Never and under no circumstances may the party of the proletariat enter into a party of another class or merge with it organizationally.* An absolutely independent party of the proletariat is a first and decisive condition for communist politics.

2. *The question of imperialism.* The false course of the Comintern was based on the statement that the yoke of international imperialism is compelling all “progressive” classes to go together. In other words, according to the Comintern’s Stalinist theory, the yoke of imperialism would somehow change the laws of the class struggle. In fact, the economic, political, and military penetration of imperialism into China’s life brought the internal class struggle to extreme sharpness.

While at the bottom, in the agrarian bases of the Chinese economy, the bourgeoisie is organically and unbreakably linked with feudal forms of exploitation, at the top it is just as organically and unbreakably linked with world finance capital. The Chinese bourgeoisie cannot on its own break free either from agrarian feudalism or from foreign imperialism.

Its conflicts with the most reactionary feudal militarists and its collisions with the international imperialists always take second place at the decisive moment to its irreconcilable antagonism to the poor workers and peasants.
Having always behind it the help of the world imperialists against the Chinese workers and peasants, the so-called national bourgeoisie raises the class struggle to civil war more rapidly and more mercilessly than any other bourgeoisie in the world, and drowns the workers and peasants in blood.

It is a gigantic and historical crime that the leadership of the Comintern helped the Chinese national bourgeoisie to mount the backs of the workers and peasants, while shielding it from the criticism and protests of revolutionary Bolsheviks. Never in the history of all revolutions has the bourgeoisie had such a cover-up and such a disguise as the Stalinist leadership created for the Chinese bourgeoisie.

The Opposition reminds the Chinese workers and the workers of the whole world that as little as a few days before the Shanghai coup of Chiang Kai-shek, Stalin not only suddenly called for trust and support for Chiang Kai-shek, but also subjected to fierce repressions the Bolshevik-Leninists ("Trotskists") who had given warning in time of the defeat in store for the revolution.

The Chinese Opposition declares that all who support or spread or defend in relation to the past the legend that the "national" bourgeoisie is able to lead the masses to a revolutionary struggle are traitors. The tasks of the Chinese revolution can really be solved only on condition that the Chinese proletariat, at the head of the oppressed masses, throws off bourgeois political leadership and seizes power. There is no other way.

3. The question of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry. In this question too which has decisive importance for China, just as for all countries of the East, the policy of the Comintern constitutes a Menshevik falsification of Marxism. When we, the Opposition, spoke of the necessity for a revolutionary alliance of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie, we had in mind the oppressed masses, the tens and hundreds of millions of poor of town and countryside. The Comintern leadership understood and understands by the petty bourgeoisie those petty-bourgeois summits, overwhelmingly intellectuals, who, under the form of democratic parties and organizations, exploit the rural and urban poor, selling them out at the decisive moment to the big bourgeoisie. For us, it is not a matter of an alliance with Wang Ching-wei against Chiang Kai-shek, but of an alliance with the toiling masses against Wang Ching-wei and Chiang Kai-shek.
4. **The question of soviets.** The Bolshevik theory of soviets was replaced by an opportunist falsification, subsequently supplemented by adventurist practice.

For the countries of the East, just as for the countries of the West, soviets are the form of organization which can and must be created from the very first stage of a broad revolutionary upsurge. Soviets usually arise as revolutionary strike organizations, and then extend their functions and increase their authority in the eyes of the masses. At the next stage they become the organizations of a revolutionary uprising. Finally, after the victory of the uprising they are transformed into the organs of revolutionary power.

In hindering the Chinese workers and peasants from creating soviets, the Stalinist leadership of the Comintern artificially disarmed and weakened the toiling masses before the bourgeoisie and gave it the opportunity to crush the revolution. The subsequent attempt in December 1927 to set up a soviet in Canton in twenty-four hours was nothing but a criminal adventure, and it prepared only for the final defeat of the heroic workers of Canton by the unrestrained military.

These are the basic crimes of the Stalinist Comintern leadership in China. Taken together they indicate a substitution of Menshevism, perfected and taken to its limits, for Bolshevism. The crushing of the second Chinese revolution is above all a defeat for the strategy of Menshevism, which this time appeared under a Bolshevik mask. It is not by chance that in this the whole of the international social democracy was in solidarity with Stalin and Bukharin.

Without understanding the great lessons for which the Chinese working class has paid so dearly there can be no movement forward. The Chinese Left Opposition bases itself on these lessons, wholly and completely. The Chinese bourgeoisie, after the defeat of the popular masses, was compelled to endure the dictatorship of the military. This is for the given period the only possible form of state power, flowing from the irreconcilable antagonisms of the bourgeoisie toward the popular masses on the one hand and the dependence of the bourgeoisie on foreign imperialism on the other. Individual layers and provincial groups of the bourgeoisie are not content with the rule of the sword, but the big bourgeoisie as a whole cannot keep itself in power otherwise than with the sword.

The inability of the "national" bourgeoisie to stand at the head
of a revolutionary nation makes democratic parliamentarism unacceptable to it. Under the name of a temporary regime of "guardianship of the people," the "national" bourgeoisie is establishing the rule of military cliques.

These last, which reflect the special and local interests of various groups of the bourgeoisie, come one after the other into conflicts and open wars, which are the reward for a crushed revolution.

It would be pitiful and contemptible now to try to determine which of the generals is "progressive," so as to again bind up the fate of the revolutionary struggle to his sword.

The task of the Opposition is to counterpose the workers and the poor to the whole social mechanism of the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie. It is not the Stalinist policy of collaboration and alliances with leaders, but the irreconcilable class policy of Bolshevism that will be the Opposition's line.

From the end of 1927 the Chinese revolution gave way to counterrevolution which is still continuing to deepen. The clearest expression of this process is the fate of the Chinese party. At the Sixth Congress the number of members of the Chinese Communist Party was boastfully given as one hundred thousand. The Opposition said then that after 1927 the party would hardly be able to keep even ten thousand members. In fact, the party today musters not more than three to four thousand, and its decline is still going on. The false political orientation, which at every step comes into irreconcilable contradiction with the facts, is destroying the Chinese Communist Party and will inevitably lead it to its doom, if the Communist Opposition does not secure a basic change in its whole policy and in the whole party regime.

In continuing to cover up for its errors, the present leadership of the Comintern is clearing the way in the Chinese workers' movement for two enemies: social democracy and anarchism. The revolutionary movement can only be defended from these complementary dangers by the Communist Opposition, which wages an irreconcilable struggle against both the opportunism and the adventurism which inevitably flow from the Stalinist leadership of the Comintern.

There is at present no mass revolutionary movement in China. All that can be done is to prepare for it. The preparation must consist in attracting ever wider circles of workers into the political life of the country, on the basis that exists now in an epoch of triumphant counterrevolution.
The slogan of soviets, as a slogan for the present, is now adventurism or empty talk.

The struggle against the military dictatorship must inevitably assume the form of transitional revolutionary-democratic demands, leading to the demand for a Chinese Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal direct, equal, and secret voting, for the solution of the most important problems facing the country: the introduction of the eight-hour day, the confiscation of the land, and the securing of national independence for China.

Having rejected transitional revolutionary-democratic slogans, the Sixth Congress left the Chinese Communist Party without any slogans and thereby denied it the possibility of approaching the task of mobilizing the masses under conditions of counter-revolution.

The Chinese Opposition condemns the lifeless irrelevance of such a policy. The Chinese Opposition predicts that as soon as the workers start to emerge from their paralysis they will inevitably throw up democratic slogans. If the Communists stand back, the revival of political struggle will go to the benefit of petty-bourgeois democracy, and it is possible to predict in advance that the present Chinese Stalinists will follow in its wake, giving the democratic slogans not a revolutionary, but a conciliatory interpretation.

The Opposition therefore considers it necessary to make clear in advance that the real road to a solution of the problems of national independence and the raising of the standard of living of the mass of the people is a basic change in the whole social structure by means of a third Chinese revolution.

At present, it is still difficult to predict when and in what ways the revolutionary revival in the country will start. There are, however, symptoms which allow the conclusion to be drawn that political revival will be preceded by a certain economic revival, with a greater or lesser participation of foreign capital.

An economic upsurge, even a weak one of short duration, will again assemble the workers in the factories, raise their feeling of class self-confidence, and thereby create the conditions for the setting up of trade-union organizations and for a new extension of the influence of the Communist Party. An industrial upsurge would in no case liquidate the revolution. On the contrary, in the last analysis it would revive and sharpen all the unsolved problems and all the now repressed class and subclass antagonisms (between the military, the bourgeoisie and “democracy,”
between the "national" bourgeoisie and imperialism, and, finally, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie as a whole). The upsurge would lead the Chinese popular masses out of oppression and passivity. The inevitable new crisis after this could serve as a new revolutionary impulse.

Of course, factors of an international character could hinder or possibly accelerate these processes.

The Opposition therefore does not bind itself to any ready-made scheme. Its duty is to follow the actual development of the internal life of the country and the whole world situation. All the tactical turns of our policy must be timed to the real situation of each new stage. And our general strategic line must lead to the conquest of power.

The dictatorship of the Chinese proletariat must include the Chinese revolution in the international socialist revolution. The victory of socialism in China, just as in the USSR, is thinkable only in the conditions of a victorious international revolution. The Opposition categorically rejects the reactionary Stalinist theory of socialism in one country.

The immediate tasks of the Opposition are:

a) to publish the most important documents of the Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition);

b) to commence as soon as possible publication of a weekly political and theoretical organ of the Opposition;

c) to select, on the basis of a clear conception, the best, most reliable elements of communism, capable of withstanding the pressure of counterrevolution, creating a centralized faction of Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition) and preparing themselves and others for a new upsurge;

d) to maintain constant active contact with the Left Opposition in all other countries, so as to attain in the shortest possible time the construction of a strong, ideologically united international faction of Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition).

Only such a faction, openly and boldly coming out under its own banner, both inside the Communist parties and outside them, is capable of saving the Communist International from decay and degeneration and returning it to the path of Marx and Lenin.
THE BOLSHEVIK OPPOSITIONISTS NEED HELP¹²¹

June 1, 1929

At the time of the first rumors about my exile, comrades in various countries, worried about my fate, formed "Trotsky Aid" committees. These committees started collecting money. In expressing my warm gratitude for the comrades' concern about my fate, I should like at the same time to state that personally I have no need of financial help. I shall put the amount spent on "Trotsky Aid" in various ways connected with my exile into a fund to help the Bolsheviks suffering under the Thermidorean measures of the Stalin bureaucracy.

Regardless what this fund will be called from now on, I request the comrades to continue the collections, since the need among the Russian Bolshevik-Leninists (Oppositionists) and their families has become extremely great. If they collect money for the Opposition, Russian workers are threatened with unemployment and banishment. Petty-bourgeois and official circles see in the Bolshevik Opposition, quite rightly, their irreconcilable foe. All the more need for help to the arrested and banished Bolsheviks and their families from cothinkers, friends, and revolutionaries in general throughout the world.
WHY I WANT TO COME TO LONDON

June 11, 1929

My state of health has obliged me to decline all interviews during the past few weeks, but I now desire to receive a representative of an English newspaper, especially after false information concerning me has been spread throughout the world by a prominent London newspaper from its Constantinople correspondent, and in view of its inconceivable refusal to publish the formal denial which I forwarded it immediately this information came to my knowledge.

It is untrue that I have addressed a demand to return to Russia to the Stalinist faction, which for the moment governs Soviet Russia. Nothing is changed in my situation as an exile, and it ought not to have been necessary to make a denial to the fantasy of a poor imagination, which is without scruples concerning so-called plans in the Orient and the Extreme Orient. The Near East begins in Turkey, and my sojourn here has shown that I understand the right of refuge.

I have just addressed a request to the British government for permission to go to England. This is not because I have any reason to complain of the treatment which I have received at the hands of the Turkish authorities. On the contrary, they have shown themselves to be perfectly loyal and hospitable. I should not dream of leaving Turkey were I not compelled to do so for a number of important reasons.

My state of health and especially that of my wife demands treatment which it is impossible to obtain here. Furthermore, residence in London would allow me to pursue my scientific work and enable me to superintend the publication of my books in
A *Punch* cartoon opposing Trotsky’s request for a British visa.
English. Here I am deprived of the necessary sources of information. The smallest verification entails a great loss of time.

I do not wish to conceal that there is besides, at this moment, a special interest for me to go to England, where a great political change has just taken place.

The party which for the second time assumes power in Great Britain believes that the difficulties created by private ownership can be surmounted through the medium of democracy. I want to see how it will be done.

I do not think that democracy which believes it can solve the greatest problems by democratic methods can begin by refusing the right of asylum—a democratic institution—to an adversary who has no intention of interfering with or intervening in British political affairs, but who desires only to observe and to learn.

It is well known that the German government refused to give me a visa for Germany. I was therefore unable to receive that lesson in democracy which Herr Loebe, the president of the Reichstag, had promised me. The right of asylum exists in Germany only for its political friends, which means that it does not exist at all, despite the fact that it is continually affirmed that Germany is the freest country in the world.

The Norwegian government, which by the way I had not approached, declared itself unable to undertake responsibility for my personal security. Suffice it to say that I am the only private person whose security is dependent on oneself and one's friends. To put the question on a humane basis, I demand that less importance be attributed to my security and more to my health.

Leon Trotsky

[Trotsky's written statement was followed by a verbal exchange with the Daily Express correspondent:]

I asked M. Trotsky then how he would reconcile the offer of refuge by Great Britain to a man exiled from Russia with a renewal of diplomatic relations between the two countries. He replied that he saw nothing in that connection whereby difficulty might arise.

"On the contrary," he said, "for the British government, clinging firmly to the principle of nonintervention, the right of refuge is entirely one of an internal order. Equally am I sure that with the reestablishment of diplomatic relations the British government would not think of demanding that the Soviet government should modify its internal regime."
He added laughingly that of course he would never have dreamed of asking for permission to enter England while Sir Austen Chamberlain was at the Foreign Office. "Sir Austen," he said, "for some reason had a personal objection to me which he has aired on not a few occasions.

"Yes," he continued, speaking of the question of resumed relations, "I hope the new government will repair the mistake committed by its predecessor. That British industry should be made to suffer merely because of discontent with the Communist International is a thing I cannot understand. I believe, moreover, that this is also the opinion of British industrialists, who found it necessary to send an important delegation to Russia to study the situation."

M. Trotsky spoke of his works which are now in preparation, citing especially that which has for its subject the world situation since the war, notably the situation of the United States vis-a-vis Europe in general and in particular vis-a-vis Great Britain.

"What is my opinion," he concluded, "concerning the possibilities of the new socialist government and the perspectives open before it? It is precisely these questions which I shall treat in my new book on world politics.

"The great experiment which begins with Mr. MacDonald's new cabinet will furnish me with new elements for appreciation and discussion."
Dear Comrade,

Thank you very much for your detailed letter of June 3. It contains much valuable information which I hope to use in the future. Here I wish to confine myself to the question of our attitude toward the German Right Opposition.

1. You admit that Brandler and Thalheimer failed to understand the revolutionary situation in Germany in 1923, the revolutionary situation in China in 1925-27, the revolutionary situation in Britain in 1926, and finally the Thermidorean character of the struggle against “Trotskyism” in 1923-27. All this is admitted by you. But thereby you admit that Brandler and Thalheimer are not revolutionists, because revolutionists are defined and known by their attitude toward the basic issues of the world revolution. What can we Bolsheviks have in common with nonrevolutionists or, what is still worse, with people who have fought against our revolutionary decisions and slogans during the most critical moments in the last six to seven years?

2. You are, however, disturbed over Brandler and Thalheimer being called liquidators and Mensheviks. If one takes this literally, then it is of course wrong. But the tendency whereby they are counterposed to us is undoubtedly the liquidationist and Menshevik tendency. The Vienna Arbeiter Zeitung criticizes me in exactly the same way as Thalheimer. Together with Thalheimer the Vienna Arbeiter Zeitung sympathizes with Stalin against me, and with Rykov and Bukharin against Stalin. But the Vienna Arbeiter Zeitung does it openly, while Brandler and Thalheimer play the wretched game of hide-and-seek. In such cases I prefer the Arbeiter Zeitung, i.e., an admitted enemy.
3. Your letter contains annihilating arguments against the Right. Nevertheless you find it necessary to add that the situation “in the German Communist Party would improve if it were carrying out the so-called Right policy instead of the present policy.”

But, after all, we have already seen the Brandlerite policy as the leading party policy. It led to the greatest catastrophe toward the end of 1923. This catastrophe is at the bottom of all the subsequent violent shifts of German communism to the right and to the left. This catastrophe was the premise for the ensuing phase of stabilization of European capitalism. How then can one overlook the fact that Brandler as a politician stands on the other side of the barricades?

4. You know that I did not arrive at this devastating conclusion suddenly. I had hopes that Brandler could learn. In the autumn of 1923 he sensed his own inadequacy. He told me several times that he lacked the stamina to orient himself in a revolutionary situation. However, after he let the revolutionary situation slip by, he became extremely arrogant. He began to accuse me of “pessimism.” He looked forward to 1924 with “greater optimism.” I then understood that this man was incapable of distinguishing between the face of the revolution and its back.

If this were a personal idiosyncrasy, it wouldn’t be so bad. But this has now been erected into a system and upon this system a faction is being built. What can we have in common with this faction?

5. I am not in the least taking up the defense of the policy of Maslow126 and the others. In 1923 Maslow’s verbal radicalism stemmed from the same passivity as in Brandler’s case. Not understanding the ABC’s of the problem, Maslow tried to ridicule my demand that a date for the uprising be set. At the Fifth Congress he still believed that the revolution was gaining momentum. In other words, on the most fundamental questions he made the same mistakes as Brandler, serving them up with an ultraleftist sauce. But Maslow tried to learn until he fell into the swamp of capitulationism. Other former ultralefts did learn a few things. I am by no means taking responsibility for the Volkswille line as a whole. In it now there are many regurgitations from the past, i.e., a combination of opportunist and ultraleft tendencies. But nevertheless, these comrades have learned a great deal and many of them have shown that they are capable of learning more. On the other hand, Brandler and Thalheimer have taken a
gigantic step backward, raising their revolutionary blindness into a platform.

6. You see merit in their struggle for party democracy. I don’t see any merit in it. Brandler and Thalheimer never raised their voices against the crushing of the Left Opposition. They not only tolerated the Stalinist regime but supported it. They joined in the chorus of the Thermidorean persecution of “Trotskyism.” When did they feel themselves called upon to struggle for party democracy? When the apparatus began to crush them and when they became convinced that they could not come to power by exclusively serving the Stalinists. Is it really possible to see merit in opportunists because they begin shouting when the centrists, afraid of criticism from the left, begin crushing them? No one likes to be beaten. There is no merit in it.

The centrist methods of struggle against the Right are revolting and in the last analysis help the Right. But this does not at all mean that a democratic regime in the Communist Party is obliged to assure the right of membership to the opportunist tendency of Brandler.

It is impermissible to approach party democracy as a thing in itself. We speak of party democracy on specific revolutionary foundations, which exclude Brandlerism.

7. The second merit of the Brandlerites you see in their struggle for transitional demands and their search for ties with the masses, etc. But after all do we need ties with the masses for the sake of these ties alone and not for the sake of revolutionary (and therewith international) goals? If we were to proceed only from ties with the masses, then we ought to turn our eyes toward the Second International and Amsterdam. In this respect the German social democracy is far more imposing than Brandler and Thalheimer.

It is of course possible to object that this is an exaggeration: Brandler and Thalheimer are, you know, not the social democracy. Of course, they are not yet the social democracy, and, of course, they are not the existing social democracy. But one must know how to approach events in their development. The German social democracy did not begin with Hermann Mueller either. On the other hand, Brandler still only wants to win the masses; he hasn’t won them yet. You yourself remark with indignation that the Brandlerites are turning their backs upon the international proletariat. They are not concerned with the Russian Revolution, nor with the Chinese revolution, nor with the rest of mankind.
They want to carry out their policy in Germany, just as Stalin wants to build socialism in Russia. Live and let live. However, we know where this has led in the past: to August 4, 1914. Permit me to recall once again that young opportunist factions, especially oppositional factions, are no “nicer” in relation to the old social chauvinist parties than a young pig is “nicer” than an old swine.

8. But those who imagine that Brandler is actually capable of leading the masses “on the soil of reality” (i.e., of national reformism) are seriously mistaken. No, on this soil Brandler has an unbeatable competitor. To the extent that an ordinary worker has to choose between Brandler and Wels, he will take Wels, and in his own way he will be correct: there is no need to begin from the beginning something that has already been accomplished.

9. You seem to give credit to Brandler and Thalheimer for their criticism of Thaelmann’s May 1 policy. In passing you express assurance that I could not possibly approve of this policy. I don’t know whether you have read my letter to the Sixth World Congress “What Now?” [in The Third International After Lenin]. This letter contains a special chapter devoted to the perspectives of the radicalization of the German working class and in it is a direct and categorical warning against the puerile Thaelmannist overestimation of the degree of this radicalization and against the dangers of ultraleft adventures latent in this. I will deal in greater detail with all this in a pamphlet which I hope to issue next month. But in criticizing bureaucratic adventurism I will draw all the more sharply a line of demarcation between my criticism and that of Brandler. Opportunists always appear very triumphant in criticizing revolutionary adventurism. But they also pave the way for it: Brandler paved the way for Maslow just as Maslow paved the way for Thaelmann, who combines all the mistakes of Brandler and Maslow and adds to them his own blunders which stem from bureaucratic stupidity and boastful ignorance.

10. You point to individual groups of the Left Opposition and call them “sectarian.” We ought to come to an agreement on the content of this term. Among us there are elements who are satisfied to sit at home and criticize the mistakes of the official party, without setting themselves any broader tasks, without assuming any practical revolutionary obligations, converting revolutionary opposition into a title, something akin to an Order
of the Legion of Honor. There are in addition sectarian tendencies that express themselves by splitting every hair into four parts. It is necessary to struggle against this. And I am personally ready to wage a struggle against it, and not to be deterred, if need be, by old friendships, personal ties, and so forth and so on.

However, there should be no illusions. Revolutionary Marxists have been once again—not for the first time and probably not for the last time—driven into a position of an international propaganda society. By the very nature of things such a situation involves certain elements of sectarianism, which can be overcome only gradually. You seem to be frightened by the smallness of your numbers. This is, of course, unpleasant. It is, of course, best to have organizations numbering millions. But where are we, the vanguard of the vanguard, to obtain organizations of millions the day after the world revolution has suffered catastrophic defeats in the most important countries, defeats produced by a Menshevik leadership that hides behind a false mask of Bolshevism? Where?

We are passing through a period of colossal reaction, following the revolutionary years (1917-23). On a new and higher historical stage, we, revolutionary Marxists, find ourselves thrown back into a position of a small and persecuted minority, almost as at the beginning of the imperialist war. As all of history demonstrates, beginning, say, with the First International, such regressions are unavoidable. Our advantage over our predecessors lies in the fact that the situation today is more mature and that we ourselves are more "mature," for we stand on the shoulders of Marx, Lenin, and many others. We shall capitalize on our advantage only if we are able to evince the greatest ideological irreconcilability, fiercer even than Lenin’s irreconcilability at the outbreak of the war. Characterless impressionists like Radek will depart from us. They will invariably speak about our “sectarianism.” We must not fear words. We have already passed twice through similar experiences. This happened during the 1907-12 reaction in Russia. This happened in all of Europe during the war years. There will still be individual capitulations, desertions, and outright betrayals. This is inherent in the nature of our period. All the more reliable will be the selection of our ranks. The greatest honor for a genuine revolutionist today is to remain a “sectarian” of revolutionary Marxism in the eyes of philistines, whimperers, and superficial thinkers. Let me repeat: today we are once again only an international propaganda society. I do not see
in this the slightest reason for pessimism, despite the fact that behind us is the great historical mountain of the October Revolution. Or, more accurately, precisely because this great historical mountain lies behind us. I have no doubt that the development of the new chapter of the proletarian revolution will trace its genealogy back to our "sectarian" group.

11. In conclusion, a few words about Brandler's faction as a whole. You agree with me that Brandler and Thalheimer are incorrigible. I am ready to agree with you that the faction remains superior to its leaders. Many workers fell into this faction, despairing of the policy of the official party and at the same time remembering the ill-starred leadership of the ultralefts following 1923. All this is true. A section of these workers, like a section of the ultraleft workers, will go over to the social democracy. Another section will come to us, if we do not show any indulgence to the Right. Our task consists in explaining that the Brandlerite faction is only a new gateway to the social democracy.

12. Do we need a platform of transitional demands? We do. Do we need correct tactics in the trade unions? Unquestionably. But it is possible to discuss these questions only with those who have clearly and firmly decided for what ends we need all this. As I will not discuss various tendencies in materialism with a man who crosses himself on passing a church, just so I will not start elaborating slogans and tactics with Brandler, who, out of principle, labels the back of the revolution as its face (and vice versa). We must first entrench ourselves on principled positions, take a correct starting point, and then proceed to move along tactical lines. We are now in the period of principled self-clarification and merciless demarcation from opportunists and muddlers. This is the only avenue to the highway of revolution.

With warm and irreconcilable greetings,

L. Trotsky
TENACITY,
TENACITY, TENACITY!131

June 14, 1929

The vacillations of Radek and a few others at the top are evidently encouraging Zinoviev. The papers say—and it looks very like the truth—that Zinoviev suggested to Stalin a brand new slogan: “With the Trotskyists, but without Trotsky.” Since Zinoviev at his capitulation lost not only the last shreds of political honor but also his supporters, he is now trying to get Stalin to include the “Trotskyists” in the party, so that they can then like every other capitulating group and grouplet condemn themselves to political nullity. Pyatakov has become an ordinary official. Nothing is heard of the famous Safarov132 group (the left Zinovievists); it is as if they had drowned. Zinoviev and Kamenev are vainly knocking at Molotov’s, Ordzhonikidze’s, and Voroshilov’s, mistaking the doors of the party offices for the doors of the party. But the officials are not opening their arms to them. Kamenev, as letters from Moscow report, was on the point of completely saying goodbye to politics and writing a book on Lenin. And why not? A bad book is always better than a hopeless policy. But Zinoviev is pretending as hard as he can to be alive. Each new capitulation acts on the venerable capitulator like a shot in the arm.

All these people talk about the party, swear by the party, capitulate in the name of the party. It is as if they are waiting for the party finally to appreciate their political cowardice and call them to leadership. Isn’t it grotesque? True, the press reports that the capitulators’ anguish for the party will be rewarded in the person of the not unknown Maslow. Maslow is supposed to be due appointment as a “leader.” But by whom? Not by the party, but by the Stalinist apparatus, which now needs a change in Ger-
many. But Stalin has no intention of replacing himself. The paradox is that the Maslows can come to their new "glory" in the apparatus only by betraying Zinoviev, although the policy of Maslow was a shadow of the Zinoviev model. Stalin can need Maslow only against the ill-fated Thaelmann. But Stalin cannot need Zinoviev and Kamenev. Stalin needs the official Pyatakov, the official Krestinsky. But Radek can hardly find himself a place in Molotov's system. To control the Comintern they now need people like Gusev and Manuilsky.

Radek and a few others with him think that the most favorable moment for their capitulation has now arrived. Why, actually? Because, you see, Stalin has dealt with Rykov, Tomsky, and Bukharin. But was our task really to get one part of the ruling group to deal with the other? Has the principled position on basic political questions really changed? Has the party regime changed? Hasn't the anti-Marxist program of the Comintern remained in force? Is there really anything at all sure about tomorrow?

The present crushing of the Right, sharp in form but superficial in content, in its turn is only a by-product of the policy of the Opposition. Bukharin is completely correct when he accuses Stalin of not having thought up a single word, but just used bits of the Opposition platform. What has produced the left twitch of the apparatus? Our attack, our irreconcilability, the growth of our influence, the courage of our cadres. If at the Fifteenth Congress we had committed hara-kiri along with Zinoviev, Stalin would have had no convincing reason to deny his own past and adorn himself with feathers plucked from the Opposition.

By capitulating, Radek has simply struck himself from the ranks of the living. He will fall into the category headed by Zinoviev of half-suspended, half-pardoned people. These people are afraid to say a word of their own aloud, are afraid to have their own opinions, and exist by looking round at their own shadows. They are not even allowed to support the ruling faction publicly. Stalin has answered them through Molotov, as once Benkendorf, the general of Nicholas I, answered the editor of a patriotic newspaper: the government has no need of your support. If Radek could become the cashier of the State Bank, like Pyatakov, that would be another matter. But Radek is pursuing the very highest of political goals. He wants to approach the party. Like others of his type, he has ceased to see that it is precisely the Opposition that is the most alive and active force in the party.
The whole life of the party, all its decisions and actions, revolve around the ideas and slogans of the Left Opposition. In the struggle between Stalin and Bukharin both sides, like clowns in the circus, are throwing accusations of Trotskyism at each other. They have no ideas of their own. It is only we who have a theoretical position and political foresight. On these bases we are forming new cadres—the second Bolshevik enrollment. But the capitulators are destroying and demoralizing the official cadres, teaching them to sham, to play the chameleon, to grovel ideologically, in conditions and at a time when theoretical clarity must be assured with unyielding revolutionary courage.

A revolutionary epoch quickly exhausts people. It is not so easy to withstand the pressure of the imperialist war, the October Revolution, the series of international defeats and the reaction growing from them. People spend themselves, their nerves fail, consciousness gets worn out and falls apart. This fact can always be observed in a revolutionary struggle. We have seen the tragic examples of how the generation of Bebel, Guesde, Victor Adler, and Plekhanov was used up. But there the process took decades. Development has gone at a completely different rate from the time of the imperialist war and the October Revolution. Some perished in the civil war, others could not hold out physically; many, all too many, gave up ideologically and morally. Hundreds and hundreds of Old Bolsheviks are now living as obedient officials, criticizing the boss over a cup of tea, and toiling away. But these at least have not shared in the complicated conjuring tricks, have not pretended to be eagles, have not taken up oppositional struggle, have not written platforms, but have quietly and slowly degenerated from revolutionaries into bureaucrats.

One should not think that the Opposition is protected from Thermidorean influences. We have seen a whole series of examples of how Old Bolsheviks, who had fought to maintain the tradition of the party and themselves, put out their last effort for the Opposition: some by 1925, some by 1927, some by 1929. But finally they have written themselves off; their nerves couldn’t take it. Radek is now the hurried, clamorous ideologist of that kind of element.

The Opposition would have committed shameful suicide if it had begun to equate itself with the moods of the tired and the skeptical. Over six years of intensive ideological struggle a new generation of revolutionaries has grown up and been educated, which for the first time approaches great historical tasks on the
basis of its own experience. The capitulation of the older people produces in this generation the necessary selection. This is the real leaven for future mass struggles. These elements of the Opposition will find the way to the proletarian core of the party and to the working class as a whole.

Tenacity, tenacity, tenacity!—that is the slogan for the current period. And let the dead bury their dead.
WHAT WILL THE FIRST OF AUGUST BRING?136

June 26, 1929

"The West European Bureau of the Communist International" has called on the workers of the whole world to demonstrate in the streets on the first of August. This demonstration has been called in response to the bloody repression of the vanguard of the Berlin workers by the German Social Democrats. No revolutionist has any doubt that the historic crime perpetrated on the first of May must not and will not remain unavenged. The only question is when and how we can avenge ourselves against the social democracy and its bourgeois master for the bloody attack on the May Day demonstration of the workers. The method chosen by the Comintern is wrong to the core. It is open preparation for a new defeat.

The May Day demonstration is a traditional demonstration of the proletariat which has been regularly scheduled to take place on a specific day of the year, independently of the course of the international and national life of the proletariat. But the entire history of the May Day celebration shows that it never elevated itself above the real course of the workers' movement, but was wholly determined by this movement and subordinate to it. In parties carrying on peaceful reformist work it was transformed from the beginning into a peaceful mobilization and before the war had lost all its revolutionary attributes. In countries where an energetic struggle was taking place for universal suffrage the May Day celebration was transformed into a constituent part of this struggle. In Russia the May Day celebration was identified with the revolutionary struggle against czarism and from 1905 on reflected all the stages the struggle went through: from stormy attack to complete quiescence. We saw the same thing in Germany after the war.
Recent May Day celebrations naturally reflected those processes which have currently found their expression in the life of the trade unions, in the municipal and parliamentary elections, especially in England and Belgium, and in many other more trivial manifestations of the life of the working class. The political stabilization of the bourgeoisie during the last six years has found its chief prop in the policy of the Comintern, which has guaranteed the defeat of the proletariat in Germany, China, England, Poland, and Bulgaria, and the weakening of its position in the USSR; the consistent disintegration of the Comintern; the revival of the social democracy. The political stabilization of the bourgeoisie has been the necessary premise for its economic stabilization which in turn has weakened the possibility of direct revolutionary activity.

In more concentrated form this is the situation that has recently unfolded in England, where only three years ago the proletariat carried through its revolutionary general strike. In a country where capitalism is suffering a gigantic crisis of decline and where all the leaders of the workers' organizations have succeeded in disgracing themselves by an unprecedented betrayal, the Communist Party has shown itself at the polls to be totally insignificant in size. For several years the Comintern and the Red International of Labor Unions have been announcing to the whole world that in the revolutionary Minority Movement of the trade unions there are about a million workers who follow the Communist banner. The unemployed together with adult family members easily add up to over two million voters. The miners, who have just come through an extensive strike and are compelled to work under worsened conditions, number almost as many. Out of this three or four million it would seem at least a decent share of the vote ought to have fallen to the Communist Party. And what happened? Nominating twenty-seven candidates in the districts most sympathetic to it, the Communist Party won in all only fifty thousand votes. This terrible debacle is the direct and immediate payment for the bankrupt policy of the Comintern on the question of the Anglo-Russian Committee—the central question of Comintern policy in England during the last few years.

The recent British elections [May 1929] revealed an unquestionable leftward movement of the mass of the workers. But this leftward movement, i.e., a breaking away of millions of workers from the bourgeoisie, has at the given stage a clearly reformist-
What Will the First of August Bring?

pacifist character; that fact is sharply emphasized by the defeat of the British Communist Party. It is hard to imagine a more cruel joke than that perpetrated by the Comintern on British communism. For several years the Comintern compelled the British Communist Party to hang onto the coattails of Purcell and hold a revolutionary wreath over the head of Cook. The Moscow leadership remained for a full year in a bloc with the undisputed strikebreakers of the General Council. Under these circumstances the Communist Party did not exist politically. The revolutionary minority of the trade unions were left intellectually helpless, and the Comintern with its entire policy helped Thomas and Purcell, discourage, and absorb this minority. Then, after this, the British party received an order to make a 180-degree turn. As a result, it could only certify that the working class simply does not know it as an independent revolutionary party.

The German Communist Party, incomparably stronger than the other parties, also has a more serious tradition and more militant cadres. But in 1928 the German working class had only begun to emerge from the paralysis which its vast majority was afflicted with after the catastrophe of 1923. Giving nine million votes to the social democracy, the German workers explicitly declared that they wish again to try their luck on the peaceful road of reform.

In China the Communist Party now numbers three or four thousand members, not the hundred thousand which was so light-mindedly claimed at the Sixth Congress by the Comintern bureaucrats. But this small party is in a state of still further disintegration. The leadership of Stalin, a combination of opportunism and adventurism, has wrecked the Chinese revolution for years, and with it the young Chinese Communist Party. When the Central Committee of the French party promises that on the first of August proletarian battalions will march in Shanghai as in Paris, their prediction can only be classed as cheap rhetoric. Alas, everything points to the fact that battalions will not march either in Shanghai or in Paris. The French Communist Party, like its pale shadow the Unitary General Confederation of Labor, has by no means increased its influence in recent years. There is not the slightest hope that the first of August will prove any more revolutionary in France than the first of May. Semard and Monmousseau undertake everything and promise everything in order to do nothing.
Or perhaps the outcome of the Belgian elections allows one to hope for a demonstration of the workers of Brussels and Antwerp at the summons of the Jacquemottes.\(^{142}\)

We will not dwell on the other parties of the Comintern. They all reveal exactly the same features: decline of influence, organizational weakening, ideological fracturing, loss of mass confidence in the appeals of the party.

The Czechoslovak party was considered one of the most powerful sections of the Comintern. But its first attempt last year to designate a "red day" uncovered an alarming stagnant reformism in the party, poisoned with the spirit of Smeral\(^{143}\) and those like him. As a result of the mere command from the top to become revolutionary in twenty-four hours, the Czechoslovak party simply began to crumble.

We were told during the period of the Sixth Congress that the situation in Germany was placing revolution on the order of the day. Thaelmann unequivocally announced: "The situation is becoming more revolutionary every day." But that judgment was fundamentally false. In a letter sent by Comrade Trotsky to the Sixth Congress in the name of the Opposition ("What Now?") the official estimate of the situation was analyzed in complete detail, and a correct warning was issued a year ago against the ruinous adventuristic conclusions which that estimate would entail. The Opposition does not deny the signs of a leftward movement of the German working class. On the contrary, for us this "leftward movement" found unqualified expression in the last elections to the Reichstag [May 1928]. But the crux of the question revolves around what the present *stage* of this leftward movement is. In Germany there has been a simultaneous growth of the social democracy and communism. That has undoubtedly meant an ebbing of broad circles of the workers away from the bourgeois parties. But the principal current still flows in the channel of the social democracy. In these circumstances it is intolerably light-minded to say that "the situation is becoming more revolutionary." The social democracy is not part of the revolution. Hermann Mueller and Zoergiebel\(^{144}\) reminded the whole world of that on the first of May.

We have to understand correctly what growth of the social democracy means in the present circumstances. After the experience of the war and the defeat of German militarism, after the revolutionary uprising and bitter defeats of the proletariat, broad masses of the workers, including a new generation, feel the need
to again go through the school of reformism. In the present epoch when all processes are rapidly carried through, this school will not last for decades like the prewar school of the social democracy, but most likely only a few years. It is just this period, however, that the German, yes, and the whole European working class is going through. The appearance of the independent Brandler faction is a small incidental symptom of this process. The turn of the workers from the bourgeoisie to the social democracy testifies to a leftward movement of the masses. But this leftward movement has still a purely pacifist, reformist, and nationalist character. The further development of this process depends upon a whole series of domestic and international factors, and to a considerable degree upon our own policy, upon our ability to understand the essence of the process, upon our skill in distinguishing its successive stages.

The reformist leftward movement will begin to be replaced by a revolutionary one from that moment when the masses begin in a continually increasing flood to turn from the social democracy to the Communist parties. But that has not yet happened. Individual, episodic manifestations do not matter. It is necessary to take the process as a whole. When Thaelmann, imitating Stalin and other leaders of the Comintern, said in July 1928 that "the situation is becoming more revolutionary every day," he only revealed a complete incapacity to understand the dialectic of the process that is occurring in the working class.

The German Communist Party received 3,200,000 votes in last year's elections. After the defeat of 1923, that is, after the collapse of Brandlerism, and after the monstrous mistakes of the ultralefts of 1924 and 1925, such a result was altogether significant and promising. But it was not by any means a symptom of a revolutionary situation. Nine million are weighing upon these 3,200,000. This was made clear at the time of the armored cruiser campaign,¹⁴⁵ which completely refuted Thaelmann's sales talk about the situation becoming "more revolutionary every day."

The working masses, and above all the new generation, are now passing through an accelerated repetition of the course of reformism. That is the fundamental fact. From this it does not follow, of course, that we must soften our attitude toward the social democracy or the Right Opposition (Bukharin, Brandler and Company). But our own tactical tasks ought to flow first of all from a correct understanding of what is taking place. The 1929 May Day celebration could not jump out of its political
setting. It could not help the Communist Party become stronger in twenty-four hours than it actually was. May Day could be only an episode in the process of an as yet pacifist and reformist “leftward movement” of the masses. The attempt to reach the stars in twenty-four hours, strictly according to the calendar, flowed from a false estimate of the processes taking place among the masses and inevitably led to a defeat, in which there unquestionably was an element of adventurism. The opportunists always make gains on the miscalculations of revolutionary adventurism.

in part also the Brandlerites, who represent the smoothest, most honest, and newest edition of “revolutionary” social democracy. They are using the debacle of revolutionary adventurism in order to discredit revolutionary methods in general.

There cannot be any doubt that the May Day celebration set the German Communist Party back. This does not mean of course that it set the party back forever, or even for a long time. The unexampled crime perpetrated by the social democracy will be gradually assimilated into the consciousness of the working masses and will help them make the transition to communism. There can be no doubt of that—on one single condition: a generally correct policy of the Communist Party itself.

If you approach the situation from this point of view it is necessary first of all to ask the question: What is now needed by the Berlin workers and the German workers and all other workers? A repetition of May Day or a learning of the lessons of May Day? The question itself contains the answer. A repetition is unthinkable and not to be permitted. A repetition would be a naked, senseless adventure. What we want is a learning of the lessons, a correct evaluation of what happened. What we want is a correct political line.

We have said that May Day cannot artificially raise itself above the political level of the movement. Still less can artificial additions of “red days,” bureaucratically designated in advance according to the calendar, do this. Moreover, the Comintern is trying to make the first of August the revenge for the first of May. It is possible to say even now, and it is necessary to say it in the hearing of all: the first of August “red day” is condemned in advance to failure. In addition: what was of worth in the first of May (the self-sacrifice of a part of the proletarian vanguard) will be reduced to a minimum on the first of August. And what was
bad on the first of May (the elements of adventurism) will be increased to a greater degree.

In the autumn of 1923, when ideological life in the Comintern was not yet entirely strangled, there was an international polemic in the leading Communist organs as to whether or not it is possible to set the date for an insurrection in advance. Basing themselves on all the experience of revolutions, the Marxists demonstrated that it is not only possible but necessary. Following Stalin and Zinoviev, Brandler and Maslow laughed at the idea of setting the date for an insurrection, thereby showing that on the fundamental questions of the revolution they were still hopeless philistines. The more revolutionary a situation is, the more necessary it is for the proletarian vanguard to have a clear and definite plan of action. The leadership of the party ought to stand firmly at the helm, looking ahead. One of the fundamental moments of leadership in such circumstances is the practical preparation of an insurrection. And since an insurrection, like all human activities, develops in time, the leadership must designate in good time the date of an insurrection. It stands to reason that with a change in the circumstances the date may be changed—as it was changed in Petrograd in 1917. But a leadership that cannot understand the significance of the time factor, that merely swims with the current, gurgling and blowing bubbles, is condemned to defeat. A revolutionary situation demands a revolutionary calendar.

But this certainly does not mean that it is sufficient for Thaelmann, Stalin, Manuilsky, or Semard to pick up the calendar and put a red dot on August 1 in order to turn that day into a revolutionary event. Such an approach combines the most disastrous features of bureaucratism and adventurism. In those countries and those parties where sheer bureaucratism is dominant, and these are a majority, the first of August will in all probability end in a comical fiasco like the Vincennes demonstration of Semard and Monmousseau. In those countries where the elements of adventurism are dominant, the first of August may end in a tragedy which this time—in contrast to May Day—will be wholly, absolutely, and irremediably to the advantage of the enemy.

The call of the West European Bureau of the Comintern issued in Berlin on May 8, although we are accustomed to much, shocked us with its light-mindedness, garrulousness, braggadocio, and disgusting irresponsibility. "Into the streets, proletari-
ans!” “Down with imperialist war!” “Appropriate the political and military-technical experience of the struggle of the Berlin proletariat!” “Acquire the fighting methods of the police!” “Insure your ability to maneuver!” “Unite your support of the Berlin proletariat with the daily demands of the broadest masses of the workers!” “Down with imperialist war!” “Into the streets, proletarians!”

In other words, the European Communist parties are given a strictly scheduled task: in the course of three months (May to August) to unite themselves with the broadest masses of the workers (no more, no less), learn the art of maneuvering, acquire the fighting methods of the police, appropriate the political and military-technical experience of the struggle, and go into the streets against—the imperialist war. It is really difficult to imagine a more pitiful document, testifying to the fact that the consecutive blows of the governmental apparatus on the skull of the Comintern have succeeded in producing an ominous stupidity. And now this brainless leadership, armed with the above-cited ideas and slogans, warns the bourgeoisie of all Europe that it intends on the first of August to lead the workers into the streets “fully armed with military-technical methods.” Could it be possible to play more shamelessly with the lives of the proletarian vanguard and the honor of the Comintern than these contemptible epigones headed by Stalin are playing?

The tasks and duties of the Bolshevik-Leninists flow very clearly from the whole situation. We represent a small minority in the workers’ movement today—and for the same reasons that the bourgeoisie is strong, the social democracy has grown, the right wing of the Comintern is consolidating itself, and centrism holds the apparatus in its hand. The task of the Marxist minority is to analyze, evaluate, foresee, warn against dangers, and indicate the road. What is to be done immediately? The first thing is to correct what has already been done. It is necessary to call off the first of August demonstration.

But will this be injurious to the prestige of the Comintern and its national sections? Indubitably. A crude political mistake cannot be made without affecting the authority of the Comintern. But the injury will be less if you call off the demonstration in time than if you stubbornly persist in the mistake, converting the demonstration in the one case into an unworthy comedy and in
the other into a guerrilla battle between a few revolutionary troops and the police.

The recent congress of the German Communist Party seems to be trying to draw away from the call of the West European Bureau in the direction of common sense. But instead of clearly and firmly rejecting it, the manifesto of the congress is content to gloss over and dilute the military-technical slogans of the Comintern. That is the worst course to take, for it combines all the disadvantages of a retreat with all the dangers of adventurism.

*It is necessary to call off the demonstration.* The Opposition ought to use all its strength to accomplish that. We should be able to knock on the doors of all the party organizations, behind whose backs the demonstration was announced. We must appeal to the advanced elements of the trade unions. We must spare no effort to explain the error and the danger of this new invention. We must explain to Communist and revolutionary workers in general that the first prerequisite for a militant mass demonstration at the call of the party is for the party to have influence among the masses, gained from day to day by a clear, farsighted, and correct policy. The present policy of the Comintern is undermining and destroying the influence won by the October Revolution and during the period of the first four congresses of the Comintern. We must change the policy fundamentally. We must begin by calling off the first of August demonstration.

The Opposition will under no conditions permit itself to be cut off from the masses and above all from planning in good time the date for the insurrection. The Opposition is the vanguard of the vanguard. It will fulfill its duty this time as in all others.
I am in complete agreement with you that we cannot tolerate lies and slanders spread about a comrade who is distinguished from others by the fault of being more energetic and more generous in his actions. There can be no doubt that many comrades will be exposed to "arguments" of this kind. It is the procedure of the Stalinists and Yaroslavskyists, long since established. They will try to intimidate by this process comrades who are insufficiently tempered. We must create a means of counteraction on our part. When the French Opposition has a recognized center, the question will be sharper. We could submit the question to this center and when its decision is made, we should manage venomous attacks not at all badly. But lacking this official center, we can find a remedy in a provisional commission. The initiative could be taken by some comrades who have known R.M. for a long time and who know him well. These comrades should write a short letter, in an extremely energetic tone. For example: "There are people whose interest it is to spread infamous rumors about Comrade M. . . . We have no wish to list here these rumors, too stupid in their shamelessness. We declare we shall find the means of obliging every one of those spreading these rumors to speak clearly and to answer before a special commission composed of irreproachable revolutionaries known to the working class." This commission could be composed of Rosmer, Monatte, and other prominent comrades. If I come to London, I will be altogether prepared to take part in it. If my voice can be of use from here, I will naturally be completely ready to add it. It would be best to take the initiative immediately and not allow the Semards and the others who are trying to exclude our friend, not on the question of ideas, but on a question of "honor." If the party has already intervened officially, by some measures of inquiry, etc., . . . you should oppose your action to theirs, aloud and openly, declaring your absolute distrust in the impartiality of the apparatus. But the best is to be first.
This book owes its origin to chance. I had not in any way planned my journey to Spain at the end of 1916. Much less had I conceived a study of my own of the interior of the “model” prison of Madrid. The name Cadiz resounded in my ears almost like something exotic. In my imagination I associated it with Arabs, with sea, and with palm trees. Until the autumn of 1916 I had never wondered if the beautiful southern Cadiz was blessed with a police force. Nevertheless I had to spend some weeks under its vigilance. This whole experience was fortuitous for me and seemed, at times, a pleasant dream. But it was neither fantasy nor dream. Dreams are not in the habit of leaving fingerprints. And in spite of that the prints of all the fingers of my right and left hands can be found in the office of the model prison of Madrid. No greater proof of the reality of what happened could be given by any philosopher.

In the prison in Madrid, on the train, in the hotel in Cadiz, I noted down my impressions without any particular purpose in mind. My notebooks later traveled with me across the Atlantic; they remained in my baggage during the weeks I enjoyed the hospitality of the king of England, in the concentration camp in Canada, and they again crossed the ocean and the Scandinavian peninsula with me to Petrograd. In the whirlwind of the events of the revolution and the civil war I forgot they existed. In 1925, speaking with my friend Voronsky, I mentioned in passing my Spanish impressions and notes. Voronsky at that time edited the best monthly literary review in the Soviet republic, and with his native journalist’s talent he immediately took advantage of my indiscretion to keep me from leaving until I had solemnly prom-
ised to look for my notebooks and to give them to him to copy and put in some order. That is how this book appeared. Another of my friends, Andres Nin,\textsuperscript{152} decided to translate it into Spanish. I had grave doubts about the wisdom of this undertaking. But Nin was very insistent. For this reason the responsibility for the appearance of this book in Spanish falls on his shoulders.

My knowledge of the Spanish language was at a very elementary level: the Spanish government didn't let me perfect myself in the language of Cervantes. This circumstance alone is enough to explain the quite superficial and simple character of my observations. It would be useless to look in this book for more or less complete pictures of the customs or the political and cultural life of Spain. The aforesaid shows how far the author is from any pretensions. I did not live in Spain as an investigator or observer, nor even as a tourist at liberty. I entered the country as someone thrown out of France and I lived in it as someone held in jail in Madrid and under surveillance in Cadiz while waiting to be thrown out again. These circumstances restricted the radius of my observations and at the same time conditioned beforehand my way of reacting to the aspects of life in Spain with which I had contact. Without a good ironic relish, my series of experiences in Spain would be, even for me, a completely indigestible dish. The general tone of my book expresses, in all its spontaneity, the feelings I had when I made the trip through Irun, San Sebastian, Madrid to Cadiz and from there again to Madrid and Barcelona, to disembark later, quitting the coast of Europe, on the other side of the Atlantic.

But if this little book can awaken the interest of the Spanish reader and induce him to penetrate into the psychology of the Russian Revolution, I shall not lament the work done by my friend Nin in translating these plain and unpretentious pages.
The October Revolution is passing through a deep crisis. The highest expression of this is the furious struggle of the Stalinist bureaucracy against the proletarian wing of the party, the Opposition. The latter is in incomparably difficult conditions waging an irreconcilable struggle for Marxism, for October, for international revolution. Individual elements with honorable names are wavering or retreating. Grandiose epochs like ours quickly consume or dry up people. But they also speed up the education of a new generation and give it the necessary tempering. The youth of the party, who entered the ranks of Bolshevism on the eve of October or in the years of the civil war, have already produced from their midst a whole layer of representatives of the Opposition, outstanding in energy, devotion, and clarity. The merciless persecutions are evoking the necessary resistance in the hearts of these youth.

The struggle of the Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition) already has its great history and its not inconsiderable literature. To collect this literature and publish at least the more important of its documents is an absolutely indispensable task which we hope gradually to perform in a series of books, collections, and other publications.

It is, however, no less important to serve the present needs of Oppositional struggle with the help of correctly arranged information. On the pages of the *Biulleten* we shall be publishing the current documents of the Oppositional struggle, and in general information on the life of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet republic.

The Opposition is an international faction and has a right to existence only as such. That is why we shall on these pages give documents which relate to the struggle of the Bolshevik-Leninists not only in the Soviet republic but also in the whole world.

The present publication has close connections with corresponding publications of the Bolshevik Opposition in all countries.

The immediate aim of this publication is to serve the practical struggle of the Soviet republic for the cause of Marx and Lenin.
NECESSARY CLARIFICATIONS
CONCERNING
THE FIRST OF AUGUST

July 1929

Some comrades have taken this letter ["What Will the First of August Bring?"] as suggesting that the Opposition ought to refuse to participate in the August 1 demonstrations. A more false and absurd interpretation is, on the whole, impossible to imagine. It is true that the text of the letter contains no concrete organizational or tactical instructions. But if allowance is made for the fact that we are dealing with different countries, in which the situation around the first of August is developing in different ways, it will be seen as natural that uniform, detailed instructions cannot be given telling each national group of the Opposition what to do and how to proceed. The letter from the Opposition editors took as its starting point the May 8 Comintern call (which we received only after long delay), and its main objective was to try to win cancellation of the adventuristic demonstrations which had been projected and whose character had been set in advance by the May 8 call. What the letter discusses is not the rejection of demonstrations in general, but the rejection of a particular kind of demonstration, which could only be a caricature of the May Day events in Berlin. The last lines of the letter state—as something taken for granted—that the Opposition will never let itself be separated from the working class as a whole, or from its vanguard in particular. For any thoughtful political person, this means that if the first of August demonstration is not called off, if it takes place in the form projected by the Comintern—which we consider incorrect—in that case, we would participate and share responsibility with the proletarian vanguard. That is the only meaning the passage could have. Why, then, do we not say so openly? Because, when you are calling for
the cancellation of demonstrations of a particular kind, there is no point in explaining at length that you are willing to take part if they should be held after all. The last lines do say this—as something taken for granted—that is, as a general rule of conduct for revolutionaries, who do not, under any circumstances, become separated from the most active section of the working class.

The national groups of the Opposition can and should concretize this letter in special calls or resolutions, according to the situation which is still developing in each country but which will acquire fixed and final form as August 1 approaches.

At this point almost every Comintern party has pulled back from the line of the May 8 call and taken up some sort of indefinite position. It is therefore more important than ever, and more incumbent upon us than ever, to go on the offensive, explaining the criminal adventurism of the May 8 call and trying to make the official leadership take a completely clear stand. Certainly we can and should explain to worker Communists that we will share their fate under any circumstances. But, after all, it is not the task of the Opposition to simply participate in the actions of the masses even when they are incorrect. Rather it is to show the masses the correct path. That is what the Opposition letter does.
DIPLOMACY OR REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS?

Letter to a Czech Comrade

July 1, 1929

If your letter had dealt mainly or exclusively with special questions of Czechoslovakia, I might have found it difficult to answer, for the situation in Czechoslovakia is, unfortunately, less familiar to me at this time than the situation in a number of other European countries. But your letter raises a number of questions of general significance for the whole Communist Opposition, which has become an international ideological current and is becoming an international faction.

What did our questions arise from? I drew attention to the fact that you in your statement formally distanced yourself from "Trotskyism." Of course, if you consider that the views defended by the Opposition are opposed to Leninism or are erroneous in themselves, our separation is politically obligatory and does not need justification.

But as I see it now, the matter is not that way at all. You consider that so-called "Trotskyism" is in fact an application of the methods of Marx and Lenin to the contemporary period. If you mark yourself off from Trotskyism it is, as you explain, not from considerations of principle but from tactical ones. The members of the party are so confused, in your words, by the specter of "Trotskyism" that it is necessary for the time being to present our views in disguise, and not declare openly that they are the views of the Communist Left Opposition.

I cannot at all agree with this. This method contradicts all my political experience. More than that, it contradicts the whole history of Bolshevism.

It is in fact possible to think that the centrist apparatus is waging its furious struggle against our name and not against our
ideas. But this means underestimating the opponent. Such an approach simply ignores the political content of ruling centrism, and replaces politics by cheap pedagogics for backward children.

The whole policy of the Comintern for the past six years has passed either to the right or the left of the Marxist line. I do not know of a single major decision on questions of principle or current policies which has been correct. As far as I understand, you agree with this. In all cases, almost without exception, we oppose to the policy of the Comintern a Marxist line. Each time it has been condemned under the name of “Trotskyism.” This has been going on for six years now. Thus “Trotskyism” has ceased to be an indifferent label—it is filled with the content of the whole life of the Comintern from the past six years. You cannot subject the contemporary errors to criticism and propose a correct solution without expounding the views officially condemned under the name of “Trotskyism.” And if for pedagogical reasons you distance yourself in words from Trotskyism, there still remains politically the question of your relation to a definite international tendency: the Left Opposition. You risk falling victim tomorrow to the contradictions of your position. One of two things: either you must each time make clear in what you disagree with the Left Opposition, and consequently wage a factional struggle against it—or you will be forced to take off your mask and admit that you were only pretending to be an “anti-Trotskyist” in order to defend the ideas of the Communist Left Opposition. I do not know which is worse.

No, a game of hide-and-seek in politics is an absolutely impermissible thing. I have already quoted several times for various reasons the words of a certain French writer: “If you hide your soul from others, in the end you will no longer be able to find it yourself.” Experience prompts me to suggest that you are probably not ruled only by pedagogical considerations (which, I already said, in no way justify disguises). In fact you are ruled by the lack of readiness to oppose yourself to the bureaucratically dense public opinion of the party. Most often, this kind of lack of readiness is produced by an insufficiently clear understanding of all the depths of the differences of opinion and all the magnificence of the cause which our tendency is destined to complete.

The zigzags of Stalinist centrism may inspire some people today with the thought that things are not too bad with the official leadership; that if you avoid annoying them too much with a harsh formulation of a question it will be possible to
penetrate gradually the consciousness of broad circles of the party, to create a "base" for yourself, and then to unfurl your banner completely.

This is a fundamentally wrong conception and an extremely dangerous one. There is no central organized base. We can step by step construct a base for ourselves only on the basis of ideological influence. The deeper the roots the persecution of Marxism has put down and the more stifling the character of the anti-Trotskyist terror, the more is firm, irreconcilable, and bold propaganda necessary on our part. A silenced and frightened, but honest, party member can turn to our side only if he understands that it is a matter of the life or death of the proletarian party. This means that you are obliged to pose all questions openly, without fearing "isolation" and an initial strengthening of the terror by the apparatus. Every reservation, every blurring of questions, every concealment will go in favor of centris
tism, which lives on reservations, blurring, and concealing.

Radek started from the position that we, the Marxist Opposition, ought to try to approach the centrists so as to push them to the left. To this end, Radek began to soften the contradictions and minimize the differences of opinion. And he finished by crawling on all fours to the centrists with a rope around his neck and conceding that they were right and not the Opposition. On the surface it might at first appear that Radek differed from us only on questions of inner-party tactics. But from the very beginning this was not so. Inner-party tactics depend on the basic political line. In fact, Radek always remained a left centrist within the Opposition. There is nothing unnatural in this. From 1923-27 the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party and the Comintern had, with the exception of the Zinoviev turn, a right-centrist character. At that time, the left-centrist elements inevitably gravitated toward us. But after the splitting of the right-centrist bloc and the Stalinists’ turn to the left, the centrists within the Opposition see their “final goal” reached and even are beginning to fear that under the pressure of the Left Opposition Stalin might move still further left. That is why Radek and the others are already starting to defend official centrist against the Opposition and tomorrow will prove to be the fifth wheel on the right on the cart of the ruling bloc.

Here we approach a question which, I am told, deeply interests a large number of comrades in Czechoslovakia: the general question of our relation to the centrists and the Right. In Prague, they say, there is a special philosopher of Marxist strategy and tactics
who, though gone from the political stage, does not refrain from the amusement behind-the-scenes of reproachfully shaking his head in the direction of the Opposition, which in his view fights too hard against the centrists and not enough against the Right.

Is it possible to think of a more pedantic, more lifeless, more laughable formulation of the question? I would have understood if someone had said that, carried away by the struggle on the right, i.e., against the centrists and the Right, we do not sufficiently criticize the ultraleft. Such a formulation of the question, irrespective of whether it is true or not at any given moment, has a basis of principle to it. In the struggle against the right we are in a common front with the ultraleft and ought therefore not to forget the appropriate ideological delimitation from them.

But the centrists, like the Right, are on the right of us. When we struggle against centrism, we thereby struggle doubly against the right, for centrism is only a modified, disguised, more deceptive form of opportunism.

Of course, if we limited our task only to the bare formula of party democracy, it might be possible to enter a bloc with the Right in the struggle with the bureaucratic center. But this danger threatens not us, but precisely those who obscure differences of opinion, soften contradictions, and in a tender voice demand only some “improvements” in the party regime.

True, the Czech Right is not averse to flirting with “Trotskyism.” They, you see, as supporters of “party democracy,” are against the arrest and exile of the Russian Opposition. But this is a cheap position, and they will not be able to maintain it. The class struggle, especially in a revolutionary epoch, is unthinkable without arrests, exiles, and repressions in general. But each time it is necessary to take stock of who is doing the arresting, whom they are arresting, and what they are arrested for. The question is solved by the political line. We Bolshevik-Leninists need democracy for the proletarian vanguard, as a weapon in the struggle with opportunism and for the preparation of revolution.

The fact is that all the defeats of the proletariat in all the countries of the world have in recent years been completed by new blows at the Left Opposition. The bourgeois and social democratic reaction is pressing on the Soviet republic, weakening the Communist Party in the whole world, and through the Stalinist apparatus striking at the so-called “Trotskyists.” The Opposition is one of the primary nodes of the whole political situation. In the struggle with “Trotskyism” Stalin has a common front with the bourgeoisie and the social democracy of all countries. The
wretched slanders of Yaroslavsky are now in contradiction to the living and incontrovertible fact of world politics. There is no escaping from this. The Opposition is a small minority, but it is an accumulation of the revolutionary experience of the proletariat, the leaven for a revolutionary future.

A revolutionary majority can be won only by a tendency which is capable in the most difficult conditions of remaining true to itself. The present reformist-pacifist wing in Europe (the growth of the social democracy, the Labourites in Britain) will be wrecked, however official communism may help the social democracy by its policy. The demand for cadres with an ideological background and a revolutionary tempering will constantly grow. The masses have no need of those who waver, hesitate, and disguise themselves, supposedly in the name of the masses. The masses will reject them when the basic questions of the revolution are squarely posed.

The armchair pundits are contriving to accuse us of attacking the centrists too much and of sparing the Right. But surely this is just buffoonery? The very reason we attack centrism is that by its whole policy of unprincipled zigzags it feeds and strengthens the Right tendencies not only within the party or around it, but in the working class as a whole.

What significance has Stalin’s bureaucratic elimination of Tomsky and Bukharin, if the line of the trade unions has been further suppressed, if Pravda is still more an organ of ignorance and libel than yesterday, if the authority of the party among the working class is declining and the confidence of the bourgeois elements strengthened?

What significance has Thaelmann’s elimination of the Right or the conciliators, if the whole policy of the Communist Party feeds the social democracy, undermining in the consciousness of the workers their admiration and trust for the banner of communism?

The Rykovs, Bukharins, and Tomskys have no independent significance, nor have the Brandlers, Thalheimers, Eshchers, Kovandas, Ilekins, Neuraths,*156 and others. The strengthening

*Neurath once tried as it were to raise himself to the level of revolutionary politics but, like the majority of Zinoviev’s supporters, did not withstand the pressure, and first he capitulated to the apparatus and now is slipping down to the right. It is by this living experience that we must learn to weigh and evaluate ideas, groups, and individuals.
Diplomacy or Revolutionary Politics?

of the Right faction in communism only reflects a deeper process of a shift in forces in the direction of capitalist reaction. This process has many expressions, including the growth of the Thermidorean elements and attitudes in the Soviet republic, the growth of the parties of the Second International, the decline in the influence of communism, and the crushing of the revolutionary wing, i.e., the Communist Opposition.

Of course, it is not the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party or the presidium of the Comintern which determines the course of world history. There are also other factors. But inasmuch as the causes of the dreadful defeats in almost all countries of the world without exception go back directly to false leadership, the blame for this falls on centrism. Within the party, that is the chief enemy! The Right has now been expelled. Whether the group of conciliators is expelled or not has no serious significance. The leadership of the party is in the hands of the Stalinists, i.e., the centrists. Meanwhile, they continue to destroy the party, to sap trust in it, to undermine its future. That is why we concentrate the main blow at centrism. It is the main enemy within the party, for it is precisely what is hindering the solution of the basic problems of the revolution. In the USSR, centrism by its policy of vacillation is impeding economic development, angering the peasantry, and weakening the proletariat. In Germany, centrism is the most faithful henchman of the social democracy. Thus, all our struggle against the centrists is dictated by the necessities of our basic task within the working class: to overthrow the opportunist organizations and gather the overwhelming majority of workers around the banner of communism.

It is precisely the centrists who, in order to draw the attention of the party away from the basic questions, i.e., from their basic errors and omissions, are now in words reducing the whole life of the party to the struggle against the "right" enemy, i.e., the Right groups within the party. And the left centrists within the Opposition or close to the Opposition want to swim with the current and hasten to assume protective coloration. In fact, what could be simpler than, instead of posing to oneself the problems of changing the program, strategy, tactics, and organization of the Comintern, to occupy oneself with cheap, formal, incited, and even paid "struggle against the Right," with the leading role in this struggle being played by such inveterate opportunists as Lozovsky, Petrovsky, Martinov, Kuusinen, Kolarov,¹⁵⁷ and the rest of the crew. No, our formulation of the question is different.
The main enemy in the country is the imperialist bourgeoisie. The main enemy in the working class is the social democracy. And the main enemy in the party is centism!

You mention that by "careful" circuitous methods, using disguises, the Czech Communist Party has been built up as a mass party. I believe you are wrong. The whole affair was in the great revolutionary upsurge of the Czech workers, produced by the postwar conditions and by disillusionment with the independent national republic. But even if we admit that the diplomacy of the leadership has attracted some additional masses into the party, which otherwise would not have entered it, it is still necessary to ask whether this is a plus or a minus. It is said that this year close to thirty thousand workers left the party. What is easily won is also easily lost. A revolutionary vanguard is not built up on misunderstandings and half-truths.

We have had a fresh and in its way classic example of this in Britain. The whole policy of Stalinist centrism there was directed at not allowing a counterposing of the Communists to the reformists, in order gradually to create an "organizational base" in the trade unions and then on this base unfurl the revolutionary banner. You know what came of this. When it came to counting heads, the Communist Party could muster a mere fifty thousand votes.

Lenin himself has more than once been accused of having forgotten about and helped the right in his struggle with the left centrists. I myself more than once made such an accusation against Lenin. It is in this, and not at all in permanent revolution, that the basic error of what is called "historical Trotskyism" lay. In order to become a Bolshevik not on a Stalinist passport but in actuality it is necessary to understand fully the meaning and significance of Lenin's irreconcilability toward centrism, without which there is not and cannot be a road to proletarian revolution.

You should, therefore, advise the Prague philosopher either to come out on the stage and formulate his centrist prejudices against the Bolshevik line of the Opposition, or to keep silent entirely and not confuse the young comrades with pedantic and lifeless lamentations.

Whether we shall grow fast or slowly I do not know. This does not depend only on us. But we shall inevitably grow—with a correct policy. I would see practical tasks of our Czech cothinkers more or less as follows:
1. Immediately to publish in Czech the most important documents of the International Left Opposition from the recent period.
2. To devote all efforts to the setting up of a regular journal.
3. To start working out the national platform of the Czech section of the Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition).
4. To set up a correct organization of the Czechoslovakian faction of the Bolshevik-Leninists.
5. To take an active part in the setting up of an international organ of the Opposition, to secure its ideological unity on an international scale.
6. To appear everywhere there is an opportunity—at CP meetings, at meetings of the Right Opposition, at open meetings of workers—without disguises, and with a clear and distinct exposition of your views.
7. To carry out untiring educational work, even though only with small circles or isolated individuals.
8. In all cases of mass actions, the Oppositionists must appear in the front rank, to show in deed their selfless devotion to proletarian revolution.
Comrade Souvarine:

Your long letter, or rather your pamphlet, gives me some necessary particulars. I do not see that anything remains of the ties that united us a few years ago. If I reply to you by this letter, it is not out of reverence for the past but out of the political necessity to state that our futures are irreconcilably opposed.

I find in your letter hardly a single idea that is correct and based on Marxist doctrine and the great events of history. I cannot escape the impression that it is the pen of a discontented journalist that guides you and prompts your paradoxes. The latter, moreover, are not new. I could cite many cases where a desertion from the revolution has been dressed up in analogous formulations, without perhaps such journalistic skill or such bookish culture.

I have neither the possibility nor the desire to analyze the complicated threads of your paradoxes and your sophisms. I will take only one example, sufficient nonetheless because it deals with the most important question.

You treat the party and the International, including the Opposition, like a corpse. According to you, the great fault of the Russian Opposition consists in its insistence on influencing the party and even on being reintegrated into it. On the other hand, you characterize the Soviet economy as state capitalism, as a great step forward, and you demand that the Opposition enter the service of this state capitalism instead of being concerned with the party.

You thereby give an example of an analysis which springs from words, not ideas, only to end up with words without content.
State capitalism—I use your formulation—that is, nationalized industry and transportation, retain their "state" character only through the party. The state apparatus and the apparatus of the trusts themselves are guilty of centrifugal tendencies. It would not be an exaggeration if I said that nine-tenths of the elements who constitute the economic apparatus would be quite happy to transform the trusts into enterprises more or less independent of the state, in order to transform them, at a second stage, into private enterprises.

On the other hand the unions, if they are not allied to the party, are altogether disposed and inclined to launch a trade-union struggle outside of any consideration for the state and the five-year plan. It would never occur to anyone who deals in realities, not superficial journalism, to serve the Soviet economy by ignoring the party, and outside the measures of the party or a faction. "State" capitalism lives and dies with the party. Besides, the best proof of it is that the Soviet economy every day experiences the influence of the Opposition, as refracted and distorted by the Stalinist apparatus.

Your idea that one can serve the cause of the proletariat outside of the party is not even mature enough to be called syndicalist. At this stage, it only signifies desertion from the Marxist organization. During the counterrevolution in Russia and at the height of the imperialist war, we often heard this notion, the crowning touch to your letter: "We must keep silent and wait." That always means that one is in the process of changing sides.

I am sure that tomorrow you will not be silent. You will pass to the other side of the barricades. Theoretically, you are already there.

We record a man overboard and pass on to the next point on the agenda.
Dear Comrade Paz,

To the joint letter—which I do not have to characterize as would be proper in my reply since I am sure I will be collaborating with the majority of the signers, who signed by mistake—to this letter you add a private letter that gives me the opportunity to reply to you in complete frankness, complete freedom, and even complete brutality.

You call me the "boss" and, in making this designation, you take upon yourself the right to instruct and guide me. You point out to me on every occasion how a "boss" ought to conduct himself, how he ought to organize his time, what jobs he ought to give up in order to devote himself to others that you assign him. Perhaps you will permit me to ask you whether your time and your forces are organized in accordance with this great revolutionary task of which you wish to be the "axis"? Because your letter deals with that question only: Who will be the axis? And your break with the weekly paper, the hostility that you show to it, your accusations against Gourget and now against Rosmer, turn about this same "axis."

I do not know if I am the "boss" and especially if I am the boss that you deem proper. I rather think not. But in my relations with my friends as well as with my enemies I have no other consideration than the revolutionary cause. Personal prejudices are absolutely foreign to me. As I have said many times, I wished Contre le Courant to become a weekly. In Constantinople, you had as yet only counterposed the financial aspect to this project. You told me, in confirmation of what I already knew, that the expenses of Contre le Courant are covered by sums furnished by the Russian
Opposition, and that with the exhaustion of these funds the continuation of the paper as a weekly presented difficulties. This argument struck me as strange. I couldn't understand it. I said to myself, "It's a passing remark. I shouldn't exaggerate its importance." It is correct that I had to accept your proposal for a semimonthly, but it was a matter for me (and for you) of a temporary measure, for two or three months at the outside. In reality, the decision that was taken was for a weekly, with the perspective of a daily, and this is even indicated in your notebook. But you have not even come close to a daily, or a weekly, or even a semimonthly. *Contre le Courant* has become a collection of Russian documents, more now than before. One learns nothing from this paper about the French movement. We had worked out other projects as well for mass work. Nothing has been realized. I cannot see in *Contre le Courant* the least trace of work undertaken to this end. And after I have waited patiently for four months, after I have repeated insistently that we had to get out from behind closed doors, and you have replied only with stories about Treint and Souvarine—after four months, you present me an extract from your notebook to justify your documentation. But that is the conduct of a notary, not a revolutionary. And here is the decisive point. To publish our documents in Russia, our friends have given all they had and sacrificed all that people devoted to their cause could sacrifice. In Paris, it was not a matter of doing so much. To produce the weekly, it would have required altogether secondary and insignificant sacrifices: sacrifices of time and money. You begin, you set a good example, and then you make demands on others, because you have a right to make demands in the name of a common cause. But you have begun by stating the absence of a financial base and, then, to "deepen" the theory of abstention, you have added the absence of a theoretical base. Everything that has been said and done, up to this moment, is void and inoperable. To do something "solid," we have to wait for your pamphlet. Oh, it's an outrageous pretense just the same, and you yourself would not have decided, in other circumstances, on this unheard-of argument if you had not put yourself in a precarious situation, where you had to find, at whatever cost, the appearance of argumentation.

You do not find expressions forceful enough to disparage the five comrades who "took their inspiration from Constantinople." This sarcasm is out of place; and in bad taste. These comrades, however busy earning their living, came to help me at
their own initiative and at their own risk, here, to Constantinople, at a very difficult time. Their help was invaluable to me. All of this is proper. But there is another part to the story. I said to myself, after having observed them closely, that comrades who are capable of such initiative and such personal sacrifice are revolutionaries, or can become such, because it is in this way, Comrade Paz, that revolutionaries are formed. You can have revolutionaries both wise and ignorant, intelligent or mediocre. But you can’t have revolutionaries who lack the willingness to smash obstacles, who lack devotion and the spirit of sacrifice. I was not mistaken. These young comrades declared that they were completely prepared to give their time, their forces, their means for a weekly paper, and to mobilize others. So, they are doing what they have promised, and you are sabotaging their work instead of helping them. And it’s always because of the question of the “axis.”

But how do you imagine the place of a weekly destined to become a daily in a movement that must have ramifications everywhere? Do you believe the task can be fulfilled by devoting to it the scraps of time left over from a very busy law practice? Do you believe you can manage the movement, or even a weekly paper associated with the movement, in passing, like a secondary task? I have a different idea of the revolutionary axis. I believe that the person who manages a workers’ paper, especially in a situation of heavy responsibilities like ours, ought to be occupied with this task only. I have been preoccupied a great deal with this question since your stay in Constantinople, when I learned for the first time, from you yourself, that you were a very busy lawyer. But I told myself that, since you wished to manage the weekly, you would naturally have to draw the necessary conclusions. And as I did not consider our relationship to be that of a boss to a slave, I did not point out to you what the distribution of your time had to be between the revolution and the courthouse. I suppose you know that when Haase wanted to become one of the axes of the German party, he found it necessary to abandon his law practice at Koenigsberg.164 At the congress in Jena, there was much praise for Haase—even from Bebel—for having made the sacrifice of his annual income of thirty thousand marks. We Russians—I myself was present at the congress—were quite annoyed at these eulogies, which seemed to us perfectly petty-bourgeois. I even spoke of this incident in one of my interventions, to characterize the German party’s lack of revolutionary
spirit. And nevertheless Haase was not prepared for the revolutionary situations and the harsh turn of events.

I will not dwell upon the record of the Russian party in times of illegal work. The person who belonged to the movement belonged not only with his material means, but with his body and soul. He identified openly with the cause he served, and it was by such a process of education that we were able to create the fighters who became the many "axes" of the proletarian revolution.

Comrade Paz, I speak frankly and even brutally in order to save whatever may still be saved. It is no longer time for mincing words, for the situation is too serious. I am neither a fanatic nor a sectarian. I can very well understand a person who sympathizes with the communist cause without leaving his milieu. Assistance of this sort can be very valuable for us. But it is the assistance of a sympathizer. I discussed this question in a letter to my American friends. Eastman\(^\text{165}\) had written to me, without mincing words himself, that such was his personal situation. He designates himself a "fellow-traveler," does not aspire, in his own words, to any leading role in the movement of the Opposition, and is content to assist it. He does translations, he has turned over his copyrights to the \textit{Militant}, etc. And why? Because he cannot give himself entirely to the movement. And he has acted correctly.

You must understand that the person who is the "axis," that is, the leader or one of the leaders of the revolutionary movement, assumes the right to call upon workers to make the greatest sacrifices, including that of their lives. This right involves no less important responsibilities. Otherwise, every intelligent worker will inevitably ask himself, "If X, who calls me to the greatest sacrifices, keeps four-fifths or two-thirds of his time not to assure my victory but to assure his bourgeois existence, that shows that he does not have confidence in the imminence of the coming revolution." And this worker would be right.

Leave aside the program, please! It is not a matter of program. It's a matter of revolutionary activity in general. Marx once said that a single step forward for the movement is worth more than ten programs. And Marx was an expert at programs just the same and even at manifestos, at least as much as you and I!

To conclude. Your letters and above all your political attitude show me that communism is for you a sincere idea rather than a dominant conviction of life. And yet this conception is very abstract. Now, at the moment it is necessary (it would have been
necessary a long time ago) to undertake action which involves you to the very end, you begin instinctively to oppose it because of a double standard of behavior. When you are invited to take part, you reply, “No resources and insufficient forces.” And, when the others begin to look for the resources and the forces, you say, “If I am not the axis, I am opposed.” What you are doing is unheard of! Even if you do not have confidence in the weekly paper, you ought to wait quietly and not sabotage it! You have no experience in those matters, and you go on blindly toward a new catastrophe! Tomorrow you will invoke theoretical, philosophical, political, and philological differences to justify your position. It's not hard to understand how that will end up! If you don’t want to enter the lists, wait quietly, keep a friendly neutrality, and don’t present the sad spectacle of an unprincipled opposition, dictated by exclusively personal reasons.

With the greatest desire to save our political friendship.

L. Trotsky
A LETTER TO
THE DAILY HERALD

July 15, 1929

Just as I received a note from the British Consul here stating that he has yet no answer to my request, I saw in the local Press a short paragraph, saying that the Home Office Secretary, Mr. Clynes, said during a sitting of the House of Commons that the Government, after having carefully examined the circumstances of the case, has decided not to give to Mr. Trotsky the permission to visit England.

Now I wonder what the British Government has examined “carefully.” Surely not the reasons advanced by me when I asked for the British visa.

Do they esteem that I and my wife are not ill or not ill enough to get the permission to visit England? Do they believe that I am here in the better conditions to pursue my literary work?

But, as far as I know, there was no examine at all, “careful” or not, of these points.

What, then, was examined “carefully”?

The stupid fancies which are sent one day from Constantinople, another from Riga, and are running through the most reactionary Press in every country, those fancies I have exposed several times in letters you kindly publish, and which are so ludicrous that they can only make laughing every man who has a knowledge of the international Labour movement?

To speak frankly, I shall say that such fancies are not the fact of newspaper correspondents, but that they are invented and thrown into the circulation by secret police agencies, whose work is now well known, and was revealed in a famous circumstance by the false Zinoviev’s letter, a forgery of which British Labour was the victim.

But it seems as if those agencies were still able to influence Governments and public opinion. Governments change, but that secret police remains, and finally, leads.

Leon Trotsky
I can give my view on Sino-Soviet relations, of course, only as an individual. I have no information except what is in the newspapers. In cases of this kind, information in the newspapers is always insufficient.

There can be no doubt that aggressiveness has been manifested not by the Soviet, but by the Chinese government. The managing apparatus of the Chinese Eastern Railroad has existed for a number of years. The workers' organizations that the Chinese regime has attacked have also existed for some time. The existing administrative arrangement for the Chinese Eastern Railroad was carefully worked out this last time by a special commission under my chairmanship. The commission's decisions were approved in April 1926 and completely protect Chinese interests.

The conduct of the present Chinese government is explained by the fact that it was made stronger by the crushing defeat of the workers and peasants. I will not discuss here the reasons for the defeat of the revolutionary movement of the Chinese people because I have dealt sufficiently with this theme in my previously published works. The government, having risen out of a completely routed revolution, as always in such cases, feels weak in relation to those forces against which the revolution was directed, i.e., above all against British and Japanese imperialism. Therefore, it is compelled to try to enhance its power and influence by making adventuristic gestures toward its revolutionary neighbor.

Must this provocation that developed out of the defeat of the Chinese revolution lead to war? I don't think so. Why? Because the Soviet government does not want war, and the Chinese government is not capable of waging it.
The army of Chiang Kai-shek was victorious in 1925-27 [against the warlords] thanks to the revolutionary upsurge of the masses. In turning against them, the army forfeited its chief source of strength. As a purely military organization, Chiang Kai-shek's army is extremely weak. Chiang Kai-shek cannot help but realize that the Soviet government is well aware of the weakness of his army. It is unthinkable that Chiang Kai-shek could wage a war against the Red Army without the aid of other powers. It is more accurate to say that Chiang Kai-shek would wage war only if his army were merely the auxiliary detachment to the forces of another power. I do not believe that at this time such a combination is very likely, especially in light of the Soviet government's sincere desire, as indicated above, to settle problems by peaceful means.

The reference of the American government to the Kellogg Pact can hardly be very convincing inasmuch as the American government until now has not recognized the Soviet Union and thus has not created even the formal prerequisites for an "impartial" attitude toward the conflict.

It goes without saying that in the event that war is imposed on the Soviet people, the Opposition will devote itself fully to the cause of defending the October Revolution.
A WRETCHED DOCUMENT\textsuperscript{172}

July 27, 1929

The capitulatory statement of Preobrazhensky, Radek, and Smilga of July 10 is a unique document of political and moral degeneration, and the Opposition can only congratulate itself on the desire of its authors to show themselves in their true colors. For the uninitiated, i.e., for those who are kept artificially in the twilight in which the members of the party and the Comintern find themselves, the “trio’s” letter can create a sensation.

As far as the Opposition is concerned, each of its members knew and knows that Preobrazhensky, Radek, and Smilga had long since shown themselves to be dead souls. Before the Sixth Comintern Congress the trio had engaged in important activity inside the Opposition, contributing to its internal purification, i.e., to the departure of its weak and accidental members. The surrender by Oppositionists who support the trio is certainly at this moment a trump card in the hands of the apparatus. The functionaries, the idle windbags, and guttersnipes speak of “the collapse of the Trotskyist Opposition.” Yaroslavsky speaks of “the twilight” of Trotskyism. Three, even four years ago, the death of Trotskyism was recorded. Then came its destruction. Then, in Molotov’s immortal phrase, “the coffin” and “[nailing down] the lid” of Trotskyism. Now it’s back to the twilight of Trotskyism and its disintegration. And this after the death, after the coffin, and after the lid! There is an old popular saying which says: Anyone buried who is alive lives a long time. This saying is highly pertinent.

But what do you make of the tens or hundreds who capitulated? It would have been surprising had there been none. Eighteen months ago, according to Yaroslavsky’s statistics, about twelve
thousand Oppositionists were expelled. In the speech he made after the July plenum last year, Stalin gave approximately this account: ten thousand Trotskyists were expelled; let us admit that double this number still remain in the party. After that, expulsions did not stop for a single day. All told, at least fifteen to twenty thousand must have been expelled from the CPSU. Among them were not a few accidental, young, and immature elements. Also not a few old, worn-out elements. Deported, the members of the Opposition find themselves in terrible conditions of most complete isolation. Their families are in a state of total destitution. Ideological separation, political isolation, and material oppression cannot fail to provoke their effects of decomposition, and the "authoritative" trio is palmed off as the ready-made formula of this decomposition. What is there surprising in their getting some hundreds of signatures—even some thousands? It is only in this way that the selection and political tempering of revolutionaries is produced.

We don't see under the trio's letter the signatures of Rakovsky, Mrachkovsky, Beloborodov, Sosnovsky, Muralov, Kasparova, Boguslavsky, Rafail, and many other lesser-known comrades who in fact were the real leaders of the Opposition. It is possible, obviously, that there were other individuals who left. It is possible that there were also tens and hundreds more signatures. All that will only delay for a time the Opposition's struggle; it will not stop it. A long time ago, we declared we were conducting a long-term policy. Now—more than ever—we are sure of this. For a long time the "trio" needed only the opportunity to renounce their past and to move over to the positions of Zinoviev, but with the possibility of saving face. The USSR's new five-year plan supplied the bridge to the trio for retreat from Marxist positions.

The capitulators began by asserting that "the concrete figures of the five-year plan" in themselves express the program of socialist construction. That is the point of departure taken in this letter, its guiding thought, its one and only argument.

For six years we had waged a pitiless struggle against Stalin's centrist faction on the fundamental questions of world proletarian revolution: socialism in one country; the independence of the class party of the proletariat or a workers' and peasants' government; the policy of "the bloc of four classes"; the united front with strikers or with strikebreakers; the danger of Thermidor and its connection with the progress of the workers' international movement and the orientation of the Comintern leadership, etc.,
etc. However, all this is surrendered and is replaced by "the concrete figures of the five-year plan."

There is absolutely no doubt: the new five-year plan presents an attempt to express in figures the Opposition's criticism, and thereby to weaken it. In this sense, the five-year plan presents a kind of zigzag towards the Opposition, like the resolution on party democracy. But one would have to be a political simpleton to think the question is resolved even one part in a hundred or even one part in a thousand because of the circumstance that in counterbalance to the old five-year plan opposed to "Trotskyism" and "superindustrialization," the same functionaries have now put together a new five-year plan built on principles condemned as "superindustrialization" and directed—in a new direction—against the Right.

Till now, we had thought all five-year plans were valuable insofar as their roots lay in correct methods of economic leadership, particularly in the political leadership of the party and the Comintern. That is why, for a Marxist, what is decisive is the expression of the principled aims of the party and the party's political methods, not "the concrete figures of the five-year plan" whose fate is still altogether in the future.

But let us admit for the moment that the five-year plan is really the expression of the self-styled general line, that it won't be canceled tomorrow but will actually come into being. That would only mean that as a result of six years of merciless struggle, rejecting any capitulation, the Opposition has imposed on the party leadership a more correct projection of economic work. On pages 30 and 31 of our platform, printed illegally, was to be found a criticism of the first five-year plan, which really expressed the Stalin-Bukharin line. But in order to reach an understanding of the ABC of the question, i.e., the decisive role of the rate of industrialization, there was needed the courageous struggle of the Opposition—with its illegal meetings, printshop, and demonstrations against the arrest, physical attacks, and deportation of Bolshevik-Leninists. "The concrete figures" of the new Stalinist five-year plan turn out to be a secondary product of this struggle. If Radek, Smilga, and Preobrazhensky deny their past, if they withdraw their signatures to this same platform which engendered the Stalinist five-year plan, it is because they are politically bankrupt.

"The Fifteenth Party Congress was correct," write the capitulators, "to condemn the platform." The learned economists and
politicians are trying with all their might to destroy the roots which gave birth to the five-year plan. This is not new. Once Krylov told in a fable of an economist (or could it have been of a naturalist?) who in a certain year had a great liking for concrete acorns (“I don’t get fat on them”) but thought they had nothing to do with roots and oak trunks—they were even a hindrance on the road to socialist construction. But that was really all about acorns whereas, in regard to the five-year plan, the better case, the question is about the statistical shell.

But what if tomorrow there is a turn to the right? Who will resist it? “The party”? That is too—unconcrete. The party as a whole has twice undergone in silence a change of line which, on each occasion, was announced to it administratively (or, if you prefer, the party gave its answer through the Opposition). But who would have expressed resistance and led it, if the capitulators had succeeded in breaking up the Opposition? What could have given flavor to the salt if it had lost its saltiness? Tomorrow the salt will be more necessary than yesterday.

With Stalin and Yaroslavsky, the trio “condemns” the publication of my articles in the bourgeois press. To the whole world, to the face of friend and foe, I said the Stalinists lie when they dare to accuse the Opposition of counterrevolution. I said the Opposition defends the October Revolution to the last drop of its blood. The whole world knows this now, and draws its own conclusions. Yaroslavsky declares in this connection that I work hand in hand with Chamberlain. The Radeks, tumbling down the stairs, howl in their weak voices with the Yaroslavskys. But the facts bring their confirmations. The bourgeois governments of all Europe have refused me a visa; not only Chamberlain but also MacDonald. The Soviet diplomats, defending the interests of the Stalinist faction, make a bloc with the capitalist diplomats and police to make my stay in any of the countries of Europe impossible. That is the political reality, which has a much deeper significance than questionable figures. Stalin’s bloc, his united front with Stresemann, with the German police, with Hermann Mueller, with Hilferding, with the Norwegian conservatives, with the French bourgeois republicans, with MacDonald and Thomas, with the British Intelligence Service, this united front against me, and in my person against the Opposition, is the incontestable reality, is the symbolic expression of the political groupings in the world arena. He who, in face of these facts, howls with Yaroslavsky on the subject of the bourgeois press deserves only contempt.
The central question is not the figures of the bureaucratic five-year plan themselves but the question of the party as the main weapon of the proletariat. The party regime is not something autonomous: it expresses and reinforces the party's political line. It corrects itself or degenerates, depending on the extent to which the political line corresponds to the objective historical situation. In this sense, the party regime is, for a Marxist, an indispensable control over the political line, now called the "general line" in order to show it is not the line of the party but of the general secretary.

Where does the "trio" of capitulators stand in face of the present party regime? They are well satisfied. They "support the struggle against bureaucratism in the apparatus of the government and of the party." They support self-criticism—as against "the demand for the right of criticism put forward by Trotsky." They reject the demand for "the legitimization of factions" and the slogan of the secret ballot which "opens the door to Thermidorean forces." We heard all this from Yaroslavsky and Molotov three, four, five, and six years ago. The trio hasn't added a word. Renegades are always distinguished by short memories or assume that other people have short memories. Revolutionaries, on the contrary, enjoy good memories, which is why it can be truthfully said the revolutionary party is the memory of the working class. Learning not to forget the past in order to foresee the future is our first, our most important task.

It is not difficult to show that, as they bow before the party, the capitulators despise it. The trio, as we have heard, is for self-criticism as against the abstraction of freedom of criticism. But is it possible in the party to subject to criticism the activities of the Central Committee? Is it, or is it not? Is this an abstract or a concrete question? Let the "trio" not pretend that it depends on the kind of criticism. We know it as well as they do. The limits of criticism inside the party can be broader or narrower; but it exists, it should exist, it cannot not exist in a party of revolutionary action. If you please, don’t shrink; we aren’t talking about that. We are talking about the decisions of 1928 on self-criticism in which there is a secret paragraph exempting the Central Committee, or, more exactly, the upper strata of the Stalinist faction, from criticism in general. The Stalinists think that in a party of a million and a half members, for the most part politically immature, the authority of the Central Committee must be beyond criticism. By the way, it was for this purpose that they crowded the party with politically immature people. We, the Op-
position, think that under these conditions the "general" line is the line of the general secretary. The party exists only to support him, just as, for example, the trio now supports the struggle of Yaroslavsky and Molotov against bureaucratism.

The Opposition has put forward the slogan of the secret ballot in the party. The trio says this demand "opens the door to Thermidorean forces." But this quite simply means that the trio admits the existence of such powerful Thermidorean forces inside the party that they must be feared! Can there be a clearer condemnation not only of the party regime but of the party itself? What, then, in the trio's view, is the revolutionary value of the party if the general line is supported not by the goodwill of the party but by a regime of terror directed against Thermidorean forces inside the party? Is it not clear that the secret ballot, which is aimed against these forces, can be important for saving the revolutionary norms of the party? How is it this unfortunate trio does not notice the monstrous character of this argument? It is very simple: political stupidity always accompanies political degeneration.

The trio rejects the abstract "right of criticism" in favor of Yaroslavsky's self-criticism. Very well. Was the Wrangel officer something abstract or something concrete? In any case, it was because Preobrazhensky, Radek, and Smilga together with us sinners demanded three years ago a struggle against the kulaks, acceleration in industrialization, and improvement in the party regime that they were accused of "concrete" connections with counterrevolutionaries through the Wrangel officer, who in fact operated as a concrete agent of the GPU. What is the relation between the Wrangel officer and the system of self-criticism now approved by the trio? And what will they say of Stalin's attempts to compromise the Opposition through an agent provocateur, military conspiracies, and terrorist attacks? Or is that too "abstract"?

The trio teaches: "The demand for the legitimization of factions in the party put forward by Trotsky is non-Bolshevik." Admirable frankness! As if it were a question of legitimization in general, of factions in general in the party in general. What can one do with former Marxists who have relapsed into their infancy? It was at the Tenth Congress of the ruling Bolshevik Party, in the extremely difficult conditions of the economic turn, that factions were prohibited. But it was precisely in the ruling party, precisely at a definite period, and precisely in consideration of the sufficiently liberal regime in the party, under the conditions of
friendship between all the responsible elements of the party, that it was possible to proceed with a minimum of factionalism which, within certain limits, is inevitably bound up with the life and development of a party. What have the wretched epigones done? They have transformed the prohibition of factions into an absolute, they have extended it to all the parties of the Comintern, i.e., even to those taking only their first steps, they have raised the leadership of the Comintern above criticism and have put before every Communist the alternative: either bow down to some Yaroslavsky or Gusev, or—find themselves outside the party. And the results? Abused inside, ideological life emerges outside and engenders the appearance of the break-up of the Comintern. All the leading elements of the first five years are expelled from the Comintern. That is the fundamental fact, more important and instructive than the retailing of all Yaroslavsky's stupid thoughts about "self-criticism" in his own words. The delegates to the first four congresses of the Comintern, i.e., the principal ones, the pioneers, Lenin's disciples in all parties, are expelled from the Comintern. Why? In order to struggle—against "Trotskyism." In essence—"Leninism." But on this, the eloquent capitulators keep silent.

At this moment, the Comintern as a whole is composed of factions in struggle. The fact that the trio does not wish to "legitimize" them is of little importance, especially since the trio hasn't had time to legitimize themselves, but only hopes to; that is why they have taken a horizontal position. There can be no doubt that after their admission into the party, the faction of three (each sector of the capitulators has its own faction) will whisper in corners, will break up while waiting for better days, and will have discussions with the faction of the Zinovievites, which has by now succeeded in reaching a more advanced stage of decomposition. Certainly, that will not prevent one or the other from supporting the "general" line, with all the surprises to come.

"The demand for legitimizing factions is non-Bolshevik." The Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU as well as the Sixth Congress of the Comintern was right. That is what the trio teaches us. Very good. But the president of the Fifteenth Party Congress was Rykov, while Bukharin directed the Sixth Congress. At the time, both were in a faction. Is that concrete or abstract? Rykov, until yesterday, was head of the government. Until yesterday, Bukharin headed the Comintern. That seems to be concrete. Both were in a faction with international sections in almost all countries of the world. Did the CPSU pronounce judgment on Rykov
and Tomsky? No; at the Fifteenth Congress they didn’t even speak about them. Did the Sixth Congress judge Bukharin? No; an ovation was organized for him. How are we to understand this? It’s very simple: it is concrete self-criticism as opposed to abstract freedom of criticism.

The trio claims, “We support the policy of the Comintern which is waging a merciless struggle against the social democracy.” How new, how profound, and, above all, how “concrete” this is! And what are we to say of such a struggle that has resulted in the social democracy increasing its numbers and strengthening its positions while the Communist parties lose ground and break up increasingly into fresh factions? All that is lacking as reply to our observation is for the trio to pronounce something abominable against our pessimism. As is known, capitulators in general do not invent gunpowder. They borrow snuff from Yaroslavsky’s snuffbox and pass it off as gunpowder. As has long been established, the optimists without parallel are the people who adopt a horizontal position, i.e., who stick their noses into the ground and sing with choirboy voices praises to the general line. But life verifies the line, particularly through parliamentary elections. The greatest verification took place only a few days ago in Britain. In a country where capitalism is gravely ill and where there is chronic unemployment, in a country going through great social upheavals and equally great betrayals by the reformists, the Communist Party collected fifty thousand votes against seven and a half million for the social democracy. That is the most concrete result of the Comintern policy during the last six years!

The whole Comintern policy is built today on the philosophy of “the third period,” promulgated by the Sixth Congress without the slightest theoretical preparation in the press. There are no stupidities or crimes committed against Marxism which are not covered by the sacramental formula of “the third period.” What does this mean? We heard it for the first time from Bukharin’s mouth. Even the obedient Sixth Congress resisted because it did not understand. Bukharin swore that the CPSU delegation had unanimously instituted the third period. The congress surrendered. But to what? According to Bukharin, it turned out like this: till then the stabilization of capitalism had been conjunctural; now it was organic; consequently, the revolutionary situation was postponed to the indefinite future. But in the first report to the congress the illustrious expert in Marxism and international politics hiding under the modest pseudonym of Molotov declared, as against Bukharin’s schematism, that the third period was in
existence—how could it not be?—but only for something quite different: the third period meant an extreme sharpening of the contradictions and imminence of the revolutionary situation. Although the Sixth Congress had appeared to be all for Bukharin, after the congress the Comintern was all for Molotov. That is the dialectic! I sent a letter to the Sixth Congress, “What Now?” In that letter I warned against unprincipled charlatanism on the indications of a revolutionary situation. I emphasized that as a result of the fatal errors of the preceding period we were passing through a new period of the growth of the social democracy. Consequently, after the entire period of revolutionary situations neglected and ruined by the Comintern, a period of preparation had begun again, i.e., of struggles to regain lost influence, to enlarge and strengthen it. To shout with eyes shut that “the situation is becoming more revolutionary every day,” as did the unfortunate Thaelmann at the Sixth Congress, means confusing the party and pushing the honest proletarian youth onto the road of adventurism. This prevision was confirmed word for word by the May Day events in Berlin. To be sure, after the inevitable hesitations and equivocations, Radek, Preobrazhensky, and Smilga signed my appeal to the Sixth Congress together with all the other Oppositionists. Who was right in this fundamental question? The Sixth Congress or the Opposition? The results of the British elections and the fruits of Thaelmann’s line constituted in themselves political facts a thousand times more important than the second (while we await the third) edition of the five-year plan. These are political facts of world importance, but at the moment all we get is bureaucratic shuffling of statistical forms. The penitents, however, keep silent about this as they kept silent about the shameful, adventurist appeal of the West European Bureau of the Comintern on May 8. This appeal follows entirely from the philosophy of the third period, according to Molotov and not according to Bukharin.

As befits all self-respecting bankrupts, the trio certainly could not fail to cover themselves from the permanent revolution side. Of this powder, there is an inexhaustible supply in Yaroslavsky’s snuffbox. What is most tragic in all the new historical experience of the defeats of opportunism—the Chinese revolution—the three capitulators dismiss with a cheap oath in which they declare they have nothing in common with the theory of permanent revolution. It would be more correct to say that these gentlemen have nothing in common with Marxism on the fundamental questions of world revolution.
Radek and Smilga stubbornly supported the subordination of the Chinese Communist Party to the bourgeois Kuomintang, and this not only before Chiang Kai-shek's coup d'état but also after the coup d'état. Preobrazhensky mumbled something vague, as he usually does on political questions. A remarkable fact: all those in the Opposition who had supported the subordination of the Communist Party to the Kuomintang have become capitulators. Not one of the Oppositionists who remained faithful to their banner carries this mark, a mark of notorious shame. Three-quarters of a century after the Communist Manifesto came into the world, a quarter of a century after the foundation of the Bolshevik Party, these unfortunate "Marxists" thought it possible to defend the Communists being in the Kuomintang cage! In reply to my accusation, Radek, as he now does in his letter of surrender, raised the fear of "the isolation" of the proletariat from the peasantry should the Communist Party leave the bourgeois Kuomintang. Shortly before that, Radek described the Canton government as a workers' and peasants' government, helping Stalin to camouflage enslavement of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. How cover oneself from these shameful acts, consequences of this blindness and stupidity, this betrayal of Marxism? How? With an indictment of the permanent revolution! Yaroslavsky's snuffbox is at your service.

As early as 1928, having begun to look for arguments in order to capitulate, Radek associated himself immediately with the resolution of the February 1928 plenum of the ECCI on the Chinese question. This resolution described the Trotskyists as liquidators because they called a defeat a defeat and did not agree to describe the victorious Chinese counterrevolution as the highest stage of the Chinese revolution. In this February resolution the course toward armed insurrection and soviets was proclaimed. For anyone with the slightest political sense helped by revolutionary experience, this resolution offered itself as a sample of disgusting, irresponsible adventurism. Radek associated himself with it. Smilga was thoughtfully silent because what was the Chinese revolution to him when he had already begun to smell the "concrete" odor of the figures of the five-year plan? Preobrazhensky involved himself in the matter in a no less subtle manner than Radek, but from the opposite end. The Chinese revolution is defeated, he wrote, and will be for a long time. A new revolution won't come soon. In that case, is it worthwhile quarreling with the centrists over China? Preobrazhensky sent lengthy messages on the subject. Reading them at Alma-Ata, I had a
feeling of shame. What had these people learned in the school of Lenin? I asked myself several times. Preobrazhensky's premises were completely the opposite of Radek's, yet their conclusions were identical: both would have liked very much for Yaroslavsky to embrace them fraternally, through the mediation of Menzhinsky.\textsuperscript{178} Oh, to be sure, it's for the good of the revolution. They aren't careerists; no, they aren't careerists—they are simply people without hope, exhausted of ideas.

To the adventurist resolution of the plenum of the ECCI of February 28, I had already counterposed at the time the course of mobilizing the Chinese masses around democratic slogans, including the slogan of a Chinese Constituent Assembly. But here the unfortunate trio rushed into ultraleftism; that was cheap and committed them to nothing. Democratic slogans? Never. "It is a gross mistake by Trotsky." Only Chinese soviets, and not a penny less. It is difficult to invent anything more stupid than this apology for a position. To use the slogan of soviets in a period of bourgeois reaction is to trifle, i.e., to make a mockery of soviets. Even at the time of the revolution, i.e., in the period of directly building soviets, we didn't withdraw democratic slogans. We withdrew them only when the real soviets, which had already captured power, clashed, before the eyes of the masses, with the real institutions of democracy. In the language of Lenin (and not in the mishmash of Stalin and his parrots) that meant: not jumping over the democratic stage in the development of the country.

Without a program for democracy—the Constituent Assembly, the eight-hour day, national independence for China, confiscation of the land, the right of nationalities to self-determination, etc.—without this program for democracy, the Chinese Communist Party would find itself bound hand and foot and would be obliged passively to clear the ground for the Chinese social democracy which, helped by Stalin, Radek, and Company, might supplant it.

So: when he followed in the wake of the Opposition, Radek missed what was most important in the Chinese revolution, for he defended the subordination of the Communist Party to the bourgeois Kuomintang. Radek missed the Chinese counterrevolution, supporting the course to armed insurrection which followed the Canton adventure. Now, Radek jumps over the period of the counterrevolution and the struggle for democracy, keeping himself apart from the tasks of the transition period by the abstract idea of soviets outside of time and place. But in compensation, Radek swears he has nothing in common with permanent revolu-
tion. That is gratifying. That is comforting. It is true that Radek
does not understand the motive forces of revolution; he does not
understand its changing periods; he does not understand the role
and meaning of the proletarian party; he does not understand the
relation between democratic slogans and the struggle for power;
but in compensation—oh, supreme compensation!—he takes no
strong drink and if he comforts himself on difficult days, it is not
with the alcohol of permanent revolution but with innocent
pinches from Yaroslavsky's snuffbox.

But, no, these "pinches" are not so innocent. On the contrary,
they are very dangerous. They bear in themselves a very great
threat for the coming Chinese revolution. The anti-Marxist theory
of Stalin-Radek bears in itself a repetition, changed but not
improved, of the Kuomintang experiment, for China, for India,
and for all the other countries of the East.

On the basis of all the experiences of the Russian and Chinese
revolutions, on the basis of the teachings of Marx and Lenin,
having thought the matter out in the light of these experiences,
the Opposition affirms:

A new Chinese revolution can overthrow the existing regime
and hand power over to the mass of the people only in the form of
the dictatorship of the proletariat.

"The democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the
peasantry"—substituting for the dictatorship of the proletariat
leading the peasantry and carrying out the democratic program—
is a fiction, a self-deception, or, worse still, Kerenskyism or Kuo-
mintangism.

Between the regime of Kerensky or Chiang Kai-shek on the one
hand and the dictatorship of the proletariat on the other, there is
not nor can there be any intermediate revolutionary regime, and
whoever puts forward such a naked formula shamefully deceives
the workers of the East and prepares fresh catastrophes.

The Opposition says to the workers of the East: the machina-
tions of the capitulators gnawing within the party help Stalin to
sow the seeds of centrisity, to throw sand in your eyes, to stop up
your ears, to befog your minds. On the one hand, you are weak-
ened in the face of the regime of an oppressive bourgeois dictator-
sip because you are forbidden to develop the struggle for democ-

Such forecasters utter treacheries. Workers of the East, learn to
distrust them, learn to despise them, learn to drive them out of your ranks!

I have recently stated to the representatives of the bourgeois press, in reply to their questions, that in the event of war being forced on the Soviet republic because of the Sino-Soviet conflict, every Oppositionist will do his duty in the struggle for the Soviet republic. That is too obvious to dwell on. But that is only half the duty. The other half is no less important; it is to tell the truth about the party. Chiang Kai-shek's provocation is the settlement of expenses incurred by Stalin in the defeat of the Chinese revolution. We gave warning hundreds of times: after Stalin has helped Chiang Kai-shek to settle in the saddle, Chiang Kai-shek would, at the first opportunity, draw his whip on him. That is what has happened. Pick up the check and pay it!

The capitulators not only renounce the platform; in passing they falsify it with a view to making capitulation easier for others. Thus, on the question of the workers, the capitulators deliberately falsify passages from the platform and pass them off as the official formulations. In the meantime, already deported, Preobrazhensky recently showed correctly that if the Opposition's economic policy had been applied from 1923 the situation would be incomparably better, as well as the situation of the toiling masses. This means not only the workers but also the overwhelming majority of the peasantry.

The road to a future rise in the economy passes in the present period through a serious, obvious, and tangible improvement in the material situation of the workers and not through bald bureaucratic instructions to raise the productivity of labor. The capitulators—especially Radek—always insisted in the past on this point in the Opposition's platform, more than on any other. Now they reject the very ABC of the Opposition the more truly to follow the analphabetism of Stalinism.

With complete brazen-faced hypocrisy, the trio condemns "the creation of the Soviet Bolshevik-Leninist center" which, according to them, is "another step towards the formation of a new party." The indecency of this accusation lies in the fact that the three accusers were for years members of the Bolshevik-Leninist center. When they speak of the creation of this center, they simply deceive public opinion. The question doesn't lie in the creation of the center but in its being proclaimed publicly. Of course, this step wasn't accidental. While the struggle was going on in the party, while hope remained that the struggle would be resolved without a split, the center faction had no intention of
proclaiming itself publicly. But now the Opposition has been put outside the party, not only outside the CPSU but also outside the whole Comintern, and since the Opposition takes its tasks and obligations seriously, it can struggle to carry them out only in organized fashion, i.e., by creating a serious and competent faction. The trio speaks of a second party without remarking that, if this terminology is used, we have to speak not of two but of three parties, including among them the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Rykov, yesterday's leader of the Comintern, Bukharin, and yesterday's leader of the trade unions, Tomsky. Such short formulations are good for the newly born or for old people relapsed into babyhood. The question is not resolved by counting "parties." We are dealing with the historical succession of Bolshevism. With the regime before which the trio crawls, the party will go through not a few splits in the future. Nevertheless, basically proletarian ranks gather around our banner. How bureaucrats count parties is a matter of tenth-rate importance. The historian of the future will say that the cause of Marx and Lenin was continued by the Opposition.

Of course, the pious trinity triumphantly announces that the main danger in the Comintern is "the Right danger." The struggle against this danger, as is known, now assumes an administrative character. The Thaelmanns, the Semards, and all their cothinkers gather to form and strengthen Right factions, the point of entry toward the social democracy. That the centrists now struggle in their own way against the Right is a fact we foresaw a long time ago. Right at the end of 1926 and at the beginning of 1927, when Radek and Smilga—precisely these two—more than the others opposed a second party, I warned them more than once: the Right tail will strike at the centrist head and provoke a split in the ruling bloc. The facts confirmed our prognosis. Now the impatient left centrists in the Opposition ranks clear off. They will do more harm to the Stalinists than they were ever of use to us. Good riddance.

We remain what we were. Every blow we strike at the centrists is a double blow at the Right. In the new Stalinist five-year plan we see confirmed the correctness and insight of the Opposition. Through the concrete official figures we see the face of tomorrow. The centrists will move over to the left only under our whip. That is why there is no reason to give up the whip in our hands. On the contrary, we have to use three whips. As in the past we foresaw the split between the Right and the center, so we now see an
inevitable differentiation among the centrists. After its victories, the Stalin faction will enter a period of great tests, shocks, and crises. We shall continue to keep our hand on the pulse of the party. We shall point out the danger from the Right, not following the stupid bureaucrats, but two or three years in advance. We shall support every centrist step to the left, but not by softening our struggle against *centrism, the main danger in the party*. Our *fidelity to the October Revolution remains unshakable*. It is the fidelity of fighters, not of parasites.
On July 22 I gave the following statement in answer to an American news agency questionnaire:

"I can give my view on Sino-Soviet relations, of course, only as an individual. I have no information except what is in the newspapers. In cases of this kind, information in the newspapers is always insufficient.

"There can be no doubt that aggressiveness has been manifested not by the Soviet, but by the Chinese government. The managing apparatus of the Chinese Eastern Railroad has existed for a number of years. The workers' organizations that the Chinese regime has attacked have also existed for some time. The existing administrative arrangement for the Chinese Eastern Railroad was carefully worked out this last time by a special commission under my chairmanship. The commission's decisions were approved in April 1926 and completely protect Chinese interests.

"The conduct of the present Chinese government is explained by the fact that it was made stronger by the crushing defeat of the workers and peasants. I will not discuss here the reasons for the defeat of the revolutionary movement of the Chinese people because I have dealt sufficiently with this theme in my previously published works. The government, having risen out of a completely routed revolution, as always in such cases, feels weak in relation to those forces against which the revolution was directed, i.e., above all against British and Japanese imperialism. Therefore, it is compelled to try to enhance its power and influence by making adventuristic gestures toward its revolutionary neighbor.

"Must this provocation that developed out of the defeat of the
Chinese revolution lead to war? I don’t think so. Why? Because the Soviet government does not want war, and the Chinese government is not capable of waging it.

“The army of Chiang Kai-shek was victorious in 1925-27 [against the warlords] thanks to the revolutionary upsurge of the masses. In turning against them, the army has forfeited its chief source of strength. As a purely military organization, Chiang Kai-shek’s army is extremely weak. Chiang Kai-shek cannot help but realize that the Soviet government is well aware of the weakness of his army. It is unthinkable that Chiang Kai-shek could wage a war against the Red Army without the aid of other powers. It is more accurate to say that Chiang Kai-shek would wage war only if his army were merely the auxiliary detachment to the forces of another power. I do not believe that at this time such a combination is very likely, especially in light of the Soviet government’s sincere desire, as indicated above, to settle problems by peaceful means. . . .

“It goes without saying that in the event that war is imposed on the Soviet people, the Opposition will devote itself fully to the cause of defending the October Revolution.”

I thought that in this statement I had expressed the viewpoint of the Communist Left Opposition as a whole. I regret to say that this is not entirely true. Individuals and groups have come forward in the Opposition that, on the occasion of their first serious political test, have taken either an equivocal or a basically wrong position, a position outside their own revolutionary Opposition camp or one which brought them very close to the camp of the social democracy.

In Die Fahne des Kommunismus, number 26, there was an article written by one H.P. According to this article, the conflict was caused by an encroachment on China’s right of self-determination by the Soviet republic. In other words, it was in essence a defense of Chiang Kai-shek. I shall not deal with this article, since H.P. received a correct reply from Comrade Kurt Landau, who dealt with this question as behooves a Marxist.

The editor of Fahne des Kommunismus printed the article as a discussion article, with a note that he is not in solidarity with the author. It is incomprehensible that a discussion could be opened on a question that is so elementary for every revolutionary, particularly at a time political action is called for. The thing became even worse when the editor of the paper also published Landau’s contribution as a “discussion article.” H.P.’s article
expresses the prejudices of vulgar democracy combined with those of anarchism. Landau's article formulates the Marxist position. And what about the position of the editor?

Something incomparably worse occurred in one of the numerous groups of the French Opposition. Number 35 of *Contre le Courant* (July 28, 1929) had an editorial on the Sino-Soviet conflict which is a sorry mess of errors from beginning to end, partly of a social democratic and partly of an ultraleft character. The editorial begins with the statement that the adventuristic policy of the Soviet bureaucracy is responsible for the conflict; in other words, the paper assumes the role of Chiang Kai-shek's attorney. The editorial puts the policy of the Soviet government toward the Chinese Eastern Railroad in the category of a capitalist, imperialist policy, which resorts to the support of the imperialist powers.

"The Communist Opposition," the editorial states, "cannot support Stalin's war, which is not a defensive war of the proletariat but a semicolonial war." Elsewhere it says: "The Opposition must have the courage to tell the working class that it is not falling into line with the Stalinist bureaucrats, that it is not for their adventuristic war." This sentence is emphasized in the original, and not by accident. It expresses the whole point of the editorial and thereby puts the author into implacable opposition to the Communist Left.

In what sense is the Stalinist bureaucracy responsible for the present conflict? In this sense and no other: that it helped Chiang Kai-shek by its previous policy to destroy the revolution of the Chinese workers and peasants. I wrote about this in an article directed against Radek and Company: "Chiang Kai-shek's provocation is the settlement of expenses incurred by Stalin in the defeat of the Chinese revolution. We gave warning hundreds of times: after Stalin has helped Chiang Kai-shek to settle in the saddle, Chiang Kai-shek would, at the first opportunity, draw his whip on him. That is what has happened."

Chiang Kai-shek's provocation was preceded by his crushing of the Chinese revolution. What we have now is an adventure of the Bonapartist military power headed by Chiang Kai-shek. This provocation is at the root of the Sino-Soviet conflict.

According to the editorial, the principal cause of the conflict is the imperialist "claim" of the Soviet republic on the Chinese Eastern Railroad. Hands off China! shout the involuntary defenders of Chiang Kai-shek, repeating not only the slogans but also the basic arguments of the social democrats. Up until now
we believed that only the capitalist bourgeoisie as a class could be the representatives of an imperialist policy. Is there anything to indicate the contrary? Or has such a class taken power in the USSR? Since when? We are fighting against the centrism of the Stalinist bureaucracy (remember: centrism is a tendency within the working class itself) because centrist policies may help the bourgeoisie to gain power, first the petty and middle bourgeoisie and, eventually, finance capital. This is the historical danger; but this is a process that is by no means at the point of completion.

In the same issue of *Contre le Courant*, there is a so-called draft of a platform. In it we read among other things: "We cannot say that Thermidor has already taken hold." This shows that continual repetition of the general formulas of the Opposition is far from equivalent to a political understanding of those formulas. If we cannot say that Thermidor is an accomplished fact, then we cannot say that Soviet policy has become a capitalist, or imperialist, policy. Centrism zigzags between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie. To identify centrism with big capital is to understand nothing, and thereby to support finance capital not only against the proletariat, but also against the petty bourgeoisie.

The theoretical wisdom of the ultralefts in Berlin and Paris boils down to a few democratic abstractions, which have a geographical, not a socialist basis. The Chinese Eastern Railroad runs through Manchuria, which belongs to China. China has a right to self-determination; therefore, the claim of Soviet Russia to this railroad is imperialism. It should be turned over. To whom? To Chiang Kai-shek? Or to the son of Chang Tso-lin?181

During the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations,182 von Kuelmann introduced the demand for an independent Latvia and Estonia, referring to the fact that the Landtags established there with the aid of Germany had instructed him to demand separation. We refused to sanction this, and we were denounced by the entire official German press as imperialists.

Let us assume that in the Caucasus there is an outbreak of counterrevolution which, with the help of, say, England, achieves victory. Let us also assume that the workers of Baku, with the help of the Soviet Union, succeed in keeping the whole area of Baku in their hands. It goes without saying that the Transcaucasian counterrevolution would lay claim to this district of Baku. It is perfectly clear that the Soviet Republic would not consent to this. Is it not also clear that in such a case the enemy would accuse the Soviet government of imperialism?
Had the revolution of the Chinese workers and peasants been victorious, there wouldn't be any difficulty whatsoever about the Chinese Eastern Railroad. The lines would have been turned over to the victorious Chinese people. But the fact of the matter is that the Chinese people were defeated by the ruling Chinese bourgeoisie, with the aid of foreign imperialism. To turn over the railroad to Chiang Kai-shek under such conditions would mean to give aid and comfort to the Chinese Bonapartist counterrevolution against the Chinese people. This itself is decisive. But there is another consideration of equal weight. Chiang Kai-shek never could get those lines by virtue of his own financial-political means—let alone keep them. It is hardly an accident that he tolerates the actual independence of Manchuria existing under a Japanese protectorate. The railroad lines transferred to Chiang Kai-shek would only become security for the foreign loans he received. They would pass into the hands of the real imperialists and would become their most important economic and strategic outpost in the Far East—against a potential Chinese revolution and against the Soviet republic. We are well aware that the imperialists understand perfectly how to utilize the slogan of self-determination for their own dirty deals. But I don't believe that Marxists are under any obligation to help them put it over.

The point of departure for the ultralefts is the fact that it was the greedy and thievish imperialism of the czar that took the Chinese Eastern Railroad from the Chinese people. This is a fact that cannot be disputed. Yet they forget to point out this was the same imperialism that dominated the Russian people. Yes, this railroad was constructed for the purpose of robbing the Chinese workers and peasants. But it was constructed by the exploitation and the robbery of the Russian workers and peasants. Then the October Revolution took place. Did this alter the mutual relations of the Chinese and the Russians? On the foundation of the revolution, after a period of reaction, the state structure was rebuilt. Did Russia now return to the starting point? Can we now imagine, from a historical viewpoint—regardless of Stalin and Molotov, regardless of the exile of the Opposition, etc., etc.—can we imagine an ownership of the Chinese Eastern Railroad that would be more beneficial from the point of view of the international proletariat and the Chinese revolution than that of the Soviet Union? This is how we ought to put the question.

All the White Guard emigres look upon this question from a class viewpoint, not from a nationalist or a geographical one. In
spite of internal dissension, the leading groups of the Russian emigres agree that the internationalization of the Chinese Eastern Railroad, that is, its transference to the control of world imperialism, would be more advantageous to the "coming," that is, bourgeois, Russia than leaving it in the possession of the Soviet state. By the same token, we can say that its remaining under the control of the Soviet government would be more advantageous to an independent China than turning it over to any of the present claimants.

Does this mean that the managing apparatus of the lines is perfect? No! Indeed not. Czarist imperialism has left its traces. All the zigzags of Soviet internal policy are undoubtedly also reflected in the apparatus of the lines. The tasks of the Opposition extend to these questions as well.

I would like to refer to my personal experience in this matter. I had to fight more than once for an improvement in the administration of the Chinese railroad. The last time I worked on this question was in March 1926 on a special commission of which I was chairman. The members of the commission were Voroshilov, Dzerzhinsky, and Chicherin. In full agreement with the Chinese revolutionaries, not only the Communists but also the representatives of the then functioning Kuomintang, the commission considered absolutely necessary: "strictly keeping the actual apparatus of the CERR in the hands of the Soviet government—which in the next period is the only way to protect the railroad from imperialist seizure. . . ."

With regard to the administration in the interim, the resolution adopted on the question had this to say: "It is necessary to immediately adopt broad measures of a cultural-political nature aimed at Sinofication of the railroad.

"a. The administration should be bilingual; station signs and instructions posted in the stations and in the cars, etc., should be bilingual.

"b. Chinese schools for railroad workers should be established combining technical and political training.

"c. At appropriate points along the railroad, cultural-educational institutions should be established for the Chinese workers and the Chinese settlements adjacent to the railroad."

With regard to the policy of the Russian representatives toward China, the resolution said: "There is absolutely no doubt that in the actions of the various departmental representatives there
were inadmissible great-power mannerisms compromIsmg the Soviet administration and creating an impression of Soviet imperialism.

"It is necessary to impress upon the corresponding agencies and persons the vital importance for us of such a policy and of even such an external form of the policy in relation to China so that any trace of suspicion of great-power intentions will be eliminated. This policy—based on the closest attention to China's rights, on emphasizing its sovereignty, etc.—must be carried out on every level. In every individual instance of a violation of this policy, no matter how slight, the culprits should be punished and this fact brought to the attention of Chinese public opinion."

In addition to this I must point out that the Chinese owners of the railroad, including Chiang Kai-shek, put against the management of the railroad not a Chinese but mainly a White-Guardist apparatus on the payroll of the imperialists of the world. The White Guards employed in the police and military squads of the Chinese lines have frequently committed acts of violence against the railroad workers. Regarding this, the resolution passed by the commission said the following:

"... It is necessary right now to carefully compile (and subsequently examine) all cases of tyranny and violence on the part of Chinese militarists, police, and Russian White Guard elements against Russian workers and employees of the CERR, and also all cases of conflict between Russians and Chinese on national-social grounds. It is also necessary to devise the course and means for defending the personal and national dignity of Russian workers so that conflicts on this basis rather than kindling chauvinist sentiments on both sides, on the contrary, will have a political and educational significance. It is necessary to set up special conciliation commissions or courts of honor attached to the trade unions, with both sides participating on an equal basis, under the actual guidance of serious communists who understand the full importance and acuteness of the national question."

I believe that this is a far cry from imperialism. I believe that the ultralefts have a good chance to learn something from this. I am also ready to admit that not all of our resolutions have been carried out. There were probably more unlawful acts on the railroad than in Moscow. That is precisely why the Opposition wages an implacable struggle. Yet it is a poor politician who throws out the baby with the bath water.

I have already shown the sense in which the Stalinist faction is
responsible for Chiang Kai-shek's provocations. But even if we assume that Stalin's bureaucrats have acted foolishly again, and have thereby helped the enemy to strike a blow against the Soviet republic, what conclusions should we draw? The conclusion that we must not defend the Soviet republic? Or the conclusion that we must free the Soviet republic from the Stalinist leadership? The *Contre le Courant* editorial has outrageously come to the first conclusion. It states that we must not support Stalin's bureaucracy and its adventuristic war, as though in the event of war the Stalinist bureaucracy would be at stake and not the October Revolution and its potentialities. In order to display more of its wisdom, the editorial continues: "It is not up to the Opposition to find some special remedy in the present crisis.” We cannot imagine a worse position. This is not the view of a revolutionary, but of a disinterested spectator. What shall the Russian revolutionary do? What shall the fighters of the Opposition do in case of war? Shall they perhaps take a neutral position? The author of the editorial does not seem to think of this. And that is because he is not guided by the viewpoint of a revolutionary who will unconditionally enlist in the war, but proceeds like a notary who records the actions of both parties without intervening.

The Stalinists have accused us more than once of being defeatists or conditional defensists. I spoke on this subject at a joint plenary session of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission on August 1, 1927. I said: "The lie of conditional defensism ... we fling back into the faces of the calumniators.”

In this way I repudiated the idea of neutrality and of conditional defense, called it a slander, and hurled the slander back into the teeth of the Stalinists. Did the author of the editorial fail to notice this? And if he didn’t—why did he not attack me? The speech to which I refer was printed in my recent book, published in French under the title *La Revolution defigree*.

When I spoke, I did not deal with a specific war, but with any war that might be waged against the Soviet republic. Only an ignoramus could fail to see from the combination of the preceding events a basic antagonism between the imperialist powers and Soviet Russia. Yes, concerning my visa the imperialists are in cheerful accord with Stalin. But when it comes to the question of the Soviet republic, they all remain its mortal enemies, irrespective of Stalin. Every war would expose this antagonism and inevitably result in endangering the very existence of the Soviet Union. That is why I said in that speech:
"Do we, the Opposition, cast any doubts on the defense of the socialist fatherland? Not in the slightest degree. It is our hope not only to participate in the defense, but to be able to teach others a few things. Do we cast doubts on Stalin’s ability to sketch a correct line for the defense of the socialist fatherland? We do so and, indeed, to the highest possible degree.

"... The Opposition is for the victory of the USSR; it has proved and will continue to prove this in action, in a manner inferior to none. But Stalin is not concerned with that. Stalin has essentially a different question in mind, which he dares not express, namely, ‘Does the Opposition really think that the leadership of Stalin is incapable of assuring victory to the USSR?’ Yes, we think so.”

Zinoviev: “Correct!”

"... Not a single Oppositionist will renounce his right and his duty, on the eve of war, or during the war, to fight for the correction of the party’s course—as has always been the case in our party—because therein lies the most important condition for victory. To sum up. For the socialist fatherland? Yes! For the Stalinist course? No!”

I believe that this position retains its full force at the present moment as well.
Dear Comrades:
You are about to publish a weekly newspaper based on the principles of the Communist Left Opposition. I am with you with all my heart. This is exactly what is needed.

In France the influence of the Opposition is far too slight. This is because there are too many Oppositional groups in France. Many of them are stagnating. From time to time they put out an issue of a magazine containing documents of the international Opposition or episodic articles on isolated questions of French life. The reader forgets the contents of the last issue by the time a new one reaches him. It is indispensable to break out of this situation. It is necessary to supply the masses with correct and systematic Marxist evaluations of all the events of social life. Politics demands the continuity of thought, words, and deeds. That is why politics demands a daily newspaper.

The Opposition still lacks the resources today to undertake a daily. You are obliged to begin with a weekly. This is already a step forward; provided, of course, you do not stop here but will continue to stubbornly steer—toward a daily.

Those ideas which you represent—the ideas of Marxism, enriched by the practice of Lenin’s party and the entire postwar revolutionary struggle of the international proletariat—will cut a path for themselves. There can be no doubt of this. All that is necessary is that these ideas be intimately tied to the facts of life, geared to actual events, and fructified by the living experience of the masses. Your weekly will serve this end.

Thereby it will become an irreplaceable instrument for elaborating the platform of the French Opposition—a platform that is
correct in principle and viable. Only pedants are capable of
taking in principle that a platform can be hatched in an office and then
proclaimed as a ready-made premise for political activity. No, a
fighting program can only set down and generalize the political
experience that has already been gone through, and in this way
create conditions for broader and more successful experiences in
the future.

Marx once remarked that a single actual step of the movement
is more important than a dozen programs. Marx had in mind
programs which are created outside the actual struggle, primarily
for the consolation of their creators. Marx's words, alas, apply
most directly to the present position of the French Communist
Opposition. Wherein lies its weakness? In this, that it has not
waged a political struggle, or, in those cases where this was
undertaken, it was done only episodically. This inevitably leads
to the formation and preservation of shut-in self-sufficient circles
which, as everyone knows, never pass the test of events. A contin­
uation of this condition threatens to cruelly compromise the
French Opposition and for a long time to bar its road to the
future. A concentration of all the forces of the Left Opposition
faction is indispensable. Your La Verite must become the organ
for such a concentration.

It is impermissible to lose any more time; enough has been
already lost.

The mistakes of official communism are not accidental in char­
acter. They are implanted in the very nature of the ruling faction.
Centrism is an intermediate tendency, intermediate between re­
formism and communism. Centrism has not and cannot have its
own independent line. It always gropes for a line under a rain of
blows from the right and from the left. It rushes from side to side,
executes zigzags, swings around a circle, and falls from one
extreme into the other. It ought to be added that contemporary
centrism is utterly bureaucratized and completely subject to the
commands of the summit of the Stalinist faction. This invests
every zigzag of the leadership with an international scope, inde­
pendently of the existing conditions of the labor movement in
each country. As a result we witness the progressive weakening
of the positions of world communism. Individuals of the Semard
and Monmousseau type are the most finished representatives of
bureaucratic centrism in France. The latest adventurist zigzag
to the left—whose immediate aim is to screen from the eyes of the
workers the physical attacks against the Communist Opposi-
tion—found its expression in a number of adventures and revealed from Canton to Berlin both the heroism of the advanced layer of the workers as well as the political bankruptcy of the leadership. As a result of this convulsive zigzag, which brought the only thing it could, namely, defeat, one must expect a further weakening of centrism and the strengthening of the wings—the right and the left.

A moment now approaches clearly favorable for the recruitment of revolutionary workers under the banner of Marx and Lenin.

Rejecting the circle spirit, with its petty interests and ambitions, *La Verite* must unite around itself all the virile, healthy, and genuinely revolutionary elements of the Communist Left Opposition. The vanguard of the workers needs this today as urgently as it needs its daily bread.

The attitude of the revolutionary press toward its readers is the most important test of a political line. The *reformists* deliberately lie to their readers in order to preserve the bourgeois system. The *centrists* employ lies to cloak their vacillations, their uncertainty, their capitulation, and their adventures. They do not trust themselves and therefore do not trust their readers. They are of the opinion that the worker can be led only if he is blindfolded and pulled by the hand. Such is the spirit of the official press of the Comintern nowadays. It has no faith in the workers. It exercises guardianship over them, as if they were little children. When they ask awkward questions, it sternly shakes its finger at them. Precisely this engenders apathy in the ranks of the party and the growing vacuum around it.

The mass of workers does not consist of infants! It consists of people with the harsh experience of life. It does not tolerate nursemaids, whose strictness is as a rule directly proportional to their stupidity. The worker seeks, not commands, but assistance in political orientation. For this it is first of all necessary to tell him what is. Not to distort, not to tendentiously select, not to embellish, not to sugarcoat, but honestly to say what is. The politics of communism can only gain from a truthful clarification of reality. Untruth is needed for salvaging false reputations, but not for the education of the masses. The workers need the truth as an instrument of revolutionary action.

Your paper bears the name *La Verite*. This name, like all others, has been amply abused. Nevertheless it is a good and honorable name. The *truth* is always revolutionary. To lay bare
the truth of their position before the oppressed is to lead them to
the highroad of revolution. To tell the truth about the rulers is to
undermine the foundations of their rule. To tell the truth about
the reformist bureaucracy is to condemn it in the consciousness of
the masses. To tell the truth about the centrists is to help the
workers assure a correct leadership of the Communist Interna-
tional. This is the task of your weekly. All forms and manifesta-
tions of the labor movement must be conscientiously illumined.
An attentive reader must become convinced that if he wants to
learn the genuine facts of the proletarian struggle in France and
in the whole world he must seek them in *La Verite*. He will in this
way adopt our standpoint, for it will loom before him in the light
of facts and statistics. Only the tendency which, together with
the workers and at their head, seeks a correct orientation can
create for itself conscious and devoted partisans who do not know
disillusionment and demoralization.

Dear friends! I am with you with all my heart. I joyfully accept
your proposal for collaboration. I will do everything in my power
to make this collaboration regular and systematic. I will try to
supply articles for each issue on the situation in Russia, on events
in world life, and on the problems of the international labor
movement.

Warmly wishing you success,
L. Trotsky

P.S. Some comrades have called my attention to the fact that
parallel with your weekly another Oppositional weekly is report-
edly scheduled to appear and they ask: What is the reason for it?
Let me answer briefly. If the second publication is preparing to
put forward the very same ideas that we are, then its participants
ought not to multiply parallel enterprises but instead take their
place in common ranks. It is otherwise if their ideas differ so
profoundly from ours as to justify the publication of a competing
weekly. But in that case these are opponents, and against oppo-
nents one conducts a fight. In any event, my sympathy and
support belong only to *La Verite*. 
A DECLARATION OF LA VERITE\textsuperscript{185}

August 1929

Our publication is meant for the vanguard workers. Our only task is the liberation of the working class. To achieve this aim, we see no other road than the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The contemporary democratic state is the instrument of bourgeois rule. The democratic system aims to assure the rule of capital. The less this domination is ensured by normal democratic means, the more it requires the use of violence.

The French socialists continue to repeat that they will reach socialism by democratic means. But we have seen and we see the social democrats in power. Last May Day in Germany they shot down twenty-seven workers because the vanguard of the Berlin proletariat wanted to come out in the streets on the date fixed by the founding convention of the Second International as the day of great proletarian demonstrations. In England the Labourites crawl not only before capital but before the monarchy, and they begin the “democratization” of the country, not by liquidating the House of Lords, but by elevating among the farcical dignitaries that old Fabian, Webb.\textsuperscript{186}

The Marxist position on democracy is completely vindicated by experience. Social democracy in power does not even mean that reforms will be achieved. When the bourgeoisie feels forced to agree to a social reform, it carries it out itself, without handing over the honor to the social democrats. When the bourgeoisie allows the socialists to serve it, it deprives them even of the pocket money needed to cover the cost of their reform activity.

The difference between our epoch and the prewar epoch is
reflected politically in the sharpest way by the fate of the social democracy. Up until the war, it was in opposition to the bourgeois state. But now it is its firmest support. In England and in Germany, the persistence of capitalist rule would not be possible without the social democracy. If it is absurd to equate the social democracy with fascism as the present leadership of the Communist International often does,\textsuperscript{187} nevertheless it is indisputable that social democracy and fascism represent instruments, distinct and in opposition on certain points, which, in the final analysis, serve in different periods the same end: the maintenance of the bourgeoisie in the imperialist epoch.

The revolutionary overthrow of bourgeois domination was accomplished by the Bolshevik Party. The October Revolution is the grandest achievement of the world working-class movement, and it will remain one of the greatest events of human history in general. We stand resolutely and without reservations on the basis of the October Revolution: it is our revolution.

The February revolution had shown that democracy which the revolution had only just created, heaps pitiless reprisals on the workers as soon as they start to threaten private property. On the other hand, the October Revolution showed that, even in a backward country where the peasant population is an overwhelming majority, the proletariat can seize power by gathering around itself the oppressed masses. This historic lesson was taught to the international proletariat by the Bolshevik Party under Lenin’s leadership. The policy of the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution is the supreme application of the Marxist method. It marks the new starting point of the working class in its march forward.

**Postwar Dreams and Reality**

Step by step, France comes out of the drunkenness of victory. The ghosts flee. The fantastic hopes vanish. The harsh reality remains. The haughty dream of French capital, domination of Europe, and, through Europe, the world, is crushed.

During the early postwar years, the governments of England and America still thought it necessary to flatter the national pride of the French bourgeoisie in giving it, from time to time, an ornamental satisfaction. But this time has passed. The American bourgeoisie has since measured the depth of Europe’s downfall and has ceased bothering itself about it. The British bourgeoisie which the Americans treat bluntly passes off its anger onto the
French. The situation of the British bourgeoisie is characterized by the contradiction between its traditions of world domination and the decline in its place in the world economy. The French bourgeoisie does not have such a tradition of power. The Versailles peace is the delirious fantasy of an upstart petty bourgeoisie. France’s material base is absolutely inadequate by contemporary (that is, American) standards for it to have a world role.

The serious growth of French industry is an incontestable fact, as is the rationalization of industrial procedures. But it is precisely this growth that faces the French bourgeoisie with the problem of the world market in a more and more urgent way. It is no longer a question of occupying the Saar or the Ruhr, but of the place of French imperialism in the world. At the first important test, the insufficiency of French imperialism will be clearly shown: too small a population, too restricted a territory, too heavy a dependence on her neighbors, too heavy a burden of debt, and an even heavier burden of militarism. We will not attempt to predict here the dates of the future inevitable failures, retreats, and defeats of French imperialism. But we foresee them and we do not doubt that they will provoke internal crises and shakeups. In touching speeches one can operate with fictitious quantities, but in the real political world the sophisms of Poincare, the pathos of Franklin-Bouillon, or the eloquence of Briand rings like pitiful yelping. America says “Pay!” England says “Pay!” Snowden, the Labour Party interpreter for the City, finds in his vocabulary the most vulgar expressions about France.

The Communist International foresaw this outcome in the period when it had a leadership able to comprehend the meaning of the development of things and able to foresee their results. As far back as 1920, when the hegemony of victorious France appeared to be indisputable, the manifesto of the Second Congress of the Communist International stated: “Intoxicated by chauvinist fumes of a victory which she won for others, bourgeois France considers herself the commandress of Europe. In reality, never before has France and the very foundations of her existence been so slavishly dependent upon the more powerful states—England and North America—as she is today. For Belgium, France prescribes a specific economic and military program, transforming her weaker ally into an enslaved province, but in relation to England, France herself plays the role of Belgium, only on a somewhat larger scale.”

The postwar decade in France was more peaceful than in most
of the other countries in Europe. But that was only a moratorium based on inflation. Inflation reigned everywhere: in the monetary exchanges, in budgets, in military systems, in diplomatic plans, and in imperialist appetites. The big monetary reform of Poincare only revealed this secret: the wine of the French bourgeoisie contains four-fifths water. The moratorium expires. The American stocks must be paid for, the friendship of the world powers must be paid for, the corpses of the French workers and peasants must be paid for. France enters the age of settling of accounts. But the biggest bill will be presented by the French proletariat.

The Crisis of the Communist Party

The crisis of the French bourgeoisie in facing the world, and, therefore, its internal crisis that is now beginning, coincide with a profound crisis in the French Communist Party. The first steps of the party had been full of promise. At that time the leadership of the Communist International combined revolutionary perspicacity and audacity with the deepest attention to the concrete particularities of each country. Only on that road was success possible in general. The changes in leadership in the Soviet Union that occurred under the pressure of class forces reverberated injuriously throughout the life of the whole Communist International, including the French party. The continuity of development and experience was automatically broken. Those who led the French Communist Party and the Communist International in Lenin's era were not only pushed out of the leadership, but expelled from the party. Only those who follow quickly enough all the zigzags of the Moscow leaders are allowed to lead the party.

The ultraleft course of Zinoviev in 1924-25 meant replacing Marxist analysis with the noisy phrase, the accumulation of mistakes, and the transformation of democratic centralism into its police-like caricature. After the failure of the ultraleft leadership, it was replaced by docile employees without individuality. It was they who oriented toward Chiang Kai-shek and Purcell, while they trailed after the reformists in internal affairs. And when the Stalinist leadership, under the pressure of both the growing danger of the Right and the whip of the criticisms made by the Opposition, was forced to carry out its left turn, there was no need even to change the French leadership team: the men whose only actions had been to follow the halfway social demo-
ocratic policies of 1926-27 became adventurist politicians with the same facility. August 1 shows this strikingly. In China, in Germany, in other countries, the adventurist policy has already led to bloody catastrophes. In France to date, it has only been marked by grotesque fiascoes. But if ridicule can kill anyone, it is above all a revolutionary party.

A Great Danger

The danger, as we have said, is that a new crisis of French capitalism could catch the vanguard of the French proletariat unawares. The danger is that favorable situations can be allowed to slip by, one after another, as has been seen to occur in different countries after the war. Our task is to prevent this danger by an urgent and repeated appeal to the class consciousness and the revolutionary will of the proletarian vanguard.

We are not at all thinking of minimizing the fact that there is an enormous distance between what the party should be and what it is. There is even, on some points, a complete opposition. We have already given a brief appraisal of the French Communist Party. The deplorable results of its policy are striking: a drop in prestige, a decline in membership, a reduction in activity. But we are still far from erecting a cross over the party and going beyond it.

The official party now contains some twenty or thirty thousand members. It controls—in a sorry way—the CGTU, which has about three hundred thousand members. In the last elections the party obtained more than a million votes. These figures give a picture not of the growth of the party but of its decline. At the same time they testify to the fact that the party, formed in the eddies of the war, under the influence of the October Revolution, still contains a commanding part of the proletarian vanguard despite the unbelievable faults of its leadership. We see in this fact above all an indisputable expression of the imperious need felt by the proletariat for a revolutionary leadership.

We are neither hostile nor indifferent toward the Communist Party. Not of course out of sympathy for its functionaries. But there are courageous workers in the party, who are ready for any sacrifice: they are the ones that we want to help develop a correct political line and establish a healthy internal regime and a good communist leadership. Furthermore, around the party are some tens of thousands of communists or simply revolutionary workers
who are ready to become communists but who are blocked by this policy of impotence, convulsions, somersaults, clique struggles, and palace revolutions. One of the essential tasks of the Communist Opposition is to stop the justified indignation against a pernicious leadership from becoming a disillusionment about communism and the revolution in general. This can only be done by developing a Marxist understanding of the facts and by determining the correct tactics according to the facts of the situation itself.

**Party and Unions**

It is stupid and criminal to transform the unions into a slightly larger second edition of the party, or to make them an appendage of the party. It is completely legitimate for a revolutionary workers' party to try to win influence in the unions. Otherwise, it would condemn itself to vain, pseudorevolutionary chattering. But it must do this by methods that flow from the very nature of the unions and that reinforce them: that attract new elements, increase the number of members, and contribute to the development of correct means of struggle against the bosses. Workers see in the unions first of all a means of defending themselves against exploitation by the boss. In order to bring them into the unions, to hold them, and then to take them further, developing their class consciousness, it is first necessary for the union leadership to show that it can defend them well in immediate issues: wages, eight-hour day, harassment or brutality by the bosses or their assistants, various forms of capitalist rationalization. Trying to sustain striking workers by repeatedly giving them boring speeches on the "imminence" of war can only have disastrous consequences in all domains and for all workers, for the party and the CGTU. It shows an absolute incomprehension of the work to be done and an illusion that one can immediately reach a goal which can only be attained through long and tenacious effort.

The result is the picture that we see before us. To the degree that the Communist Party extends its influence over organization, that organization loses strength. The Communist Party took over the ARAC. But by the time it had taken it over, the group was moribund. It is the same with the CGTU. Certainly the latter is more resistant, fortunately it is hard to kill; a bad policy is not enough to destroy it. But it is possible to reduce its membership,
demoralize the rank and file, and make them wary of a leadership which is always making mistakes and always starting over again. This is precisely what the Communist Party has done in recent years.

The consequences of all these zigzags is that the clearest and most correct ideas are now obscured. There has been no advance toward the solution of a single important question. Much ground has even been lost. But the problem remains. To resolve it without recalling the basic mistakes of the Commune\textsuperscript{193} and without taking into account the immense experience of the Russian Revolution is to be deprived of the surest data and to prepare new disasters.

Three Tendencies in the International

Our attitude to the Communist International is based on the same principles as our attitude to the French Communist Party. Since the end of 1923, the Communist International has lived and lives under the barrel of a revolver held successively by the apparatus of Zinoviev and then of Stalin. Everyone was forced to think, speak, and, above all, vote “monolithically.” This destruction of ideological life takes severe vengeance now with the growth of factions and groups. As for the fundamental tendencies, we believe that they can be characterized as follows:

The Communist Left expresses the historic interests of the proletariat. Following defeats of the proletariat and the revolutionary ebb, the stabilization of the bourgeoisie and the bureaucratic “victories,” the Left is once again only a minority fighting against the current, as it was during the war.

The Right tendency within communism tends, consciously or not, to take the place that the social democracy occupied before the war, that is, the place of reformist opposition to capitalist society, while the social democracy itself has become, not by accident, one of the leading parties of the bourgeoisie. It is certain that the Right will not be able to hold this position for long. In our imperialist epoch, which poses all questions sharply, the Right will accomplish its evolution toward the bourgeoisie incomparably more rapidly than the social democracy did.

The third current, centrist, holds an intermediate position and is characterized by a policy of vacillation between the proletarian revolutionary line and the national reformist petty-bourgeois line. Centrism is now the leading tendency in official communism.
A Declaration of La Verite

This is explained by historical reasons such as the character of the period in which we live. Centrism in the USSR represents the most natural form of Bolshevism's sliding toward national reformism. The reign of centrism is a political symptom for, while Thermidor has seriously cut into the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is far from having destroyed it. Power in the USSR has not passed into the hands of the bourgeoisie, and it cannot do so without violent class battles. The ultralefts who write lightly that Thermidor is consummated only aid the bourgeoisie to disarm the proletariat.

The position that we hold on the October Revolution and the state that came out of it flows clearly from all the above. We will not allow the bureaucrats to deliver sermons to us on the need to defend the USSR against imperialism. Communist defense of the Soviet Union also implies above all defense of the dictatorship of the proletariat against the radically false policies of the Stalinist leadership. To the question of the defense of the Soviet Union, we reply, with our Russian comrades: "For the Soviet republic? Yes! For the Soviet bureaucracy? No!"

Socialism in One Country

We are internationalists. That is not for us a conventional phrase, it is the very meaning of our convictions. The liberation of the proletariat is possible only through the international revolution, into which the national revolutions will enter like successive rings. The organization of production and exchange already has an international character. National socialism is economically and politically impossible.

We reject Stalin's theory of socialism in one country as a reactionary petty-bourgeois utopia which incontestably leads to petty-bourgeois patriotism.

We radically reject the program of the Communist International adopted by the Sixth Congress. It is contradictory and eclectic. We reject it mainly because it adopts the principle of socialism in one country which is fundamentally opposed to internationalism.

From now on the Communist Left is an international current. Our next goal is to group ourselves together into an international faction on the basis of a community of ideas, methods, and tactics.

We consider the Russian Opposition to be the direct continuator
of the Bolshevik Party and the heir of the October Revolution. We are in solidarity with the main ideas of the Russian Opposition as expressed in its documents and its actions. We are tied by an indestructible solidarity to the comrades of the Opposition who have been exiled, deported, or jailed by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

However, solidarity with the Russian Opposition does not mean copying everything it does. On French soil, in the context of a capitalist republic, we want to serve the same cause that the Russian Opposition serves on Soviet soil. Still, the method of bureaucratic command is neither tolerable nor workable within the Opposition. We are for centralism, the elementary condition for revolutionary action. But centralism has to respond to the real situation of the movement. It must be based on the real independence and full political responsibility of each Communist organization, and, even more so, of each national section.

Appeal to the Youth

The work before us is not the work of a month or of a year. A new revolutionary generation has to be educated and tempered. We will not lack internal or external problems. In the eyes of many, the road toward developing a real proletarian revolutionary cadre will seem too long. There will be hesitations and deser tions. To ensure revolutionary continuity in advance, one must start by addressing the youth. The weakening of the official organizations of the Communist youth is the most dangerous sign for the future of the party. The Communist Opposition will break its way through to the proletarian youth, that is, to victory.

To choose the correct path, it is not enough to have a compass. Knowledge of the region or a good map are needed. Without them, even with a compass, one can get caught in an impassable swamp. To put forward a correct policy, it is not enough to have some general principles. It is necessary to know the situation, that is, the conditions, the facts, and the relations between them. They have to be studied attentively and honestly, and their variations followed. We cannot do it from day to day—we do not yet have a daily paper. We will do it from week to week. Only cowards can shut their eyes to the facts, whether or not they are pleasant. It is no accident that we have called our weekly La Verite.

In France the Communist Left is divided into different groups. This is due to the fact—and we do not exclude ourselves from this
criticism—that the French Opposition has spent too much time on the preparatory stage before beginning political action among the workers. We must clearly state that should this situation persist, the Opposition would be threatened with becoming a sect, or, more precisely, several sects.

We want to make our weekly the organ of the whole Left Opposition. The orientation of the paper is sufficiently spelled out, we hope, by this declaration. That will not stop the editors from opening the columns of the paper to the expression of differing nuances of thought within the Communist Left. Bias toward this or that group is completely foreign to us. We want to ensure the possibility of a collective effort on a wider basis than has been done up to now. We are solidly counting on the support of the real proletarian revolutionaries, whatever group they belonged to yesterday or belong to today.

Our basic hope is in the conscious workers who are directly linked to the masses. It is for them that we produce this paper. We say to them:

"La Verite is your organ."
A LETTER TO
THE EDITORIAL BOARD
OF LA LUTTE DE CLASSES

August 11, 1929

Dear Comrades,

I reply quite willingly to the letter of Comrade Naville which touches on the most important issues for the French Opposition. I shall not dwell on the past of the French Opposition. This would require too much time. Inasmuch as the past interests us first and foremost from the standpoint of current and future practical tasks, I shall limit myself in connection with Comrade Naville's letter to the most general conclusions on this score.

The French Opposition has not up to the present time engaged in political work in the true sense of the word. As a consequence it has virtually remained in an embryonic condition. But it is impossible to long remain in such a condition with impunity. Right and left wings have crystallized within it almost without any connection with the struggle of the French proletariat, and therefore, not infrequently, along accidental lines. The fact that the French Opposition remained too long on the first stage of development has led to a proliferation of groups, each primarily concerned with its self-preservation.

All this is true. But all this can in no case serve as an argument against the need to evaluate each and every group from the standpoint of the three basic tendencies inside the Comintern and on its periphery, namely: the Left (Marxist or Leninist), the centrist (Stalinist), and the Right (Bukharin, Brandler, etc.).

These basic criteria flow not from the peculiarities of the development of individual groups and grouplets of the French Opposition, but from the objective conditions—from the correlation of classes, the character of the epoch, the character of the given stage of the epoch, etc. Precisely for this reason the basic tenden-
cies are international in character. If we wish to avoid becoming entangled in evaluating isolated Oppositional groups that became ossified before they were able to fully unfold, we ought to proceed from the objective to the subjective, from the international to the national, from classes to parties and factions.

"But is it worthwhile to pay so much attention to Brandler or Souvarine when such gigantic tasks confront communism?" This is a rather favorite argument which appears to be profound but which in reality reflects only superficiality and indifference. People who reason in this manner thereby only show that they are not at all preparing to solve "gigantic tasks" in practice. To hide behind great perspectives in order to do nothing is a favorite ruse of skeptics and dilettantes. It is impossible to influence historical events with bare hands. An instrument is necessary. The basic instrument is the party, and at the given stage it is the faction. The faction is unified on the basis of specific ideas and methods of action. Today's ideological sloppiness implies political bankruptcy on the morrow. When an aviator prepares to fly across an ocean, he must with tenfold care check nuts, screws, bolts, and rudder. For him nothing is too trifling. We are after all only beginning to build the mechanism for future flight. Sloppiness here is especially criminal.

Souvarine became so hopelessly lost precisely because he broke with the Marxist method, seeking to replace it by subjective and capricious observations, speculations, and "studies." Every group that attempts in these conditions to tie its fate to this method is condemned to annihilation.

But in addition to the Right tendency there is another danger, very acute at the given stage of the movement. I would call it the danger of petty-bourgeois dilettantism. In Russia the Opposition is fighting under conditions which permit only genuine revolutionists to remain in its ranks. This cannot be said without reservations about Western Europe, particularly France. Not only among the intellectuals but even among the upper layer of the workers there are not a few elements willing to bear the title of the most extreme revolutionists so long as this does not impose upon them any serious obligations, i.e., so long as they are not obliged to sacrifice their time and money, submit to discipline, endanger their habits and their comforts. The postwar upheaval created not a few such revolutionists-by-misunderstanding, essentially discontented philistines masquerading as communists. Some of them also fell into the Opposition, because membership
in the Opposition under the present circumstances imposes even less obligations than does membership in the official party. Needless to say, such elements are ballast, and very dangerous ballast at that. They are one hundred percent prepared to adopt the most revolutionary program, but rabidly resist when it is necessary to take the first step toward its realization. Under difficult conditions they will of course leave our ranks at the first convenient pretext. A serious testing and a strict selection is needed on the basis of revolutionary work among the masses.

The task of the French Opposition consists in finding avenues to such work. As a beginning it is necessary to have, at least, a weekly paper, and, moreover, without delay.

It is no secret to you that certain groups and individuals launched a struggle against the weekly even before its appearance. In the interests of this struggle the most unexpected alliances are now being hastily consummated. Only yesterday X wrote and said, "It is impermissible to draw Y into common work because he is capable only of ruining it." Y in his turn wrote, "X does not deserve either political or moral confidence." Today both of them write: "The best solution is X plus Y." Others add that any other decisions would be "bureaucratic." As everyone knows, especially expert and profuse in charges of bureaucratism are unsuccessful bureaucrats of the Zinoviev school.

Comrades Naville and Gerard196 had the opportunity to talk things over with Rosmer and they know from his own lips that neither he nor his friends consider the present grouping as final. All that is involved is to begin. It will be possible and necessary to correct, supplement, and improve in the course of action, attracting ever-newer forces and, of course, casting aside those elements which prove worthless in the course of testing. This is the only way in which a living project can be built.

What is the origin of the Verite group? It took shape in a relatively short period, but not at all accidentally. Under La Verite's banner have gathered active comrades from various groups only because nothing came of attempts to get support from one of the existing groups for the creation of a weekly. We invariably heard one and the same reply: "We haven't the forces, we haven't the resources." As if by sitting in a room it is possible to expect forces and resources from no one knows where. As if forces and resources fall from the sky and are not created by energetic work. People remained completely satisfied with issuing from time to time compilations of Oppositional documents, and
Visitors to Prinkipo, Turkey: from left to right, Pierre Naville, Trotsky, Gerard Rosenthal, Denise Naville.
Alfred Rosmer with Trotsky at his desk in Prinkipo.
To the Editorial Board of La Lutte de Classes

To the Editorial Board of La Lutte de Classes

failed to notice the glaring and devastating incongruity between the ideas which they accepted in words and the methods they used in action.

Comrade Naville writes that the Russian Opposition is itself responsible because it supported the “obedient ones,” who do not always happen to be the most active and revolutionary. I will not speak here of external conditions which made our connections with foreign countries extremely difficult and frequently made our ties with the foreign Opposition dependent on isolated, accidental, and not always suitable comrades. There were of course not a few mistakes committed. Nevertheless the gist of the matter does not lie here. Individual representatives of the Russian Opposition abroad exercised disproportionately great influence only because the groups of the French Opposition were themselves too weak, too flimsily connected with the movement in their own country. There is only one way out: strengthen the Opposition on French soil. To say, like Souvarine, that we incur the danger of transferring the methods of the Comintern into our ranks is to say something that bears no resemblance whatever to reality. The present methods of the Comintern presuppose first of all the existence of state power and state finances. Failing this, such methods are unthinkable. I can only repeat here the words of G. Gourov: “Revolutionary cadres in each country must take shape on the basis of their own experiences and they must stand on their own feet. The Russian Opposition has at its disposal—today one might almost say that this is fortunate—neither instruments of state repression nor governmental financial resources. It is solely and exclusively a question of ideological influence, interchange of experiences. . . . Each national section must seek for the sources of its influence and strength not above but below, among its own workers, by rallying the youth to its side, by tireless, energetic, and truly self-sacrificing work” [from “Tasks of the Opposition”].

You might say that I, too, bear responsibility for delaying matters, to the extent that I supported publications which reflected the past and which did not prepare for the future. It is possible that during recent months I kept waiting too patiently for initiative from people who are incapable of initiative, that I restricted myself far too long to trying to convince people by letters, etc. In the final analysis involved here was a delay of two or three additional months, and nothing more.

But I am completely in agreement that it is high time to call
things and people by their name and to do so out loud. Discussion-circle diplomacy will not move us forward. What can democracy consist of today within the Opposition? In the whole Opposition’s knowing everything that is being done and the reasons for it. The old circle methods have been exhausted and have completely discredited themselves. At the moment of sharp junctures it is important to observe and verify the activity of individual groups and persons. Today it is not a question of repeating ready-made formulas but of showing in action what each given group or its individual representatives are capable of. A brief history of how the weekly was prepared is most instructive. Every active Oppositionist should be acquainted with this history, through documents and letters. That is the only way cadres take shape. That is the only way to eliminate fictitious magnitudes and to destroy fictitious reputations. That is the only way those who deserve confidence are able to win it. That is the only way in which we can pass from shut-in diplomacy and circle squabbles to genuine democracy within the Opposition.

Having passed through a number of crises, each of which faintly resembles a tempest in a teapot, the Opposition—through the weekly—will not only find itself armed from head to toe but will also feel itself more united, strengthened, and mature.

The editorial board of Contre le Courant now advances a new argument in favor of continued passivity: it is first necessary to adopt a “platform.” It is hard to imagine a more moribund demonstration of doctrinaireism. I am surprised that the Contre le Courant group, which includes workers, does not understand how silly it is to demand that the proletariat, or its vanguard, or the Opposition which desires to be the vanguard of the vanguard, should mark time until someone writes for them, during leisure hours, a salvation platform. In the course of two months we were given two fragments which did not move us a step forward, we are promised a continuation in a month and a conclusion within another month, and only then will the discussion begin. Will the other groups agree to accept as a basis for discussion the draft which has leaped ready-made from its author’s head? As for me, on the basis of the first two installments I would vote no. This is not a platform but a piece of literature and, besides, not of the best. I hope to demonstrate this in the columns of our future international periodical The Opposition.

In order to begin political work, the Opposition has a perfectly adequate programmatic base, assured by its entire preceding
struggle. This base must be taken as the point of departure. And only active participation in political life can prepare the conditions for creating a platform, and not solely a platform but also the Marxist program for the Communist International. Nothing will come of Paz's attempt to create a platform in a laboratory manner. Let us hope that after this experiment has been performed and after it has revealed its inadequacy, the majority of the group will support the initiative of action, i.e., will take its place under the banner of Verite. They will be accorded a friendly welcome, despite their blunders of today.

In this connection it is necessary to say a few words about Comrade Treint. Here it is necessary to dot all the "i's." No matter how much the various groups of the Opposition may have differed among themselves, they all agreed on one thing: no one considered it possible to work with Treint. All of them pointed to his past. I considered and still consider that, despite his past, the door must remain open to Treint, too. It was in this sense that I wrote to him. I tried to explain to him that before evincing such strictness toward all others, he must first win their confidence. Comrade Treint did not understand my advice. He now proclaims that the editorial board of La Verite does not merit his confidence. Naturally, in politics there is no room for absolute or blind confidence. Without verification and control no serious political work is possible. But it is necessary to state categorically that of all the possible candidates for editors of the weekly, Rosmer has the most right to confidence, and Treint the least. By this I do not at all mean to say that Rosmer has made no mistakes. Generally, there are no sinless people in this world. I take political conduct on a broad scale. Rosmer was one of a few dozen prewar revolutionists who remained unswaveringly loyal to internationalism during the war. Rosmer was the first to respond to the call of the October Revolution and went to Moscow to lodge there the first stones of the Communist International. When toward the end of 1923 the epigones began to revise Marxism, Rosmer raised his voice in protest, without being frightened by those abominations that were employed against him by Zinovievist agents, among whom there was a large percentage of careerists.

Facts of this sort enter as major signposts into a political biography and by these signposts it is possible to determine the road of a revolutionist.

In the biography of Comrade Treint there are no such facts. He became a revolutionist after the war. His new world outlook has
not yet been submitted even once to the test of major events. In 1923 Treint became the instrument of a false policy and a fatal regime from which the French party as well as the entire Comintern have not freed themselves to this day. Almost up to the middle of 1927 Treint supported the official line of the Comintern and the struggle against the Opposition. In May 1927 at the enlarged plenum of the ECCI, Treint, although he did introduce isolated critical statements, nevertheless voted for the Stalin-Bukharin resolutions on the Chinese question, on the Anglo-Russian Committee, and on the question of the Opposition. Yet Treint had previously spent a year and a half in Moscow and had ample opportunity to follow and study the struggle of the Opposition against Stalin. Joining the Opposition in the autumn of 1927, Treint remained a Zinovievist, which signifies a combination of centrism and ultraleftism. Finally, even now the ease with which Treint changes his appraisals and his readiness to take part in any combination, in order to obstruct our cause whenever he, Treint, is not in the leadership, testify that Treint intends to apply Zinovievist methods within the framework of the Opposition. This is impermissible. If Treint wants to take his place in our common ranks and prove in action that he is interested in the successes of the Opposition and not only in the post occupied by Treint inside the Opposition, all of us will rejoice equally. Only along this road is it possible to win moral confidence, without which it is absolutely inconceivable to pretend to any sort of leading role in the revolutionary struggle.

But it is necessary to bring this letter to a close.

It seems to me that a platform for the French Opposition in the next period can be formulated very briefly, approximately as follows:

1. To understand well and explain to others that the most important and unpostponable task today is the creation of a weekly of the Communist Left Opposition.

2. To understand and explain to others that the Verite group, given our common support, provides maximum guarantees that the weekly will be free from personal prejudices and intrigues and will be a genuine organ of the Communist Left as a whole.

3. To support openly, loudly, firmly, and energetically the initiative of La Verite—by literary collaboration, by creating a network of workers’ correspondents, by collecting funds, etc.
To the Editorial Board of La Lutte de Classes

4. To openly and firmly condemn attempts to establish a competing organ as an act dictated by circle machinations and not by the interests of the Opposition.

This “platform” fails to include many questions. But it does touch on the most vital and acute question, failing whose solution all big plans, projects, and “platforms” will remain in the realm of phrases.

As I gather from Comrade Naville’s letter and from my discussion with Comrade Gerard, you are likewise agreed that the group now fused around Verite has in the given conditions the best chances of establishing the needed weekly. This is a second step which is of no less importance than the first. I should like to hope that you will soon also take the third step, namely: declare the cause of Verite to be your own cause.198

With communist greetings,

L. Trotsky
TO THE
MARX AND LENIN CIRCLE

August 22, 1929

Dear Comrades:

Your organization bears the name "Marx and Lenin." This name imposes a responsibility. Don’t you think it is contradictory that the current activity of Souvarine, one of the founders of your group and its most prominent member, is directed entirely against the ideas of both Marx and Lenin?

On every single question in recent years Souvarine has taken positions that lent direct support to the opponents and enemies of the Communist Left Opposition. Although remaining formally in the ranks of the latter, Souvarine has carefully avoided giving any clear and complete statement of his views. After persistent and repeated demands, he sent me a lengthy manuscript representing a statement of his most recent opinions. This manuscript has nothing in common with a personal letter. It is a long pamphlet that breaks not only with Bolshevism, the October Revolution, and the basic principles of the Third International, but with the theoretical premises of Marxism. This work is aimed in full against the ideas of Marx and Lenin, under whose banner your circle claims to stand.

May I ask: Are you familiar with this recent work of Souvarine? Have you stated your attitude toward this astonishing product of the philosophy of a skeptical individualist?

Do you consider it permissible to tolerate even one day longer the fact that under the banner of Marx and Lenin people are emerging who are carrying on a mortal struggle against Marxism and its practical expression, Bolshevism?

I hope you will not undertake to dispute the fact that every revolutionary, every Marxist, and every class-conscious worker has the right to ask you the questions that I am asking you with the utmost goodwill in this letter.

Yours,
L. Trotsky
Dear Comrades:

This letter is not meant for publication. It represents an attempt to establish clarity on fundamental questions of the Opposition’s strategy. This is not the first such attempt. In a number of letters I have tried to ascertain the principled line of Volkswille and the Leninbund because one cannot get a clear picture on the basis of the extremely contradictory articles.

Recently—on June 13, 1929—I addressed an official inquiry to the Leninbund leadership. I was promised an answer. But, once again, I am waiting in vain for a reply. This matter, of course, is not simply a personal concern. The Communist Opposition as a whole, in Germany as well as in other countries, has a right to know what positions the Leninbund leadership takes on the fundamental problems of the international revolution.

The Opposition is a small minority. Its success can be ensured only if it has a clear line. The Leninbund does not have such a line. This, unfortunately, must be stated before anything else. Both on Germany's domestic problems and on international problems, Volkswille vacillates between Brandler and Korsch. I hope to speak in more detail on the Leninbund leadership’s positions on Germany’s domestic problems in a special article. Here I want only to reiterate and make more precise the questions that I have repeatedly, but in vain, posed to the Volkswille editors and the Leninbund leadership.

You have more than once accused the Russian Opposition of “not going far enough” because, you say, it does not understand that Thermidor has already taken place. I have asked you again and again: What does this mean? What options then remain for the International Opposition with respect to the USSR?

QUESTIONS FOR THE LENINBUND

August 24, 1929
If Thermidor "has been completed," this means that development in Russia has definitely taken the capitalist road. Your thesis can have no other meaning. What, then, do you think of the planned economy and the legislation restricting capitalist expansion and curtailing private accumulation? What is your attitude toward the monopoly of foreign trade? From the standpoint of capitalist development all these institutions, decrees, and measures are utopian and reactionary hindrances to the development of the productive forces. What is your point of view?

You have advanced the call for freedom to organize in the USSR as in the capitalist countries. Again, it is absolutely impossible to understand what this means. Freedom to organize never has been and cannot be an isolated demand. It is a component of the bourgeois democratic regime. Freedom to organize is inconceivable without freedom of assembly, press, etc.—in other words, without parliamentary institutions and party struggle. What is your position on this question? Despite all my attempts, to this day I have not been able to find out.

Just as unclear is your position on the question of defending the USSR against imperialism. The exceptional importance of this question was again revealed under the impact of the Sino-Soviet conflict. A number of Opposition publications have taken an obviously mistaken position on this question. The lead article in Contre le Courant, number 35, dated July 28, carried this mistake to the extreme.

What has the editorial board of Volkswille and Die Fahne des Kommunismus done in this case? It has not committed itself. It opened up a discussion. The Korschist H.P. as well as the Marxist Landau are allowed to take part in this discussion on an equal basis. But the editorial board is "elevating itself" above Marxism and above Korschism. On the one hand Die Fahne des Kommunismus prints Contre le Courant's grossly mistaken article and on the other it specially emphasizes that the article is the official position of the French editors. But does a communist publication really have the right to remain silent about the fact that this article, even if it be ten times more official, represents a flagrant break with Marxism? At a critical moment of international conflict the readers of your publication are being ideologically disarmed. They are being offered a choice: either the views of the Russian Opposition or the views of Korsch, who in turn is merely repeating the arguments of the social democracy.

It is impossible to even imagine that your entire leadership and
Questions for the Leninbund

especially all the members of the Leninbund share this position or this lack of a position. Unfortunately, it is not possible to form an opinion about the internal ideological life of the Leninbund on the basis of Volkswille. I will not assume for one minute that there is no internal ideological life. But I am compelled to conclude that Volkswille does not reflect it. This in and of itself is an extremely alarming sign.

A ruling majority in a state or in a party, with a strong apparatus, abundant funds, a well-financed press, can live a long time on omissions, vacillations, and ambiguity. Stalinist bureaucratic centrism is the best proof of this. But every Opposition minority that imitates this centrism compromises the banner it stands under and will inevitably be doomed to destruction. In its present shape, the Leninbund cannot lead the vanguard of the German proletariat or even the vanguard of this vanguard. The Leninbund needs to rearm ideologically, and to rebuild its ranks accordingly. The first condition for this is the clarification of its principled position. I do not think that you can any longer avoid answering the questions posed above. They far from exhaust the full range of problems facing the international revolution, but the answer to them will create the prerequisite for a correct approach to a number of other problems.

The Leninbund needs a platform. Your publications, instead of devoting their columns to Jimmie Higgins and sensations of the day, should become the instrument for working out a Marxist platform for the German Communist Left.

With communist greetings,

L. Trotsky
FROM A LETTER TO AN OPPOSITIONIST IN THE USSR

August 24, 1929

Dear Comrade,

We received your letter of August 8 on the twenty-second. Certainly not as quick as crossing from Europe to America on the Bremen; but for all that, one can’t complain.

You write that a mood of capitulation has taken hold of even some “good lads.” It would be surprising were it not so. Today, the Opposition survives without connections and without literature. It reads only Pravda. For many of our cothinkers the turn of the Stalinists and a certain persistence in this turn is unexpected. The international perspective is completely lost sight of. In Bolshevik is proclaimed these days the coming of the period of open revolutionary conflicts: the first stage, May Day in Berlin; the second stage, the August days throughout the world; and so on. This perspective must not only calm the conscience of the semibankrupt “old boys” but also take hold of the “good lads,” i.e., the youth without connections, information, literature, etc.

You write of the vacillations of I.N. [Smirnov], that he is distributing the draft of his appeal to the Central Committee, including a whole stock of highly commendable wishes and hopes which—as you write—“they will of course make him delete.” We all know I.N. very well, both his magnificent and his weak sides. More than once we risked losing him on past turns on the road. But it ended up satisfactorily. Will we lose him this time? I don’t know; but, even if we do, sooner or later we shall get him back. And we shall get back many others. Of course, if we ourselves don’t match their vacillations.

As to our being ready to support every step of the centrists to the left, we have already said it ten times. It is certainly possible
to repeat it an eleventh time. The problem is not solved by this. We need our own literature; theoretical clarity is indispensable; political connections established on an international scale—that's how the problem will be solved now. But it is impossible to get these right away. We have to move now in the midst of the greatest difficulties, against the stream, step by step. The less steadfast and the less experienced will waver and depart.

For a serious Marxist it is clear that this turn of the centrists to the left was made exclusively because of our struggle. This was and is genuine, authentic, revolutionary support. In the most critical moments centrism swings on a rope, not knowing where to jump next. If in 1926 and 1927 the Right faction had shown one-tenth of the persistent drive which we showed then, the Stalinists in 1928 would have made a turn to the right and not to the left, under the effect of those same objective causes. Whoever does not understand this—how can one say it politely?—should be called an utter fool. What kind of further "support" can be asked of Marxists for the leftward steps of centrism? I know of no other. As for Radek, Preobrazhensky, and the capitulatory clan in general, they imagine the affair thus: one takes Yaroslavsky under the arm on the right, another on the left, and both give him "support," whispering where to put his feet. We shall see, we shall see how this will look in practice.

You ask what sort of article was that which Comrade Urbahns published on the conflict with China, which did you so much harm? A worthless article: a combination of ultraleftism and social democracy. It was printed as discussion material. Along with it a wholly correct article by Comrade Landau was published, also as discussion material. The point of view of the editorial board remains unknown. If you receive Volkswille, then it is no secret to you that blunders of this kind by the editorial board are no accident. Comrade Urbahns has stated more than once that he is not one hundred percent in agreement with the Russian Opposition. Nothing is to be expected from him. But in a series of questions, of great importance, he is in agreement with us less than fifty percent. But that's nothing. Nowhere has Comrade Urbahns formulated clearly and explicitly his own views on any one debatable question. One should not console oneself with the thought that in the Leninbund we have an ideologically official organization standing for the principled positions we hold. It is still not anywhere near that. Ahead are not a few serious battles inside the Opposition. We have no need of orna-

From a Letter to an Oppositionist in the USSR 251
mental politics. We need revolutionary clarity. We are going to strive for it; and we shall attain it.

Unfortunately, Urbahns is not alone in his errors. Comrade Paz wrote an absolutely inadmissible article on the same question, showing that to repeat the general formulas of Marxism and to apply them in fact are decidedly not one and the same thing.

The group Verite has taken up an absolutely correct position in France, publishing a weekly around which is now grouped the Communist Left in France. I think that this organ has the prospect of playing a great role in France. Thanks to it there has already begun a serious regroupment of forces: active revolutionary elements will group themselves around its banner; skeptics and philistines, under cover of the Opposition, will inevitably be thrown into the camp to which they properly belong.

Concerning “the third period” proclaimed by the Sixth Congress, you are absolutely correct: it will have to be written about in greater detail. Now the formula of the third period has begun literally to choke the Comintern. Practical problems are not being worked out according to the real situation but according to the abstraction of the third period.

So that bureaucratism in the sphere of tactics attain its most finished expression, problems of the movement are being timed not by events but by dates on the calendar. After May Day comes the first of August. Now l'Humanite proclaims an anti-imperialist September, since the anniversary of the Young Communist League falls in that month. In this way the anti-imperialist struggle is timed to mark the anniversary of the October Revolution, and so on. To this perspective are devoted articles and manifestos. The commemoration of these calendar dates must acquire “an increasingly revolutionary character” which, in turn, flows not from the real development of the class struggle but from the metaphysical abstraction of the third period. Is it possible to imagine a greater caricature of Leninism?

Here Zinoviev is linked into the chain. He recently wrote an article in Pravda on the Sino-Soviet conflict. The article correctly brands the international social democracy which, under the slogan of national self-determination, assumes its own defense of Chiang Kai-shek. But the article goes further. According to Zinoviev, China has of course already entered “the third period.” And the supremacy of Chiang Kai-shek? Zinoviev is not disturbed by it. Chiang Kai-shek is—Kolchak, and “Kolchak also temporarily gained victories.” But didn’t Kolchak signify a provincial
counterrevolutionary uprising against a victorious proletarian dictatorship? Isn't that so? In China there is not a dictatorship of the proletariat, and there never was. To the Chinese proletariat it was forbidden even to think of it. Chiang Kai-shek rules the major centers of the country. Where does Kolchak come into this? This does not prevent one from remembering that in 1924 Zinoviev wrote that General Seeckt too was Kolchak. Why? For what reason? To give encouragement. The real Kolchak was an expense for the revolution, which itself rose steadily higher. Zinoviev thought that was what was happening in Germany in 1924. In honor of the third period one should also declare even Mussolini to be a Kolchak: for the Italian proletariat it would immediately become easier to breathe. Indeed, the heads of these people are like children's slates on which many have written in different hands, up and down, all over the place. To decipher these letters is back-breaking work.

But of this, what we have to say still lies ahead.

With communist greetings,

L. Trotsky
ON THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CAPITULATION

September 1929

The capitulation of Radek, Smilga, and Preobrazhensky is in its own way a major political fact. It shows above all how completely a great and heroic generation of revolutionaries whose destiny it was to pass through the experiences of the war and the October Revolution has spent itself. Despite the ludicrous form of the capitulation there are undoubtedly elements of tragedy in it: three old and meritorious revolutionaries have removed their names from the roll of the living. For very many centrists the road to revival is opened. For capitulators it is closed. They have deprived themselves of the most important thing: the right to command confidence. This they can never regain.

If, however, Radek, Preobrazhensky, and Smilga can no longer be teachers of revolution that does not mean that nothing is to be learned from their experience. No, the history of their capitulation is full of instruction. At our disposal, fortunately, is all the correspondence of the Bolshevik-Leninists exiled during 1928. These letters were by no means private, in the strict sense of the word. They were articles, sometimes even theses, distributed in multiple copies and reproduced in all sorts of ways. The form they had of letters was only an emergency form due to conditions of exile.

It is startling to read today arguments from Radek’s pen which irreparably discredit his renegacy. While we all were together, even the weak and the morally semibankrupt held on. But when everyone was left to his own devices, the weak and morally bankrupt began to seek one another out. In this way was created a small group of candidates for capitulation. The rank is not very high. But even at this level Radek and the others, getting caught
in contradictions, have by force of habit formulated arguments devastating to even their own future.

As is known, in 1927 Radek was on the extreme flank of the Opposition on the question of Thermidor and of two parties. Opposing Zinoviev's conciliatory mood of the time, Radek wrote, "The crisis our party is going through means a severe crisis for the revolution for many years. In this crisis the only realistic orientation is an orientation toward our cothinkers, those who have thought out the problems to the end, and are prepared for all blows on account of it. Only a crystallized nucleus of those who know what they want and are wholeheartedly fighting for their own aims can affect the chaff." These are excellent words and today they form the basis of the activities of the revolutionary Communist Opposition.

Radek did not hold on for long. His wavering began in February of the following year. However, at the time he still resolutely rejected the road of capitulation. In the same way he spoke of the deserters as contemptible. On May 10, Radek wrote indignantly to Preobrazhensky of Zinoviev and Pyatakov, "Doing violence to their convictions, they recant. It is impossible to help the working class by falsehood." Thus, Radek did not think it conceivable that capitulators could, sincerely and honestly, renounce their views. From the evidence of the facts, how could anyone think it? On June 24, Radek wrote to Comrade Trotsky, "Such a renunciation would be all the more ridiculous since the test of history has brilliantly demonstrated their correctness."

The views of the Opposition were formed at the beginning of 1923. In the middle of 1928, i.e., in the sixth year of the political test, Radek fully asserted their correctness. But a year later, having spent it in exile, Radek together with the other pair of deserters put out a statement summarized in the words, "The party was right to condemn our platform."

Such is the ideological and moral catastrophe of spiritually bankrupt revolutionaries!

For the outside world, the trio's capitulation created a sensation. For the Opposition cadres, it was nothing unexpected. From his own correspondence it is clear that Radek now and then had to defend himself against the suspicion that he was paving the way to capitulation. The younger comrades protested with great frankness. The older revolutionaries expressed themselves more cautiously, but essentially they had no illusions. On September 9, 1928, Comrade Trotsky wrote to one of the comrades in Moscow,
"I don't know if the results of the congress deepen or lessen the differences with Preobrazhensky. However bitter it is to say it, I have drawn up a balance sheet of the last few months for myself to the effect that the matter is beyond repair. Our ways are too different. It is impossible to bear these emotional outbursts for long."

The correspondence in itself is strikingly clear and so instructive that we see no need to give lengthy quotations in these preliminary lines. We give extracts from the letters in all cases from the originals which are in our possession. We reproduce all the quotations literally, only when necessary replacing initials with real names.

On May 10, 1928, Radek wrote to Preobrazhensky from Tobolsk:

"I reject the Zinovievites and the Pyatakovites as Dostoevskyites. Doing violence to their convictions, they recant. It is impossible to help the working class by falsehood. Those who are left should tell the truth."

On June 24, Radek wrote to Comrade Trotsky:

"No one can contemplate renunciation of our views. Such a renunciation would be all the more ridiculous since the test of history has brilliantly demonstrated their correctness.

"Smilga is running to extremes: not in the maintenance of his point of view but in his tone. We must never speak of the center as did the Wrangelites of the time (i.e., when Stalin tried to undermine the Opposition with a Wrangel officer)."
COMRADE SOSNOVSKY’S LETTERS

September 1929

We are printing below four letters written by Comrade L.S. Sosnovsky from Barnaul, i.e., his place of exile during 1928. The letters are written on social, everyday, and political themes. Three of them are addressed to Comrade Trotsky. They are devoted to the troubles and events in the Siberian countryside, in the party, and in the country at large. Like all the works of Comrade Sosnovsky, an incomparable publicist and social commentator, the letters are full of the breath of life. The main quality of Sosnovsky, without which any prolific publicist would be unthinkable, is a freshness of outlook. Ready-made formulas, official charts, have no effect on Lev Semyonovich. Behind formulas and figures he looks for and finds living people, and he can always take them from two sides: personal and class. It is just this freshness of outlook and ability to see what is happening in the country which has made Comrade Sosnovsky one of the leaders of the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition. The fourth letter is addressed to Vardin, one of the capitulators of the second wave. This very short letter is an excellent model for a political publicist. It will be included sometime in a revolutionary chrestomathy.

All four letters are more than a year old. The last of them was written on August 22, 1928. Despite the fact that they were written right on the heels of events and are based on very topical facts, Sosnovsky’s letters have not dated in the slightest. They are contemporary with the first steps of the Stalinist “left course” which officially opened on February 15, 1928. Sosnovsky with consummate mastery observes the contradictions of “the left course,” which stole from the Opposition in cowardly fashion and
at the same time crushed its organization. Comrade Sosnovsky's attitude to the capitulators is indissolubly linked with this evaluation of the left course, its contradictions and perspectives. The letter to Vardin seems as if it were written yesterday since the capitulators of the third wave (Radek, Preobrazhensky, Smilga) have not added a single word to what their lamentable predecessor said and did.

The letters printed below sufficiently explain why their author was arrested while he was still at Barnaul, his place of exile, and was imprisoned in Chelyabinsk Isolator, where he is today.

The editorial board of the *Biulleten* sends to L.S. Sosnovsky and through him to all deported and imprisoned Bolshevik-Leninists warm greetings from the Opposition.
FROM THE PUBLISHER

September 1929

We are issuing numbers 3 and 4 of the Biulleten. We wish to make the publication a periodical. We firmly believe that the advanced elements of the working class in the USSR need it. The difficulties which confront our publication are great. We need constant information from the Soviet republics. We need channels and links for getting our publication into the country. We need money to ensure the regular issue of the publication and its proper distribution.

We confidently count on the help and cooperation of our friends both inside the USSR and abroad.

We ask you to communicate with us abroad at the following address: Meichler, 6 rue de Milan, Paris.
September 1929

On November 7, 1928, G.I. Myasnikov, leader of the "Workers' Group," author of its manifesto, an Old Bolshevik expelled from the party in 1922, escaped from Yerevan to which he had been deported, and reached Persia. There (because of the pressure of Stalinist diplomacy), Myasnikov was arrested by the Persian police, and spent six months in prison in terrible conditions.

At the beginning of May, Persia expelled G.I. Myasnikov, without either visa or passport, to Turkey. There (in Erzurum) he asked for authorization to go to Constantinople. There was more of the same thing. The Turkish police continued the work of the Persian: Myasnikov was taken to Amasya, where he has been under police surveillance till now.

In answer to a request from the sick Myasnikov, he was given a visa for Germany. Then, unexpectedly, it was withdrawn. The explanation for this, as reported, is fashioned from the infamous accusations brought against Myasnikov (that he was supposed to have embezzled state funds, that he was a "spy," etc.).

Myasnikov's ideas are far from being ours. Nevertheless, anyone who knows his past will shudder with repugnance at the shameless lies of the Stalinists about Myasnikov.
RADEK AND THE BOURGEOIS PRESS

September 1929

That publication by a proletarian revolutionary in the bourgeois press is the exception and not the rule, that this exception must be completely justified by the importance of the circumstances—of that there can be no argument. But it is necessary to add at once: there scarcely ever have been in the history of revolutionary struggle more exceptional circumstances than those for which Comrade Trotsky told through the bourgeois press about the terms of his exile, its causes, the relations of the Opposition to the Soviet government, and so on.

Today, Radek enlists to help Yaroslavsky in condemning collaboration with the bourgeois press. We shall not stop to give examples from the rich past; we recall only one short episode which took place at the beginning when Comrade Trotsky was being sent from Moscow to Alma-Ata. Radek, who always had an inclination to move in the world of bourgeois journalists, came to Comrade Trotsky with the proposal that the latter write an account of the views of the Opposition and the reason for his being deported for the correspondent of the Berliner Tageblatt [Berlin Daily News], Mr. Scheffer. Radek’s proposal was discussed by the leading members of the Opposition and it was unanimously agreed that Radek should bring Scheffer to the apartment to see Comrade Trotsky, who gave his statement to the German correspondent. In principle, this episode was in no way different from the appeal to the bourgeois press issued by Comrade Trotsky a year later, from Constantinople. What is more. If the use of a German bourgeois publisher was permissible in 1928, it was ten times more permissible to use an American agency in 1929.

But the point is this. In 1928 Radek still followed in the wake of the Opposition; in 1929 he is being towed by Yaroslavsky.
DEFENSE OF
THE SOVIET REPUBLIC
AND THE OPPOSITION

September 7, 1929

Groupings in the Left Opposition

We have established that three tendencies exist in the international communist movement, namely: the Right, the centrist, and the Left (Marxist) tendencies. But this classification does not exhaust the question, because it omits the ultralefts. Meanwhile the latter continue to exist, engage in activities, commit blunders, and threaten to discredit the cause of the Opposition.

To be sure, today there no longer are extant any, or hardly any, ultralefts of the naive-revolutionary "aggressive" variety to whom Lenin devoted his famous book ["Left-Wing" Communism: an Infantile Disorder]. Similarly, few ultralefts of the 1924-25 formation (Maslow and others) have remained in the Opposition. The experience of defeats has not failed to leave its imprint. But the lessons of these years have been far from assimilated by all the ultralefts. Some freed themselves of prejudices, while preserving the revolutionary spirit. But others dissipated the revolutionary spirit, while retaining the prejudices. At all events, there remain not a few ultralefts infected with skepticism. They eagerly display a formal radicalism in all instances where they are not placed under an obligation to act. But in practical questions they most frequently incline toward opportunism.

Whereas reformism represents an irreconcilable enemy, ultraleftism represents an internal disease which acts as a deterrent in the struggle against the enemy. We must rid ourselves of this disease at all costs.

For several months I tried, through correspondence, to get from the Leninbund leadership a clear statement on the most fundamental questions of communist politics. My attempts were in
vain. The differences of opinion proved too great. Nothing remains except to bring them out into the open and submit them to a serious discussion. This is all the more necessary in view of the fact that the editorial board of the Leninfund publications has already initiated the discussion, after it became apparent that not only serious but positively decisive differences had arisen within the Communist Left Opposition over the Sino-Soviet conflict. Groupings have already been formed over this issue. Naturally, individual shifts will still take place. A number of comrades who have taken a wrong position will correct themselves. Others will, on the contrary, deepen their error and reach the logical conclusion, that is, they will break away completely from the Marxist position. This invariably happens in all deep-going disputes when hitherto undefined differences of opinion are submitted to the test of major events.

It’s an ill wind that blows no good. There are all too many manifestations of ideological stagnation and routinism among the disjointed Oppositional circle-groups. A thorough discussion of major political differences of opinion will enable the viable elements and groups within the Opposition to find their proper place more easily and will thereby speed the process of ideological crystallization around real and not fictitious poles. On the question of the Sino-Soviet conflict there are two basic viewpoints, linked up with the most fundamental problems of the world revolution and of the Marxist method.

**Formalism Instead of Marxism**

The most finished expression sui generis of the formalistic-leftist viewpoint has been supplied by Louzon.\(^{213}\) It is easier for him because of his entire mental makeup. Comrade Louzon is not a Marxist but a formalist. He operates far better with geography, technology, and statistics than with the materialist dialectic of class society. One can often glean considerable information from his articles, but it is impossible to learn anything politically from them. Louzon is far more attracted by abstract national “justice” than by the actual struggle of the oppressed peoples for liberation. Louzon produces elaborate proofs that the Chinese Eastern Railroad was built by czarism for the purpose of seizures and plunder. He has a map showing that this railroad crosses the heart of Manchuria. He proves by statistical data that Manchuria has been settled in recent decades by Chinese peasants. We thus
get a Russian railroad on Chinese soil side by side with the railroads of other imperialist states. Wherein is the difference? asks Louzon. And he concludes that there is no difference, or virtually none. The treaty of 1924 was an imperialist treaty. Lenin would have returned the railroad to China, that's for sure. Louzon is positive about it.

In order to determine whether a policy bears an imperialist character in a given territory, it is enough according to Louzon to determine what nationality inhabits the given territory: “If Northern Manchuria were populated by Russians, the policy of the czar and of the Soviet Union would be legitimate; but if it is populated by Chinese, then it is nothing else but the policy of robbery and oppression” (Revolution proletarienne, August 1, 1929). It is hard to believe one's eyes in reading these lines. The policy of the czar and the policy of the workers' state are analyzed exclusively from the nationalist standpoint and are thereby completely identified. Louzon proclaims the policy of the czar in Russian provinces to be legitimate. Yet for us the czar's policy in Siberia was no less criminal, predatory, and oppressive than in Manchuria. The policy of the Bolsheviks applies, for better or for worse, one and the same set of principles in Manchuria, in Siberia, or in Moscow, Comrade Louzon! In addition to nations there exist classes. The national problem separate and apart from class correlations is a fiction, a lie, a strangler's noose for the proletariat.

Louzon's method is not Marxism, but sheer schematism. It incurs the penalty that almost all the social democratic publications without exception develop the same line of thought and arrive at the selfsame conclusion. The decision of the Second International, elaborated under the leadership of Otto Bauer, completely reproduces the ideas of Louzon. How could it be otherwise? The social democracy is, of necessity, formalistic. It thrives on analogies between fascism and communism. In its eyes all those who “deny” democracy or violate it belong on the same plane. The supreme criterion is “democracy” which the reformists elevate (on paper) above the classes. Louzon acts in exactly the same way with the principle of national self-determination. This is all the more strange because Louzon as a syndicalist is sooner inclined to a formalistic denial of democracy. But it frequently happens with formalistic thinkers that while denying the whole, they reverently grovel before a part. National self-determination is one of the elements of democracy. The struggle for national
self-determination, like the struggle for democracy in general, plays an enormous role in the lives of the peoples, particularly in the life of the proletariat. He is a poor revolutionist who does not know how to utilize democratic institutions and forms, including parliamentarianism, in the interests of the proletariat. But from the proletarian standpoint, neither democracy as a whole nor national self-determination as an integral part of it stands above the classes; nor does either of them supply the highest criterion of revolutionary policy. This is the reason why we regard the social democratic analogies between fascism and Bolshevism as charlatanism. For the same reason the equating of the Sino-Soviet treaty of 1924 with an imperialist treaty, on the basis of a law of symmetry, we regard as the grossest blunder.

To whom would Louzon have wanted to cede the Chinese Eastern Railroad in 1924? To the Peking government? But this government lacked hands with which to take it; nor did it have legs with which to reach it. The Peking government was a threadbare fiction. The reality was: Marshal Chang Tso-lin, chieftain of hung hu tzu [Manchurian bandits], dictator-hangman of Manchuria, paid agent of Japan, mortal enemy of the national-revolutionary movement which erupted violently in 1925 and which became transformed in 1926 into an expedition of the South against the North, i.e., in the last analysis, an expedition against Chang Tso-lin. To surrender the railroad to the marshal would have meant in practice to make an alliance with him against the unfolding Chinese revolution. This would not have been a whit superior to the delivery of artillery and munitions to White Poland in 1920 during the latter's war against the Soviet republic. This would not have been the fulfillment of a revolutionary duty, but the most ignominious betrayal of the Chinese revolution, the real revolution, the one that is accomplished by classes, and not an abstract shadow that haunts the head of Louzon and other formalists like him.

Entangling himself in contradictions, Louzon talks himself into reproaching the Soviet government for having signed a treaty on September 20, 1924, with Chang Tso-lin, "the most reactionary militarist that ever ruled in China." Yes, he was the most reactionary. Obviously, instead of concluding a treaty with him, which protected the railroad from this extreme reactionary, what should have been done, according to Louzon, was to simply make him a gift of it.

Naturally, the treaty of 1924 which abrogated all the imperial-
ist privileges of Russia did not provide any absolute guarantees against Chang Tso-lin, because the latter had troops in Manchuria, while the Soviet troops were far removed from the scene. But however far away they may be, they exist nonetheless. Chang Tso-lin at times engaged in raids, at other times he beat a retreat. He demanded, for example, that the railroad transport his counterrevolutionary troops without any restrictions whatever. But the railroad, basing itself on the treaty, put all sorts of obstacles in his path. He arrested the director of the railroad, and then beat a retreat. For good and substantial reasons he placed no reliance upon his own forces alone. But Japan, for various reasons of its own, refrained from supporting him actively, but watched and waited. All of this was a great gain for the Chinese revolution, which unfolded from the South toward the North.

**Revolutionary Aid or Imperialist Intervention?**

In order to demonstrate even more graphically the complete barrenness of Louzonian formalism, let us approach the question from another side. Everybody knows that in order to entrench themselves in a backward country, the imperialists often give arms to one tribe against another, to one province against another, to one class against another. That is how, for example, the United States systematically acts in paving its way into South America. On the other hand, everybody knows that the Soviet government gave large-scale aid to the Chinese national-revolutionary army from the very first days of its formation, and especially during its Northern Expedition. The social democrats throughout the world shrieked, in chorus with their respective bourgeoisies, about Soviet military “intervention” in China, viewing it only as a revolutionary cover for the old policy of czarist imperialism. Is Louzon in accord with this, or isn’t he? This question is addressed to all the imitators of Louzon. We Bolsheviks hold just the contrary opinion: it was the elementary duty of the Soviet government to come to the aid of the Chinese revolution—with ideas, men, money, arms. That the Stalin-Bukharin leadership has inflicted political injuries upon the Chinese revolution which outweigh by far the value of its material support is a separate question with which we shall deal presently. But the Mensheviks accuse the Soviet government of imperialism not because of Stalin-Bukharin’s line on the Chinese question,
but for intervening in Chinese affairs, for giving aid to the Chinese revolution. Did the Soviet government commit a crime by this intervention or did it render a service, Comrade Louzon? Personally I would find it hard to speak here of any services rendered, because the intervention constituted the fulfillment of an elementary duty, stemming from the interests of the Russian and the Chinese revolutions alike. Now let me ask: Was it permissible for the Soviet government, while helping the South with its left hand, to surrender with its right hand the Chinese Eastern Railroad to the North, against which the war was directed?

Our answer is: Inasmuch as the Soviet government could not transfer its railroad from the North to the South, it was bound, in order to facilitate the revolution's offensive against the Northern militarists, to retain this railroad firmly in its hands so as not to permit the imperialists and the militarists to convert it into a weapon against the Chinese revolution. That is how we understand revolutionary duty with respect to a genuine struggle for genuine national self-determination of China.

Side by side with this there was another task. It was necessary to so conduct the policy in relation to the railroad as to permit the Chinese masses, at least their advanced layers, to clearly grasp the liberationist aims and tasks of the Soviet government with regard to China. I dealt with this in a previous article where I cited the decisions of the commission of the Central Committee of the Russian party, formulated by me and adopted in April 1926. The gist of these decisions was: We regard the Chinese Eastern Railroad as one of the weapons of the world revolution, more specifically, of the Russian and Chinese revolutions. World imperialism can, of course, directly or indirectly, openly or covertly, wrest this railroad from our hands. In order to avoid graver consequences we may find ourselves compelled to surrender it to the imperialists, just as we found ourselves compelled to sign the Brest-Litovsk peace. But until then, so long as we have the possibility and the power, we shall protect it from imperialism, in preparation for handing it over to the victorious Chinese revolution. Toward this end, we shall immediately establish schools for Chinese railroad workers with a view to educating them not only technically but politically.

But this is precisely what drives Chinese reaction to fury. A Reuters dispatch carries the following declaration of Wang, the present foreign minister of China:

"The only way out for China is the unification of all nations in
order to effectively resist *red imperialism,* otherwise China will perish in the tentacles of *communism.*”

Involved here, as we see, is not at all a struggle against imperialism in general. On the contrary, the Chinese government appeals to imperialism for aid against “red imperialism,” which it identifies with the peril of communism. Could one wish for a clearer, more precise, and more calculated formulation?

Louzon attempted to prove that the sympathies of the imperialist states are on the side of the Soviet government against China. As a matter of fact, however, the only thing he proved was that on partial questions the attitude of the imperialists toward the Soviet Union is contradictory. To the extent that imperialism rests on the inviolability of property rights, to that extent it is constrained to concede the same rights to the Soviet government, too. If this were not the case, then even trade, for instance, would be impossible between the Soviet republic and the capitalist countries. But if it came to war, then the pretext for war, i.e., the question of who owned the railroad would completely fade into the background. The imperialists would approach the question solely from the standpoint of struggle against that danger which they label “red imperialism,” i.e., the international proletarian revolution.

It would not be amiss to recall in this connection the conduct of the White emigres in the Far East. Even the *New York Times,* August 17, 1929, wrote on this score that: “Here (in Washington government circles) the possibility is conceded that the White Russians may have provoked the incidents (border clashes) on the Chinese side, which would hardly have happened otherwise.” According to Louzon what is involved is China’s national self-determination. Chiang Kai-shek appears as the embodiment in life of democratic progress; the Moscow government, as the embodiment of imperialist aggression. But the White emigres turn up for some unknown reason on the side of China’s national self-determination—against Russian imperialism. Doesn’t this single fact demonstrate how hopelessly Louzon entangled himself by replacing class policy with geography and ethnography? The White bandits who kill Red Army soldiers on the Far Eastern frontiers have in their own fashion a better grasp of politics than Louzon. They do not become entangled in secondary trifles but reduce the question to its essentials: the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the revolution.
Substituting Pacifism for Bolshevism

Departing from the class standpoint for the sake of an abstract-nationalistic position, the ultralefts necessarily slide away from a revolutionary position into a purely pacifist one. Louzon relates how the Soviet troops captured in their day the Siberian railroad and how later "the Red Army, in conformity with Lenin's anti-imperialist policy, carefully came to a halt at the frontiers of China. There was no attempt to recapture the territories of the Chinese Eastern Railroad" (*Revolution proletarienne*, p. 228). The highest duty of the proletarian revolution, it appears, is to carefully dip its banners before national frontiers. Herein, according to Louzon, is the gist of Lenin's anti-imperialist policy! One blushes with shame to read this philosophy of "revolution in one country." The Red Army halted at the frontier of China because it was not strong enough to cross this frontier and meet the inescapable onslaught of Japanese imperialism. If the Red Army were strong enough to assume such an offensive, it would have been duty-bound to launch it. A renunciation by the Red Army of a revolutionary offensive against the forces of imperialism and in the interest of Chinese workers and peasants and of the world proletarian revolution would not have meant the fulfillment of Lenin's policy but a base betrayal of the ABC of Marxism. Wherein lies the misfortune of Louzon and others like him? In this, that he has substituted a national-pacifist policy for the international-revolutionary policy. This has absolutely nothing in common with Lenin.

At one time the Red Army invaded Menshevik Georgia and helped the Georgian workers overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie. To this day, the Second International has not forgiven us for it. Georgia is inhabited by Georgians. The Red Army was composed mainly of Russians. With whom does Louzon side in this old conflict?

And what about the march on Warsaw in the summer of 1920? Louzon is perhaps aware that I opposed this campaign. But my objections were of a purely practical character. I feared that the toiling masses of Poland would not succeed in rising in time (war proceeds as a rule at a faster tempo than the revolution); and I was of the opinion that it would be dangerous for us to leave our base too far behind. This forecast was confirmed by events: the march on Warsaw was a mistake. But it was a practi-
cal error and not at all an error in principle. Had the conditions been more favorable, it would have been our direct duty to lend armed assistance to the revolution in Poland, as well as everywhere else. Yet it was precisely at that time that Lloyd George, Bonar Law, and others accused us for the first time of red imperialism. This accusation was then picked up by the social democracy, and from there it has imperceptibly traveled to the ultralefts.

Against revolutionary "intervention" Louzon quite inappropriately advances the old and uncontested principle: "The emancipation of the working class can be achieved only by the workers themselves." On a national scale? Only within the framework of a single country? Is it permissible for workers in one country to aid the strikers of another? Can they send arms to insurgents? Can they send their army, if they have one? Can they send it either to help the uprising or in order to prepare an uprising, just as strikers send squads to pull out workers in factories that have remained behind?

Why Isn’t Louzon Bold Enough to Go the Whole Way?

While adopting a nationalistic-democratic standpoint, Louzon nevertheless refrains from carrying it consistently through to the end. For if the Chinese government is truly fighting for national liberation against Soviet imperialism, then the duty of every revolutionist is not to give Stalin philosophic lectures on ethics but to give active aid to Chiang Kai-shek. From Louzon’s position, if it is taken seriously, it follows that one’s direct duty is to help China—by force of arms if possible—gain her national independence against the heirs of czarism. This is plain as daylight. Louzon himself cites, quite properly, the fact that the Soviet government gave aid to Kemal against the imperialists. Louzon demands that the selfsame principles be applied to China. Quite so: as against imperialism it is obligatory to help even the hangmen of Chiang Kai-shek. But right here the brave Louzon pauses in indecision. He somehow senses that the conclusion flowing from his position must read something like this: "Workers of the world, come to the aid of the Chinese government which is defending its independence against the assaults of the Soviet state!" Why then does Louzon stop midway? Because this sole consistent conclusion would simply convert our ultraleft formal-
ists into agents of imperialism and into political attorneys for those Russian White Guards who are now fighting arms in hand for China’s “liberation.” This lack of consistency does honor to the political instinct of the “ultralefts” but not to their political logic.

Are Socialist “Concessions” Permissible?

At this point, Comrade Urbahns, together with his closest cothinkers among the leadership of the Leninbund, injects himself into the controversy. In this, as in most other questions, they strive to straddle the fence. They publish an article by H.P., a disciple of Korsch, another article by Louzon, still another by Paz, an erroneous article by the Belgian comrades, a Marxist article by Landau, and one by me. Then the editors finally came forward with an eclectic philosophy, borrowing two-thirds from Louzon and Korsch and one-third from the Russian Left Opposition. Rhetorically all this is covered by the formula: “Our agreement with Trotsky is not one hundred percent.” Basing himself essentially on Louzon, Urbahns does not, nevertheless, remain content with geography and ethnography alone. His attempts to drag in a class standpoint, i.e., to bolster up Louzon with Marx, yield, however, truly sad results.

Let us give the floor to the programmatic article in Die Fahne des Kommunismus (the Leninbund’s theoretical organ):

“The railroad represents to this very day a Chinese concession to a foreign government, which viewed from China’s side [,?!,] differs only in degree [graduel?!] from all other concessions held by the imperialist powers” (“On the Sino-Soviet Conflict,” issue 31, p. 245).

Here we still have pure Louzon. Urbahns is teaching the German revolutionists to appraise the facts “from China’s side.” Meanwhile, the need is to appraise them from the proletarian side. National boundaries do not exhaust the issue.

First of all, it is sheerest nonsense to maintain that the proletarian state is obliged on the whole not to possess enterprises (“concessions”) in other countries. Here Urbahns, in the footsteps of Louzon, is simply taking a backstairs route to the theory of socialism in one country. The question of the workers’ state implanting industrial enterprises in backward countries is not simply an economic question but one of revolutionary strategy. If Soviet Russia has virtually failed to take this path, it was not out
of principled considerations but because of technological weakness. Advanced, i.e., highly industrialized, socialist countries like England, Germany, and France would be in every way interested in building railroads, erecting plants and grain "factories" in backward countries, former colonies, etc. Naturally they will not be able to do this either through coercion or through magnanimous gifts. They would have to receive certain colonial products in exchange. The character of this type of socialist enterprise, their administration, their working conditions would have to be such as to raise the economy and culture of the backward countries with the aid of the capital, technology, and experience of the richer proletarian states to the mutual benefit of both sides. This is not imperialism, nor is it exploitation, nor subjugation; it is, on the contrary, the socialist transformation of the world’s economic life. There is no other road at all.

For example, when the dictatorship of the proletariat is established in England, it will not at all be obliged to make a gift to the Indian bourgeoisie of the existing British concessions. This would be the stupidest possible policy, tending to enormously strengthen the power of the Indian capitalists and feudalists allied with them in relation to the Indian proletariat and peasantry; and it would retard the development of the socialist revolution in India for a long time. No! The workers' state, while proclaiming the full freedom of the colonies, will be obliged to eliminate immediately any and all national privileges from the concessions, doing away with the law of the club on the one hand and degradation on the other. At the same time, without letting go of the concessions, the workers’ state will be bound to transform them not only into vehicles of India’s economic upbuilding but also of her future socialist reconstruction. Naturally, this policy, equally indispensable for consolidating socialist England, could be carried through only shoulder to shoulder with the vanguard of the Indian proletariat and it would have to offer obvious advantages to the Indian peasants.

Let us now endeavor, together with Urbahns, to view the question “from India’s side.” For the Indian bourgeoisie the socialist “concessions” will prove far worse than capitalist concessions, if only because they would mercilessly slash its profits for the benefit of Indian workers and peasants. Conversely, for the latter the socialist concessions will become powerful bases of support, a kind of socialist bastion where forces could be gathered in preparation for the socialist overturn. Naturally, as soon as the Indian
proletariat assumed power, the former concessions would pass into its hands. The relations between the Indian and the British proletariat will be regulated not by memories of bourgeois property but by the higher principles of the international division of labor and of socialist solidarity.

There is, therefore, no simply Indian side, or simply "Chinese side." There is the side of Chiang Kai-shek. There is the side of the advanced Chinese workers. There are countless shadings of the petty bourgeoisie. When Urbahns tries to look at the issue from "China's side," he in reality dons the spectacles of a Chinese petty bourgeois who is at a loss, in a difficult situation, to choose a position and take sides.

**Mistakes in Principle**

Up to this point Urbahns repeats in the main only the arguments of Louzon. But then he goes on to "deepen" Louzon. If the editorial article of *Die Fahne des Kommunismus* is stripped of its reservations, equivocations, and all other loopholes, its gist comes down to the following formula: Since the national revolution triumphed in China, while the counterrevolution has triumphed (or virtually triumphed, or is ineluctably bound to triumph) in Russia, therefore it follows that—what follows? The article does not give a clear answer. Its eclectic philosophy performs precisely the service of dodging a clear-cut answer. I consider it necessary for the exposition that follows to set down the following preliminary propositions:

1. Comrade Urbahns has a false conception of the character of the Russian Revolution and the stage through which it is now passing. He interprets wrongly the meaning of Thermidor. (I refer here, as well as further on, to Comrade Urbahns for the sake of brevity. What I have in mind is the majority of the Leninbund's leadership and the editors of its publications. Incidentally, it is not uncommon in the columns of *Volkswille* to run across the expression: "The leadership of the Leninbund and Comrade Urbahns.")

2. Comrade Urbahns has a wrong conception of the class mechanics of the Chinese revolution and its present condition.

3. From his false social appraisals he draws erroneous and highly dangerous political conclusions.

4. The fact that he (like Louzon and other ultralefts) does not pursue his conclusions to the end only shows a lack of consis-
tency, but in no way diminishes the danger of his false position.

At this point I am compelled to quote a long passage from *Die Fahne des Kommunismus* which tries in its leading editorial to explain those conditions which created a “national liberation movement” in China:

“... (China’s) national liberation movement, revolutionary in its character, had its barb directly aimed at the imperialists and the Chinese proletariat found its class interests [!!] expressed in it. This revolution came to a halt [!] at the bourgeois stage; it brought Chiang Kai-shek’s military rule to the top, drowned in blood the Chinese proletarian revolution and the revolutionary peasant uprisings which infringed upon private property; and brought the Chinese bourgeoisie closer to the goals of the bourgeois revolution. One of these goals is national unification. ... Imperialist concessions are a painful splinter in the flesh of this national unification of China. ... The Chinese seek to get rid of it—through negotiations with the imperialist powers; in relation to Soviet Russia, which they regard as a much weaker opponent, they seek to accomplish it—through military assault. Therewith [!] decisive [massgebend] for the Chinese military government is the fact that the Russian concession is, from the class standpoint, a more [?] dangerous factor than the concessions of the capitalist ‘hostile brothers.’ This conflict ought to have been foreseen by everybody inasmuch as Chinese and Russian interests could not possibly cohabit peacefully in the China of the bourgeois revolution. Only a victorious Chinese revolution could have realized such a collaboration in life. *Even if it had ended only in a workers’ and peasants’ China ...*” (issue number 31, p. 245).

I do not recall ever encountering such a confusion of ideas in twenty odd lines of type. At all events, it did not happen to me often. A whole page would be required to untangle each line. I will try to do it as briefly as possible, disregarding the secondary contradictions.

In its first part the passage deals with imperialist concessions, including the Chinese Eastern Railroad which, it is asserted, constitute a splinter in the flesh of China’s national independence. The Soviet republic is here bracketed with the capitalist states. In its second part, the passage makes the assertion that “therewith” it is also decisive (!) that the Russian concession is more (?) dangerous from the class standpoint. And finally there follows a synthesis of these two mutually exclusive explanations,
Defense of the Soviet Republic and the Opposition

namely: the interests of China and Russia are irreconcilable in general. How so? Why so? From the first part of the quotation it follows that Russian imperialism is incompatible with China's national unity. From the second part it follows that the interests of workers' Russia are irreconcilable with those of bourgeois China. Which of these two diametrically opposed explanations does Urbahns choose? He does not choose between them but instead combines the two. How does he accomplish this? With the aid of a little adverb, "therewith" (dabei). Five German letters and the problem is solved.

That the interests of the Soviet republic and bourgeois China were irreconcilable, says Urbahns, ought to have been foreseen by everybody. Very well. This means that it is not at all a question of the railroad or of the 1924 treaty, doesn't it? The irreconcilability in the relations between present-day China and the Soviet republic only mirrors the irreconcilability of China's own internal contradictions. Had Urbahns said that the Chinese bourgeoisie, which rests on bayonets, hates the Soviet republic, whose mere existence is a source of revolutionary unrest in China, he would have spoken correctly. In addition, one would still have to say that its fear of its own oppressed masses is designated by the Chinese bourgeoisie as fear of Soviet imperialism.

Urbahns asserts that the bourgeois revolution has triumphed in China. This is the opinion of the international social democracy. What triumphed in China was not the bourgeois revolution but the bourgeois counterrevolution. This is not at all the same thing. Of the massacre of workers and peasants Urbahns speaks as of some internal detail of the bourgeois revolution. He even goes so far as to maintain that the Chinese workers found their class interests expressed (vertreten) in the national revolution, that is to say, in the Kuomintang, into which the Comintern drove them with a club. Such a standpoint is Stalinist, i.e., social democratic. The bourgeois revolution, insofar as it proved at all realizable in China as an independent stage, took place in 1911. But it took place only in order to demonstrate that a bourgeois revolution, completed to any degree whatever, is impossible in China. That is to say, that China's national unification, her emancipation from imperialism, and her democratic transformation (the agrarian problem!) are unthinkable under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. The second Chinese revolution (1925-27) showed by its entire course what the Marxists clearly saw before-
hand, namely: the genuine solution of the task of the bourgeois revolution in China is possible only through the dictatorship of the proletariat, resting on the alliance of the workers and peasants as against the alliance of the native bourgeoisie with imperialism. But this revolution cannot come to a halt at the bourgeois stage. It becomes converted into the permanent revolution, that is, it becomes a link of the international socialist revolution and shares the destinies of the latter. It is for this reason that the bourgeois counterrevolution, which triumphed with the help of Stalin and Bukharin, mercilessly crushed the movement of the popular masses and installed not a democratic regime but military-fascist rule.

The Permanent Revolution in China

In the first part of the foregoing quotation, Comrade Urbahns’s newspaper talks about the triumph of the bourgeois revolution in China. In the second part it proclaims that collaboration of China with Soviet Russia could be possible only in the event of “a victorious Chinese revolution.” What does this mean? After all, according to Urbahns, didn’t the bourgeois revolution triumph in China? Isn’t this exactly why it is trying to pluck the imperialist splinter out of its flesh? In that case, what other revolution is Urbahns talking about? Is it the proletarian revolution? Not at all. “Even if it had ended only in a workers’ and peasants’ China.” What does this “even” mean? It can mean nothing else but that the proletarian revolution is not involved here. Neither is the bourgeois revolution, not so? Then which one? Does it mean that Urbahns—like Bukharin and Radek—foresees the possibility of neither a bourgeois nor a proletarian dictatorship but of a special workers’ and peasants’ dictatorship in China? One ought to speak out on this more clearly, more boldly, and more firmly, without seeking to hide behind the little word “even.” The Stalinist-Bukharinist orientation toward the Kuomintang originated precisely from this philosophy of a nonbourgeois and non-proletarian dictatorship. It is precisely on this point that Radek and Smilga first stumbled. Stalin, Bukharin, and Zinoviev, and following in their footsteps Radek and Smilga, believe that as against world imperialism on the one side and the workers’ state on the other a petty-bourgeois revolutionary dictatorship is possible in China. And after the experience with Russian Kerenskyism and with the Chinese Kuomintang, both of the Right and the
Left, Urbahns timidly sings in tune with Radek on this question, upon which the fate of all the Far East depends. Not for nothing does Urbahns reprint the extremely superficial and trite article of Radek on the question of the permanent revolution, while keeping silent on his own attitude to the question.

Let me add parenthetically that Radek's article contains an absolutely fantastic bit of gossip to the effect that during my confinement in Alma-Ata I held back the exposure of Bukharin's negotiations with Kamenev, because I hoped for a bloc with the Rights. What is the source of this? Yaroslavsky's snuffbox? Or Menzhinsky's notebook? Radek is hardly the inventor of it. But Comrade Urbahns has so much space that he prints not only the novels of Sinclair but even the rantings of Yaroslavsky and Radek. Had Comrade Urbahns loyally turned to me for verification, I could have explained to him that the news of Bukharin's negotiations with Kamenev reached me almost simultaneously with the report of Urbahns's equivocal declarations concerning a bloc with Brandler. My reaction to this was set down in an article on the absolute inadmissibility of unprincipled blocs between the Left and Right oppositions. This article was published only a few months ago by Brandler and only then was it reprinted by Volkswille.

But to resume, today it is not at all a question of repeating fraudulently selected fragments of 1905 quotations on the permanent revolution. This work of falsification has had sufficient efforts devoted to it by the Zinovievs, the Maslows, and the like. It is a question of the entire strategic line for the countries of the East and for a whole epoch. One must state clearly whether a special democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants is conceivable and just wherein it would differ from the dictatorship of the Kuomintang on the one hand and from the dictatorship of the proletariat on the other. This brings us to the following question: Can the peasantry have an independent policy in the revolution—a policy independent in relation to the bourgeoisie and in relation to the proletariat? Marxism, enriched by the experience of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, replies: No, no, no. Following the lead of its top circles and of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, the peasantry either marches with the bourgeoisie—in that case what we get is SRism, Kerenskyism, or Kuomintangism; or, following the lead of its lower sections, the semiproletarian and proletarian elements of the village, the peasantry
marches with the industrial proletariat. In that case we have the path of Bolshevism, the path of the October (i.e., the permanent) Revolution.

It was on this question—and on no other—that Stalin and Bukharin broke the back of the Chinese Communist Party and of the Chinese revolution. Zinoviev, Radek, Smilga, Preobrazhensky strayed between Stalinism and Marxism and this straying led them to ignominious capitulation. For the countries of the East this question draws the line of demarcation between Menshevism and Bolshevism. The fact that present-day Martinovs use as a fig-leaf the shreds of Bolshevik quotations from the year 1905, the very same quotations which Stalin, Kamenev, Rykov, and others used to cover themselves against Lenin in 1917—this masquerade can take in only fools or ignoramuses.* In China the Comintern realized in life the leadership of Martinov-Bukharin-Stalin, to the accompaniment of savage braying against the permanent revolution. Today this is the fundamental question for the countries of the East and it is therefore one of the basic questions for the West. Has Comrade Urbahns an opinion on this subject? No, he has not. He ducks for cover behind a particular little word, or, what is worse, he hides behind an article of Radek, which he prints “just in case.”

Thermidor

If Comrade Urbahns is in a bad way with the Chinese revolution, the situation is still worse, if that is possible, when he comes to the Russian Revolution. I am referring here primarily to the question of Thermidor, and by this very reason, to the question of the class nature of the Soviet state. The formula of Thermidor is of course a conditional formula, like every historical analogy. When I employed this formula for the first time against Zinoviev and Stalin, I immediately underscored its wholly conditional character. But it is entirely legitimate, notwithstanding the difference between the two epochs and the two class structures. Ther-

*For twenty years (1903-23) Martinov was the chief theoretician of Menshevikism. He became a member of the Bolshevik Party when Lenin was on his sickbed and the campaign against Trotskyism was on its way. The October Revolution prior to the NEP was denounced as Trotskyism by Martinov in 1923. Today this creature is the chief theoretician of the Comintern. He remains true to himself. But he uses quotations from Lenin to cover up his old basic line. Several factories are in operation for the selection and falsification of these quotations.
midor signalizes the first victorious stage of the counterrevolution, that is, the direct transfer of power from the hands of one class into the hands of another, whereby this transfer, although necessarily accompanied by civil war, is nevertheless masked politically by the fact that the struggle occurs between the factions of a party that was yesterday united. Thermidor in France was preceded by a period of reaction which unfolded while the power remained in the hands of the plebeians, the city’s lower classes. Thermidor crowned this preparatory period of reaction by an out-and-out political catastrophe, as a result of which the plebeians lost power. Thermidor thus does not signify a period of reaction in general, i.e., a period of ebb, of downsliding, of weakening of revolutionary positions. Thermidor has a much more precise meaning. It indicates the direct transfer of power into the hands of a different class, after which the revolutionary class cannot regain power except through an armed uprising. The latter requires, in turn, a new revolutionary situation, the inception of which depends upon a whole complex of domestic and international causes.

As far back as 1923, the Marxist Opposition established the inception of a new chapter in the revolution, the chapter of ideological and political downsliding, which could, in the future, signify Thermidor. It was then that we employed this term for the first time. Had the German revolution conquered toward the end of 1923—as was entirely possible—the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia would have been cleansed and consolidated without any internal convulsions. But the German revolution ended in one of the most terrible capitulations in working-class history. The defeat of the German revolution gave a powerful impetus to all the processes of reaction inside the Soviet republic. Hence the struggle against the “permanent revolution” and “Trotskyism” in the party led to the creation of the theory of socialism in one country, and so on. The ultralefts in Germany failed to grasp the breaking-point that had occurred. With their right hand they supported the reaction in the Soviet Communist Party, with their left hand they conducted a formally aggressive policy in Germany, ignoring the defeat of the German revolution and the incipient ebb. Like the centrists in the CPSU, the German ultralefts (Maslow, Fischer, Urbahns) also covered up their false policy by a struggle against “Trotskyism” which they portrayed as “liquidationism”—because they themselves saw the revolutionary situation not behind but ahead of them. The label
of Trotskyism was in this case attached to the ability to appraise a situation and to differentiate correctly between its stages. It would be very profitable, let me add in passing, if Urbahns would at last long last draw the theoretical balance sheet of this entire struggle which befuddled the minds of the German workers and paved the way for the victory of fatuous functionaries, adventurists, and careerists.

The false “ultraleft” course of 1924-25 tended still further to weaken the positions of the European proletariat and thereby accelerated the reactionary recession in the Soviet republic. The expulsion of the Opposition from the party, the arrests and the deportations constituted extremely important consecutive moments of the entire process. They signified that the party was growing weaker and weaker and consequently that the power of resistance of the Soviet proletariat was also declining. But all this still far from signified that the counterrevolutionary overturn had already taken place, that is, that power had passed from the hands of the working class to another class.

The fact that the Soviet proletariat found it beyond its strength to prevent the organizational crushing of the Opposition represented naturally a highly alarming symptom. But on the other hand, Stalin found himself driven, simultaneously with the crushing of the Left Opposition, to plagiarize partially from its program in all fields, to direct his fire to the right, and to convert an internal party maneuver into a very sharp and prolonged zigzag to the left. This shows that despite everything the proletariat still possesses powers to exert pressure and that the state apparatus still remains dependent on it. Upon this cardinal fact the Russian Opposition must continue to base its own policy, which is the policy of reform and not of revolution.

Even before the Opposition was crushed organizationally, we said and wrote more than once that after the Lefts have been lopped off, the Rights would present the center with their bill. Those elements that supported Stalin in the struggle against us would start pressing with redoubled force as soon as the Left barrier was removed. That was our prediction. We expressed it frequently as follows: “The Thermidorean tail will come down on the centrist head.” This has already taken place, and this will be repeated again and again. I have in mind not Bukharin or Tomsky but the powerful Thermidorean forces whose pale reflection the Rights are in the party.

Despite the organizational crushing of the Opposition and the
weakening of the proletariat, the pressure of its class interests combined with the pressure of the Opposition's ideas proved sufficiently powerful to compel the centrist apparatus to undertake a prolonged left zigzag. And it was precisely this left zigzag that created the political premise for the latest series of capitulations. The composition of the capitulators is naturally quite diversified, but the leading role is being played in the main by those who formerly imagined the process of downsliding as purely one-sided and who were inclined at each new stage to proclaim that Thermidor had already been accomplished. On the eve of our expulsion from the party, the Zinovievist, Safarov, cried out in Berlin and later in Moscow, "It is five minutes to twelve!"—that is, it is five minutes before Thermidor. Five minutes passed, and—Safarov capitulated. Even before Safarov, Radek desired, in connection with the expulsion of me and Zinoviev from the Central Committee, to proclaim the inception of Thermidor. I tried to show him that it was only a party rehearsal for Thermidor, perhaps not even a dress rehearsal, but at all events not Thermidor itself, i.e., not the counterrevolutionary overturn which is accomplished by classes. Since 1926 Smilga held the opinion that the then policy of Stalin and Bukharin ("peasants enrich yourselves," the Anglo-Russian Committee, the Kuomintang) could shift in one direction and one only—to the right. Smilga held that the October Revolution had exhausted its internal resources, and that aid could come only from the outside, but he had no hopes of this in the years immediately ahead. He wrote theses on this subject. The possibility of a break between the centrists and the Rights and of a centrist swing to the left, under the pressure of internal forces, was entirely absent from his perspective. On the question of Thermidor and of two parties, Radek and Smilga held the extreme "left" position within the Opposition. That is why events caught them by surprise, and that is why they capitulated so easily.

This brief historical review should make it clear to the reader that the question of whether "Trotsky goes far enough," or "not far enough" on the problem of Thermidor (as Urbahns formulates it), contains nothing new. We studied this whole cycle of questions long ago and reviewed them over and over again at each new stage.

On May 26, 1928, I wrote from Alma-Ata to the exiled comrade Mikhail Okudzhava, one of the old Georgian Bolsheviks, as follows:
"To the extent that Stalin’s new course sets itself tasks, it unquestionably represents an attempt to approach our position. What decides in politics, however, is not only the what, but the how and the who. The main battles which will decide the fate of the revolution still lie ahead. . . . We always held, and we said so more than once, that the process of the political downsiding of the ruling faction cannot be pictured as a steadily dropping curve. Downsiding, too, does not take place, after all, in a vacuum but in a class society, with its profound internal frictions. The basic party mass is not at all monolithic; it simply represents, for the most part, political raw material. In it processes of differentiation are unavoidable—under the impact of class impulses both from the right and the left. The grave events which recently occurred in the party and the consequences of which you and I are suffering are only an overture to the future march of events. As an overture in an opera anticipates the musical themes of the opera as a whole and gives them in a condensed form, just so our political “overture” only anticipates those melodies which will find their full expression in the future, to the accompaniment of the tubas, double basses, drums, and other instruments of serious class music. The development of events confirms beyond the shadow of a doubt that we were and remain correct not only as against the weathercocks and turncoats, i.e., the Zinovievs, Kamenevs, Pyatakovs, and the rest, but also as against our dear friends on the “left,” the ultraleft muddlers insofar as they are bent to accept the overture for the opera, that is to say, to assume that all the basic processes in the party and in the state have already been accomplished; and that Thermidor, of which they heard for the first time from us, is an already accomplished fact."

This is not a hint, Comrade Urbahns, it is the truth.

Comrade Urbahns’s Mistake

The source of a whole number of Comrade Urbahns’s false conclusions lies in the fact that he believes Thermidor to be already accomplished. To be sure, he does not draw all the necessary conclusions from this. But those few conclusions he has had the time to make are enough, if they become intrenched, to ruin the cause of the Leninbund.

In an article devoted to my deportation from the Soviet Union, Die Fahne des Kommunismus wrote that “Stalinist rule can no longer be regarded as representing the working class and it must
therefore be combatted by any and all means.” (February 1, 1929).

The same article drew an identity between the deportation of Trotsky and the guillotining of Robespierre and his companions. In other words, Thermidor was proclaimed as accomplished. If this formulation of the question was arrived at in the heat of the moment, it would not be worthwhile dwelling upon. Political struggle is inconceivable without exaggerations, isolated mistakes committed in gauging things by rule of thumb, and so on. One must not take the details but the basic line. Unfortunately the leadership of the Leninbund is stubbornly trying to convert this blunder into a basic line. Volkswille of February 11 carries a resolution on the situation in Russia in connection with my deportation. This resolution flatly states: “This is Thermidor” (Das ist der Termidor), and it goes on to add:

“Hence flows the necessity for the Russian proletariat to fight for all liberties against the Stalinist regime so that it may find itself equipped to cope with the impending open counterrevolu-

The lead article in Volkswille, February 13, states that “with the exiling of Trotsky the last line has been drawn under the revolution of 1917.” It is hardly surprising that with such a position Urbahns is obliged to make ever more frequent declarations to the effect that he is not “one hundred percent in agreement” with the Russian Opposition, because the Russian Opposition “does not go far enough.” Alas, Urbahns himself kept going further and further—along the path of his original mistake.

Urbahns (like Radek) has converted the analogy with Thermidor, which is very important in the class sense, into a formal, and, in part, personal analogy. Radek said: The expulsion of the Opposition from the Central Committee is equivalent to the elimination of Robespierre’s group from the government. The guillotine or exile in Alma-Ata—that is only a question of technique. Urbahns says: The crushing of the Opposition and the deportation of Trotsky is equivalent to the guillotining of Robespierre’s group. The broad historical analogy is superseded here by an arbitrary and cheap comparison of a personal and episodic character.

The Russian Revolution of the twentieth century is incomparably broader and deeper than the French Revolution of the eighteenth century. The revolutionary class on which the October Revolution rests is far bigger numerically, far more homoge-
neous, compact, and resolute than the urban plebeians of France. The leadership of the October Revolution in all its tendencies is far more experienced and perspicacious than the leading groups of the French Revolution were or could be. Finally, the political, economic, social, and cultural changes accomplished by the Bolshevik dictatorship are far more deep-going than the changes accomplished by the Jacobins. If it was impossible to wrest power from the hands of the plebeians without a civil war, although they had been weakened by the growth of class contradictions and the bureaucratization of the Jacobins—and Thermidor was a civil war in which the sansculottes suffered defeat—how then can anyone assume or believe that power can pass from the hands of the Russian proletariat into the hands of the bourgeoisie in a peaceful, tranquil, imperceptible, bureaucratic manner? Such a conception of Thermidor is nothing else but inverted reformism.

The means of production, once the property of the capitalists, remain to this very day in the hands of the Soviet state. The land is nationalized. The exploiting elements are still excluded from the soviets and from the army. The monopoly of foreign trade remains a bulwark against the economic intervention of capitalism. All these are not trifles. But that is not all. By the power of its attack, the Opposition has forced the centrists to deliver a number of blows—which are of course by no means mortal and far from decisive—to the Thermidorean class forces and the tendencies that reflect them inside the party. One must not shut one's eyes to this. In general, a policy of blindfolding oneself is a poor policy.

The Stalinist left zigzag is just as little the “final balance” of the Thermidorean danger as the deportation of Oppositionists was the “final balance” of the October Revolution. The struggle continues, the classes have not yet spoken their final word. Centrism remains centrism; Bolsheviks must remain Bolsheviks; capitulators merit only contempt. And the ultraleft muddleheads must be called to order!

On May 1, 1928, Arbeiter Stimme, organ of the Austrian Communist Opposition (Comrade Frey's group), developed the following thoughts in an article entitled, “Despite Stalin, Soviet Russia Is a Proletarian State”:

“There are political questions which serve as infallible touchstones. . . . And for the Communist Left Oppositions, which appear today as all sorts of groupings and shadings, there is likewise such a touchstone—it is the question of the proletarian
character of Soviet Russia. ... There are elements in the Communist Left Opposition who, in their indignation at Stalinist policy in all its manifestations, throw out the baby along with the bathwater. In certain minds the idea is arising that should the Stalinist policy persist, Russia must become transformed in a purely evolutionary manner into a bourgeois state. ... Every type of degeneration in Soviet Russia is the product of the subversive work of the bourgeoisie which is being objectively fostered by the Stalinist course. In this way the bourgeoisie is seeking to prepare the downfall of the Soviet power. But to overthrow the proletarian dictatorship and to really seize power—this the bourgeoisie can achieve only through a violent overturn. ... We fight against the Stalinist course. But Soviet Russia is something quite different from Stalin. Despite all the degeneration, which we fight and will continue to fight most resolutely, so long as the class-conscious workers are armed, Soviet Russia remains for us a proletarian state, which we defend unconditionally in our own interests, in peace as in war, in spite of Stalin, and precisely in order to defeat Stalin, who is incapable of defending it with his policy. Whoever is not absolutely firm on the question of the proletarian character of Soviet Russia hurts the proletariat, hurts the revolution, hurts the Communist Left Opposition.”

This formulation is absolutely irreproachable from the standpoint of theory. Comrade Urbahns would have done much better to reprint it in the organ of the Leninbund than to publish Korschist and semi-Korschist articles.

Not Centrism in General, but a Specific Type of Centrism

The article in the organ of the Leninbund, analyzed by us, tries to attack our position from another side. “Although centrism,” the author argues against me, “is a current and a tendency inside the working class, it differs only in degree from another current and tendency inside the working class, namely, reformism. Both serve, even if in a different way, the class enemy” (Fahne des Kommunismus, number 31, p. 246).

On the surface this has a very convincing ring. But in reality, Marxist truth has been transformed into an abstraction and thereby into a falsehood. It is not enough to say that centrism in general or reformism in general constitutes a current inside the working class. It is necessary to analyze just what function is
fulfilled by a given centrism, in a given working class, in a given country, and in a given epoch. Truth is always concrete.

In Russia, centrism is in power. In England, reformism governs today. Both of them—Comrade Urbahns teaches us—represent a current inside the working class and they differ only in degree (graduel); both serve, even if differently, the class enemy. Very good, let us make note of this. But what tactic flows from this, say, in the event of war? Must communists in Russia be defeatists like communists in England? Or, on the contrary, must they be defensists in both countries, not unconditionally, to be sure, but with certain reservations? After all, defeatism and defensism are class lines and cannot be affected by second-rate distinctions between Russian centrism and British reformism. But here, perhaps, Comrade Urbahns himself will recall a few things and make the necessary correction. In England the factories, the railways, the land belong to the exploiters, and the state rules over colonies, that is, remains a slaveholding state; the reformists there defend the existing bourgeois state, defending it not very skillfully nor very cleverly; the bourgeoisie regards them semidistrustfully, semicontemptuously, watches them jealously, keeps barking orders at them, and is ready to chase them out at any moment. But for better or for worse the British reformists in power defend the domestic and foreign interests of capitalism. The same thing applies, of course, to the German social democracy.

But what is Soviet centrism defending? It is defending the social system that originated from the political and economic expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It defends this social system very poorly, very unskillfully, arousing distrust and disillusionment among the proletariat (which unfortunately does not have recourse to the same experience as the British bourgeoisie). It weakens the dictatorship, helps the forces of Thermidor, but because of the objective situation Stalinist centrism nevertheless represents a proletarian and not an imperialist regime. This is not, Comrade Urbahns, a difference of "degree" but a difference between two class regimes. We have here the two sides of the historical barricade. Whoever loses sight of this fundamental difference is lost to the revolution.

"Inverted Kerenskyism"

But in that case, objects Urbahns, what is the meaning of your own words to the effect that Stalinism is inverted Kerenskyism?
Improbable as it may seem it is precisely from this formula that Urbahns seeks to deduce the conclusion that Thermidor has already been accomplished. As a matter of fact, just the opposite conclusion flows most obviously from my formula. Kerenskyism was a form of bourgeois rule. It was the last possible form of bourgeois rule in the period of an impending proletarian revolution. It was a shaky, vacillating, and unreliable form of rule, but it was nevertheless bourgeois rule. For the proletariat to attain the transfer of power, nothing more nor less was required than an armed uprising, the October Revolution.

If Stalinism is inverted Kerenskyism, this means that ruling centrism is, on the road to Thermidor, the last form of the rule of the proletariat, weakened by domestic and foreign contradictions, by the mistakes of its leadership, by lack of its own activity. But it is nevertheless a form of proletarian rule. The centrists can be replaced either by the Bolsheviks or by the Thermidoreans. Is any other interpretation really conceivable?

By the way, I do recall that another interpretation is conceivable. From my formula of “inverted Kerenskyism” the Stalinists have drawn the conclusion that the Opposition is preparing an armed uprising against the rule of centrim, just as, in our day, we prepared the uprising against Kerenskyism. But this is obviously a fraudulent interpretation, dictated not by Marxism but by the requirements of the GPU; and it cannot withstand the slightest touch of criticism. Precisely because centrism is inverted Kerenskyism, it is the bourgeoisie and not the proletariat that requires an armed uprising for the conquest of power. Precisely because Thermidor has not been accomplished, the proletariat can still realize its tasks through a profound internal reform of the Soviet state, of the trade unions, and, above all, of the party.

Proletarian or Bourgeois State?

It must be acknowledged that in the article examined by us there seems to be a half-step backward with regard to Thermidor. But this hardly improves matters. Is Soviet Russia a bourgeois state? The article answers: no. “Have we still a proletarian dictatorship in Russia?” Again the article answers: no. Then what have we got? A state beyond classes? A state above classes? To this the article answers: in Russia we have a government which “apparently mediates between classes, but which in reality represents the interests of the economically stronger class” (issue number 32, p. 246; my emphasis). Without stating openly which
class it considers "stronger," the article nevertheless leaves no doubt that it refers to the bourgeoisie. But, after all, a government which appears to mediate between the classes but which in reality represents the interests of the bourgeoisie, is a bourgeois government. Instead of declaring this openly, the author resorts to circumlocution, which does not attest to intellectual frankness. There are no governments beyond classes. In relation to the proletarian revolution Thermidor signifies the transfer of power from the hands of the proletariat into the hands of the bourgeoisie. It can signify nothing else. If Thermidor has been accomplished, it means that Russia is a bourgeois state.

But is it true that in the Soviet republic the bourgeoisie is "the economically stronger class"? No, it is nonsense. The author apparently does not at all take into consideration the fact that by making such a contention he places a cross not over Stalin but over the October Revolution. If the bourgeoisie is already economically stronger than the proletariat; if the relation of forces is shifting in its favor "with giant strides" (mit Reisenschritten), as the article states, then it is absurd to speak of the further maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat, even if it has survived, as a vestige, to the present day. Happily, however, the representation of the Soviet bourgeoisie as the economically stronger class is simply a fantasy, and nothing more.

Urbahns may reply to us that the article has in mind not only the domestic but the world bourgeoisie. But this does not improve matters at all. The world bourgeoisie is far stronger economically than the Soviet state. No one disputes this. That is why the theory of socialism in one country is a vulgar national-reformist utopia. But this is not our way of posing the question. The productive and political role of the world proletariat enters as a most important factor into the relation of forces. The struggle takes place on a world scale, and the fate of the October Revolution is decided in this struggle. Do the ultralefts believe that this struggle is hopeless? Then let them say so. The changes in the world relationship of forces depend to a certain extent also upon us. By proclaiming, openly or semicovertly, that present-day Soviet Russia is a bourgeois state and refusing, entirely or three-quarters, to support it against world imperialism, the ultralefts of course place their little weight on the bourgeois side of the scales.

What distinguishes Stalin's Soviet republic from Lenin's is not a bourgeois power and not a supracl ass power but the elements of dual power. The analysis of this condition was long ago made by
the Russian Opposition. By its policy the centrist government has given the bourgeoisie maximum aid to define itself and to create its unofficial levers of power, its channels of exerting influence on power. But as in every serious class struggle, the contest occurs over the ownership of the means of production. Has this problem already been settled in favor of the bourgeoisie? To make such assertions, one must either lose his mind altogether, or be without one to begin with. The ultralefts simply “abstract” themselves from the socio-economic content of the revolution. They devote all their attention to the shell and ignore the kernel. Of course, if the shell has been damaged—and it has been—the kernel is also threatened. The entire activity of the Opposition is imbued with this idea. But between this and shutting one’s eyes to the socio-economic kernel of the Soviet republic there runs an abyss. The most important means of production conquered by the proletariat on November 7, 1917, still remain in the hands of the workers’ state. Do not forget this, ultralefts!

If Thermidor Is Accomplished, What Must Our Policy Be?

If Thermidor is accomplished, if the bourgeoisie is already “the economically stronger class,” it means that economic development has definitively shifted from the socialist to the capitalist track. But in that case one must be courageous enough to draw the necessary tactical conclusions.

What significance can restrictive laws against leasing land, hiring labor, etc., have if economic development as a whole is on the path of capitalism? In that case these restrictions are only a reactionary, petty-bourgeois utopia, an absurd hindrance to the development of the productive forces. A Marxist must call things by their names and recognize the necessity of repealing reactionary restrictions.

Of what significance is the monopoly of foreign trade from the standpoint of capitalist development? It is purely reactionary. It obstructs the free inflow of commodities and capital. It hinders Russia from entering the system of the circulating channels of world economy. A Marxist is obliged to recognize the necessity of repealing the monopoly of foreign trade.

The same thing may be said of the methods of planned economy as a whole. Their right to exist and develop is justifiable only from the standpoint of a socialist perspective.
In the meantime, the Russian Opposition has always demanded, as it still does, more systematic restrictive measures against capitalist enrichment; it demands the preservation and strengthening of the monopoly of foreign trade and an all-sided development of planned economy. This economic platform acquires its full meaning only in connection with the struggle against the degeneration of the party and other organizations of the proletariat. But it is enough to assume that Thermidor is accomplished for the very bases of the Oppositional platform to become nonsensical. Urbahns is silent on all this. Apparently, he does not at all take into consideration the interdependence of all the basic elements of the problem. But by way of compensation he consoles himself and others by the fact that he is "not in one hundred percent agreement" with the Russian Opposition. A cheap consolation!

Proletarian or Bourgeois Democracy?

While Comrade Urbahns and his cothinkers do not draw all the conclusions that flow from an "accomplished" Thermidor, they do draw some of them. We have already read above that they deem it necessary for the Russian working class to reconquer "all liberties." But here, too, the ultralefts halt irresolutely on the threshold. They do not explain what liberties they have in mind, and in general they touch upon the subject only in passing. Why?

In the struggle against Stalinist bureaucratism, which expresses and facilitates the pressure of enemy classes, the Russian Opposition demands democracy in the party, the trade unions, and the soviets on a proletarian basis. It implacably exposes the revolting falsification of democracy which under the label of "self-criticism" is corroding and decomposing the very foundations of the revolutionary consciousness of the proletarian vanguard. But for the Opposition the struggle for party democracy has meaning only on the basis of the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It would be quixotic, not to say idiotic, to fight for democracy in a party which is realizing the rule of a class hostile to us. In such a case, one could not speak of a class democracy in the party and in the soviets, but of "general" (that is, bourgeois) democracy in the country—against the ruling party and its dictatorship. The Mensheviks have more than once accused the Opposition of "not going far enough" because it does not demand democracy in the country. But the
Mensheviks and we stand on the opposite sides of the barricade, and at the present time—in view of the Thermidorean danger—more irreconcilably and hostilely than ever before. We are fighting for proletarian democracy precisely in order to shield the country of the October Revolution from the "liberties" of bourgeois democracy, that is, from capitalism.

It is solely from this standpoint that the question of the secret ballot should be considered. This demand of the Russian Opposition has as its aim to give the proletarian core the opportunity to straighten its back first in the party, and then in the trade unions, in order, with the aid of these two levers, then to consolidate its class positions in the soviets. Yet Comrade Urbahns and some of his closest cothinkers have sought to interpret this demand of the Opposition, which remains wholly within the framework of the dictatorship, as a general democratic slogan. A monstrous blunder! These two positions have nothing in common; they are mortally opposed to each other.

Speaking vaguely about "liberties" in general, Urbahns called one of these liberties by name: it is the freedom to organize. In the opinion of the ultralefts, the Soviet proletariat must conquer for itself the "freedom to organize." That Stalinist bureaucratism is holding the trade unions now, at the time of the left zigzag, more tightly by the throat than ever before—this is incontestable. That the trade-union organizations must be enabled to defend the interests of the workers against the growing deformations of the regime of the dictatorship, to this question the Opposition has long ago given its answer by word and deed. But it is necessary to have a clear conception of the aims and methods of the struggle against the centrist bureaucracy. It is not a question of winning the "freedom to organize" against a hostile class government, but of struggling for a regime under which the trade unions will enjoy—within the framework of the dictatorship—the necessary freedom to correct their own state by words and deeds. In other words, it is a question of the "liberty" which is, for instance, enjoyed by the powerful alliance of industrialists and agrarian capitalists in relation to their own capitalist state, upon which they exert pressure might and main, and, as is known, not without success; but it is not at all a question of "liberty" that the proletarian organizations possess or seek to get in relation to the bourgeois state. And this is not at all one and the same thing!

The freedom to organize signifies a "freedom" (we know its character very well) to carry on the class struggle in a society
whose economy is based on capitalist anarchy, while its politics are kept within the framework of so-called democracy. Socialism, on the other hand, is unthinkable not only without planned economy in the narrow sense of the term but also without the systematization of all social relations. One of the most important elements of socialist economy is the regulation of wages, and in general of the workers' relations to production and to the state. We have pointed out above the role that trade unions must play in this regulation. But this role has nothing in common with the role of the trade unions in bourgeois states, where "freedom to organize" is itself not only a reflection of capitalist anarchy but an active element in it. Suffice it to recall the economic role of the British coal miners in 1926. It is not for nothing that the capitalists together with the reformists are now carrying on a desperate and hopeless struggle for industrial peace.

Yet Urbahns advances the slogan of freedom to organize precisely in the general democratic sense. And indeed it would be impossible in any other sense. Urbahns formulates one and the same demand for Russia and for China and for the capitalist states of Europe. This would be absolutely correct—on one trifling condition, namely: if one recognizes that Thermidor is accomplished. But in that case it is already Urbahns himself who "does not go far enough." To put forward the freedom to organize as an isolated demand is a caricature of politics. Freedom to organize is inconceivable without freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and all the other "freedoms" to which the decision of the February conference (Reichausschusses) of the Leninbund refers vaguely and without commentary. And these freedoms are unthinkable outside the regime of democracy, that is, outside of capitalism. One must learn to think one's thoughts out to the end.

**Urbahns Wages a Struggle**

In connection with my remarks that we fight against the Stalinist faction, but defend the Soviet republic to the end, *Die Fahne des Kommunismus* explained to me that "unconditional [?] support [?] of Stalinist policy [?] including its foreign policy" is impermissible and that I would admit this myself if only I "think my thoughts out to the end" (number 31, p. 246). It is hardly surprising that I awaited with interest the conclusion of the article (in issue number 32). It was bound to produce the tactical conclusions from the theoretical contradictions which filled the
first part of the article to overflowing; and, in addition, it would teach people how to think their thoughts out to the end.

Between the first and second installments of the article a few things managed to become clear. In this interval Urbahns and his friends must have, one would gather, had time to receive the resolution of the Bureau of the Second International, which could not have failed to have a sobering effect upon them, because the agreement between the arguments of Otto Bauer and those of Louzon and Paz was quite astonishing.

However that may be, in the second part of the article, \textit{Die Fahne des Kommunismus} comes to the conclusion that the Soviet republic must be defended \textit{even in the conflict with China}. This is praiseworthy. But the astonishing thing is that the article, in arriving at this conclusion, polemicizes not against the Korschists, not against the ultralefts, not against Louzon, not against Paz, but against the Russian Opposition. It would seem that the question of whether the Soviet Union ought to be defended or not is so important in and by itself that secondary and tertiary considerations would be relegated aside by it. This is an elementary rule of politics. But Urbahns and his friends proceed in an entirely different manner. At the most critical moment of the Sino-Soviet conflict they published articles of the ultralefts, which, as I showed above, in essence call for the support of Chiang Kai-shek against the Soviet republic. Only under the pressure of Marxists did the editors of \textit{Die Fahne}, six weeks after the outbreak of the conflict, pronounce themselves in favor of defending the USSR. But here, too, they wage a struggle not against those who deny the elementary revolutionary duty of defense but against—Trotsky. Every mature political person must come to the conclusion that the question of the defense of the October Revolution plays for Urbahns a secondary role in this entire affair, and that his main task is to show that he is not in “one hundred percent” agreement with the Russian Opposition. It evidently never occurs to Comrade Urbahns that anyone who attempts to prove his independence by such artificial and negative devices only demonstrates in reality his complete lack of intellectual independence.

“Along with the sympathies to Soviet Russia and to communism destroyed in the Chinese people by Stalin’s policy,” reads the second part of the article, “the fact that Russia resorts to war over the Chinese Eastern Railroad, when it did not lift a hand while Chiang Kai-shek and his military hordes wallowed in the
blood of the Chinese workers and poor peasants, would undoubtedly play a role in the attitude of the Chinese people toward such a war" (Fahne des Kommunismus, number 32, p. 250).

What is true and has long ago been said is mixed up here with what is new and false. The crimes of the centrist leadership in China are absolutely unexampled. Stalin and Bukharin knifed the Chinese revolution. This is a historical fact which will penetrate more and more into the consciousness of the world proletarian vanguard. But to accuse the Soviet republic of failing to intervene arms in hand into the Shanghai and Hankow events is to substitute sentimental demagogy for revolutionary policy. In the eyes of Louzon every intervention, all the more so military intervention, into the affairs of another country is "imperialism." This is, of course, pacifist nonsense. But no less nonsensical is the directly contrary demand that the Soviet republic, with its present strength, under the present international situation, should repair with the aid of Bolshevik bayonets the damage caused by Menshevik policy. Criticism must be directed along actual and not fictitious lines, otherwise the Opposition will never gain the confidence of the workers.

But what if the Soviet republic decided to go to war over the Chinese Eastern Railroad? As I already stated, if matters reached the point of war, this fact itself would show that involved was not the Chinese Eastern Railroad but something infinitely more important. True enough, the Chinese railroad, even taken by itself, is a far more serious object than the head of an archduke, which served as the pretext for the war of 1914. But it is still not at all a question of the railroad. War in the East, regardless of its immediate pretext, would inevitably be transformed on the very next day into a struggle against Soviet "imperialism," that is, against the dictatorship of the proletariat, with far greater violence than the war over an archduke's head became converted into a war against Prussian militarism.

Matters now seem to be heading for an agreement between Moscow and Nanking, which may terminate in China's buying the railroad with the aid of foreign banks. This would actually mean the transfer of control from the hands of the workers' state into the hands of finance capital. I have already stated that the cession of the Chinese Eastern Railroad is not excluded. But such a cession must be regarded not as a realization of the principle of national self-determination but as the weakening of the proletarian revolution to the advantage of capitalist reaction. One need
not doubt, however, that it is precisely Stalin and Company who will try to picture this surrender of positions as a realization of national justice, in harmony with the categorical imperative, with the gospel according to Kellogg and Litvinov\textsuperscript{222} and the articles of Louzon and Paz published in the organ of the Lenin­bund.

**Practical Tasks in Case of War**

The practical tasks of the Opposition in case of war between China and Soviet Russia are treated by the article in an unclear, ambiguous, and evasive manner. “In case of war between China and Soviet Russia over the Chinese Eastern Railroad,” says *Die Fahne*, “the Leninist Opposition takes its stand against Chiang Kai-shek and the imperialists who back him up” (number 32, p. 250). Ultraleft muddling has brought matters to a point where “Marxists-Leninists” find themselves compelled to declare “we take our stand against Chiang Kai-shek.” This shows how far they have driven themselves. Good, you are against Chiang Kai-shek. But whom are you for?

“In such a war,” the article replies, “the Leninist Opposition will mobilize all the forces of the proletariat in every country for a general strike, taking as the starting point the organization of resistance to the manufacture of armaments, any kind of transport of munitions, and so on.” This is the position of pacifist neutrality. For Urbahns, the task of the international proletariat does not consist in aiding the Soviet republic against imperialism, but in preventing any kind of munition shipments, that is, not only to China but also to the Soviet republic. Is that what you mean? Or have you simply said not what you wanted to say but something else? Have you failed to think your thoughts “out to the end”? If that is so, then make haste to correct yourself: the question is important enough. The correct formulation would read as follows: We do everything in our power to prevent shipments of arms to counterrevolutionary China and do everything in our power to facilitate the acquisition of arms by the Soviet republic.

**Does Defense of the USSR Mean Reconciliation with Centrism?**

To illustrate wherein the viewpoint of the Leninbund differs from the viewpoint of the Russian Opposition, Urbahns makes
two revelations: 1) If, in case of war between the Soviet republic and China, an imperialist state intervenes in the war on Russia’s side, then the communists of this bourgeois state should not make civil peace with their bourgeoisie, in accordance with Bukharin’s teachings, but must orient themselves toward the overthrow of their bourgeoisie; 2) In defending the Soviet republic in the war with the Chinese counterrevolution, the Opposition must not reconcile itself with the Stalinist course, but wage a resolute struggle against it. It follows that this supposedly covers the difference between the Leninbund’s position and ours. In reality this is a muddle, and, I am afraid, a deliberate one. These two theses, dragged in by the hair, do not apply to the Sino-Soviet conflict as such, but in general to every war against the Soviet republic. Urbahns dissolves a specific issue in generalities. Neither Louzon nor Paz have up till now denied the duty of the international proletariat to defend the Soviet republic if it is attacked, for example, by the United States and Great Britain over the payment of czarist debts, the abolition of the monopoly of foreign trade, the denationalization of banks and factories, etc. The discussion has arisen over the specific character of the Sino-Soviet conflict. It is precisely on this question that the ultralefts showed their inability to evaluate particular and complex facts from a class standpoint. And it is precisely to them that the Leninbund has thrown open the columns of its publications. It is precisely in connection with their slogan “Hands off China” that Die Fahne refrained from expressing its own views for six weeks and, when it no longer was possible to remain silent, limited itself to halfway, equivocal formulations.

What has Bukharin’s theory to do with all this? What has the question of suspending the struggle with Stalinist centrum to do with all this? Who proposed it? Who spoke of it? What is this all about? Why is this necessary?

This is necessary in order to hint that the Russian Opposition—not the capitulators and the turncoats, but the Russian Opposition—is inclined to make peace with centrum, using the war as a pretext. Since I am writing for uninformed or poorly informed foreign comrades, I consider it necessary to recall, even if very briefly, how the Russian Opposition has posed the question of its attitude toward the Stalinist course under the conditions of war.

At the moment when there was a break in the Anglo-Soviet relations, the Russian Opposition, contemptuously rejecting the
lie of defeatism or of conditional defensism, declared in an official
document that during wartime all the differences of opinion
would become posed more sharply than in peacetime. Such a
declaration made in the land of the revolutionary dictatorship, at
the moment of the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Great
Britain, does not require any commentary; and, at all events, it
offers far more serious guarantees than any little articles written
on the sidelines.

A savage struggle ensued in 1927 over this question. Have
Urbahns and his cothinkers ever heard anything about the “Cle­
menteau thesis”? With this thesis in its hands, the apparatus
convulsed the party for months. The whole point was that as an
example of a patriotic opposition in the camp of the imperialists I
cited the Clemenceau clique, which despite the civil peace pro­
claimed by the bourgeoisie, conducted a struggle from 1914 to
1917 against all the other factions of the bourgeoisie and insured
the victory of French imperialism. I asked: Could there be found a
fool in the camp of the bourgeoisie who would on this account
designate Clemenceau as a defeatist or a conditional defensist?
This is nothing else but the famous “Clemenceau thesis” which
was subjected to criticism in thousands of articles and tens of
thousands of speeches.

The other day my book, La Revolution defiguree, was pub­
lished in Paris. Among other things it contains my speech at the
joint plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control
Commission on August 1, 1927. Here is what I said in this speech
on the question that interests us now:

“The greatest events in the history of mankind are revolution
and war. We have put the centrist policy to the test in the Chinese
revolution. . . . Next to the revolution the greatest historical test
is war. We say beforehand: there will be no room during the
events of war for the Stalinist and Bukharinist policy of zigzags,
sidestepping, and subterfuges—the policy of centrism. This ap­
plies to the entire leadership of the Comintern. Today the only
test put to the leaders of the foreign Communist parties is the
question: Are you ready to vote night and day against “Trotsky­
ism”? But war will confront them with far weightier de­
mands. . . . There will be no room for the intermediate position
of Stalin. That is why, permit me to say this frankly, all this talk
of a handful of Oppositionists, of generals without an army, and
so forth and so on, seems utterly ludicrous to us. The Bolsheviks
have heard all this more than once—both in 1914 and in 1917. We
foresee tomorrow all too clearly, and we are preparing for it. . . . Nor will there be any room for the gradual centrist backsliding with respect to *internal policies* under the conditions of war. All the controversies will congeal, the class contradictions will become aggravated, the issues will be posed point-blank. It will be necessary to give clear and precise answers. . . . The shilly-shallying centrist policy cannot hold its own during wartime. It must turn either to the Right or to the Left, that is, take either the Thermidorean road or the road of the Opposition. *(Commotion in the hall.)*

And it is precisely this speech that I concluded with the words, “For the socialist fatherland? Yes! For the Stalinist course? No!” And when apropos of precisely these words, Urbahns and his friends advise me two years later to think out the question to the end and to comprehend that it is impermissible to become reconciled with centrist in time of war, I can only shrug my shoulders regretfully.

**How Has Discussion Been Conducted?**

It is an ill wind that blows no good. The Sino-Soviet conflict has shown once again that an irreconcilable ideological demarcation is required within the Marxist Opposition not only from the right but also from the left. The philistines will sneer over the fact that we, a tiny minority, are constantly occupied with internal demarcations. But that will not disturb us. Precisely because we are a tiny minority whose entire strength lies in ideological clarity, we must be especially implacable towards dubious friends on the right and on the left. For several months I tried to obtain clarity from the Leninbund leadership by means of private letters. I did not succeed. In the meantime the events themselves posed one of the most important questions point-blank. The differences of opinion came out into the open. The discussion began.

Is that good or bad? The article in *Die Fahne* lectures me on the advantages of discussion and points to the harm caused by the absence of discussion in the Communist International. I have already heard once or twice before these same ideas; I do not recall whether it was from Comrade Urbahns or someone else. But there are discussions and discussions. It would have been far better if the Sino-Soviet conflict had not caught the Leninbund by surprise. There was ample time in the past to prepare for it. The question of Thermidor and of the defense of the USSR is not a
new one. It is fortunate that there was no war. But suppose there had been one? All this is not an argument against discussion but against an incorrect leadership that maintains silence on important questions until they break out into the open against its will. The fact is that the Leninbund, at least in its top circles, proved to be unprepared to answer a question posed by life itself. There was nothing left to do but to open a discussion. But to this very day, I have not found in the publications of the Leninbund any sign of an internal discussion in the organization itself. The editors of *Die Fahne* made a one-sided selection of ultraleft articles from foreign Oppositional publications, making the ridiculous article of a "sympathizing" Korschist the basis of the entire discussion. The editors themselves remained on the sidelines, as if they wanted to find out what would come of it all. Despite the exceptional gravity of the problem, Urbahns wasted week after week, confining himself to reprinting foreign articles directed against the Marxist point of view. Only after the appearance of my article, that is, six weeks after the outbreak of the conflict in the Far East, did the editors of *Die Fahne* find it opportune to express themselves. But even then they were in no hurry. Their brief article was divided into two installments. The political conclusions were put off for still another week. For what purpose? Was it perhaps to make room for Radek's slanders of the Russian Opposition which appeared in the same issue? But what was the line of the Leninbund on the most important question in international politics in the course of these six or seven weeks? No one knows.

This is no good. Such methods weaken the Leninbund and render the best possible service not only to Thaelmann but also to Brandler.

It is clear to those who are acquainted with the history of the Russian Opposition that Urbahns expresses in an ambiguous manner the very opinions that the Stalinists have so maliciously and unconscionably attributed to the Russian Opposition. While dishonestly concealing our documents from the workers, the Stalinists tirelessly repeated and printed in tens of millions of copies that the Russian Opposition considers the October Revolution lost, Thermidor accomplished, and that it steers a course toward bourgeois democracy. It is unquestionable that Stalin's organizational successes were assured in no small measure by the tireless circulation of these lies. How great must be the astonishment, and at times the outright indignation, of Russian Oppositionists
when they find in the publications of the Leninbund, in a semi-masked form, this friendly counsel that they take the path that the Stalinists have long ago foisted upon us.

The question is all the more acute because there happen to be among the ultralefts little gentlemen who whisper in each other's ear that the Russian Opposition itself agrees that Thermidor has been accomplished, but refrains from saying so out of "diplomatic" considerations. How far removed must one be from a revolutionary position to allow even for a moment the existence of such revolting duplicity among revolutionists. We can say one thing: the poison of Zinovievist and Maslowist cynicism has left its traces in the ranks of the ultralefts. The sooner the Opposition rids itself of such elements, the better for it.

The programmatic article we have analyzed, which is seemingly a summary of the "discussion," contains in passing a number of allusions to the effect that Urbahns was correct on various questions and everybody else was wrong (the declaration of the Russian Opposition on October 16, 1926; the question of creating the Leninbund not as a faction but as an independent party, running its own candidates; the question of May Day and August 1, 1929; etc.). In my opinion it would have been better if the article had not raised these questions, because each of them marks a specific mistake of Comrade Urbahns which he has failed to grasp to this very day. And I am not even referring to the utterly false position of 1923-26 when Urbahns, following in the footsteps of Maslow and others, supported the reaction in the Soviet Communist Party and conducted an ultraleft course in Germany. If necessary, I am prepared to return to all these questions and to show that Urbahns's mistakes are interconnected, that they are not accidental but originate in a certain method of thinking which I cannot call Marxist. In practice, Urbahns's politics consists of oscillating between Korsch and Brandler, or of mechanically combining Korsch and Brandler.

The Danger of Sectarianism and National Narrow-Mindedness

In this pamphlet we have analyzed differences of opinion which may be called strategical. Compared to them, the differences over the internal German questions might appear more as differences over tactics, although they, too, are perhaps reducible
to two different lines. But these questions must be analyzed independ­ently.

Nevertheless it is beyond doubt that at the bottom of many of Comrade Urbahns's mistakes is his incorrect attitude toward the official Communist Party. To regard the Communist Party—not its apparatus of functionaries but its proletarian core and the masses that follow it—as a finished, dead and buried organiza­tion is to fall into sectarianism. As a revolutionary faction, the Leninbund could have played a big role. But it cut off its own road to growth by its pretensions, which to say the least are not justified, to play the role of a second party.

Given the ideological vagueness of the Leninbund, its striving to become a "party" as quickly as possible leads it to accept in its ranks elements that have completely broken with Marxism and Bolshevism. In its anxiety to hold on to these elements, the Leninbund leadership consciously refrains from taking a clear position on a whole number of questions, which naturally only confuses and aggravates the situation, driving the disease deeper internally.

There exist today not a few "left" groups and grouplets who keep marking time, safeguarding their independence, accusing one another of not going far enough, priding themselves on not being in one hundred percent agreement with one another, publishing little newspapers from time to time, and finding satisfac­tion in this illusory existence, without any firm ground under their feet, without any distinct point of view, without any perspec­tives. Sensing their own weakness, these groups, or more cor­rectly their leaderships, fear most of all lest they fall under someone's "influence," or lest they have to declare their agree­ment with somebody else. For in that case what would become of that sweet independence whose size is the six and a half square feet required for an editorial office?

There is yet another danger connected with this.

In the Communist International the ideological leadership of the Russian party has long ago been replaced by the domination of the apparatus and the dictatorship of the cashbox. Although the Right Opposition is no less energetic than the Left in protest­ing against the dictatorship of the apparatus, our positions on this question are nevertheless diametrically opposite. By its very nature opportunism is nationalistic, since it rests on the local and temporary needs of the proletariat and not on its historical tasks.
Opportunists find international control intolerable and they reduce their international ties as much as possible to harmless formalities, imitating therein the Second International. The Brandlerites will salute the conferences of the Right Opposition in Czechoslovakia; they will exchange friendly notes with the Lovestone group in the United States; and so on, on the proviso that each group does not hinder the others from conducting an opportunist policy to its own national taste. All this is concealed beneath the cloak of struggle against bureaucratism and the domination of the Russian party.

The Left Opposition can have nothing in common with these subterfuges. International unity is not a decorative facade for us, but the very axis of our theoretical views and our policy. Meanwhile there are not a few ultralefts—and not in Germany alone—who under the flag of the struggle against the bureaucratic domination of the Stalinist apparatus carry on a semiconscious struggle to split up the Communist Opposition into independent national groups and to free them from international control.

The Russian Opposition has no less need of international ties and international control than any other national section. But I am very much afraid that Comrade Urbahns's conduct is not dictated by his desire to intervene actively in Russian affairs—which could only be welcomed—but, on the contrary, by his desire to keep the German Opposition separate and apart from the Russian.

We must watch vigilantly lest under the guise of struggle against bureaucratism there intrench themselves within the Left Opposition tendencies of nationalistic isolationism and ideological separatism, which in turn would lead inescapably to bureaucratic degeneration—only not on an international but national scale.

If the question were asked, after thorough consideration, from which side is the Left Opposition at present menaced by the danger of bureaucratization and ossification, it would become perfectly clear it is not from the side of international relations. The hypertrophied internationalism of the Comintern could arise—on the basis of the former authority of the Russian Communist Party—only thanks to the existence of state power and state finances. These “dangers” do not exist for the Left Opposition. But there are others instead. The fatal policy of the bureaucracy produces unrestrained centrifugal tendencies, and fosters desires to retire into one's own national and therefore sectarian
shell, for by remaining within the national framework the Left Opposition could be nothing but sectarian.

Conclusions

1. It is necessary to adopt a clear position on the question of Thermidor and the class character of the existing Soviet state. The Korschist tendencies must be mercilessly condemned.

2. It is necessary to adopt the position of the most resolute and unconditional defense of the USSR against external dangers, which does not exclude, but, on the contrary, presupposes an irreconcilable struggle against Stalinism in time of war even more than in time of peace.

3. It is necessary to reject and condemn the program of struggle for "the freedom to organize" and all other "freedoms" in the USSR—because this is the program of bourgeois democracy. To this program of bourgeois democracy we must counterpose the slogans and methods of proletarian democracy, whose aim, in the struggle against bureaucratic centrism, is to regenerate and fortify the dictatorship of the proletariat.

4. It is necessary to adopt immediately a clear position on the Chinese question, so that we are not taken by surprise at the next stage. A stand must be taken either in favor of the "democratic dictatorship" or the permanent revolution in China.

5. It must be clearly understood that the Leninbund is a faction and not a party. Hence flows a definite policy toward the [Communist] party (especially during elections).

6. It is necessary to condemn the tendencies toward national separatism. We must energetically take the path of international unification of the Left Opposition on the basis of principled unity.

7. It is necessary to recognize that Die Fahne des Kommunismus in its present form does not correspond to its designation of the theoretical organ of the Communist Left. It is urgent to create in Germany, through the united efforts of the German and internationalist Left, a serious Marxist organ capable of giving correct evaluations of the domestic situation in Germany in connection with the international situation and its tendencies of development.

These few points, which far from cover all the questions, seem to me the most important and the most pressing.
WHERE IS
THE LENINBUND GOING?224

A Reply to the Leninbund Leadership

September 19, 1929

Dear Comrades,

On June 13 and August 24 I addressed letters to you devoted to purely principled problems. In your September 5 response, unfortunately, the principled questions did not receive the proper treatment. At the same time, your letter raises a number of other questions, partly organizational, partly personal, with respect to different aspects of relations between the Russian Opposition and the German. Of course, you are free to raise anew any question of the past. I, for my part, am prepared to answer any question you pose. But I must say, all the same, that your attempt to complicate principled political questions that have enormous importance for the future with organizational and personal questions concerning the past make me fear that such a method could sooner lead to unnecessary exacerbation of relations and to further isolation of the Leninbund leadership from the international Left Opposition than to creation of a common ideological base.

I will try, however, to respond to all your conceptions not only in order to remove the clear factual misunderstandings but in order, by analyzing them, to show the error of the method being applied by the Leninbund leadership when examining disputed questions, as well as principled and private ones.

1. You accuse the Russian Opposition of having supported the Opposition organization in Wedding. The way you see it, the Russian Opposition committed a particular mistake when it did not recognize the Leninbund as the only Opposition organization in Germany. To this I must say the following:

a. The Leninbund leadership explained at the time that our October 16, 1926, declaration was a mistake. We, in fact, believed
and we still believe that the declaration was a correct step which allowed us subsequently to increase our forces in the party several times over.

b. The Leninbund leadership did not see the principled disagreements between us and the Democratic Centralists. I will note in passing that during that period Radek had the very same point of view, demanding that we merge with the Decemists, and so did Preobrazhensky and Smilga. But we believed that deep differences separated us from them. Now you excuse without a word the fact that in the past the Leninbund leadership supported not only the Zinoviev-Kamenev faction against the Opposition in 1923 but also the Democratic Centralism group against the United Opposition as a whole. And, at the present time, you disagree with the Russian Left Opposition on the most important questions and are getting closer to the Decemists. On what basis can you demand that the Russian Opposition, hardly a day after the Leninbund’s existence, should have recognized it as the sole representative of the German Opposition?

c. But to me, more important than all these circumstances is the following consideration. The Russian Opposition does not believe that it is called upon to determine—without factual verification and without extended experience in political collaboration and ideological struggle—which of the given national groupings is the “real” Opposition. The Wedding Opposition seemed to us to be poorly organized and politically indecisive. But we thought that we should give it time. The Leninbund leadership, headed by Maslow, Ruth Fischer, and the others, could not a priori inspire one hundred percent confidence, nor for that matter even seventy-five percent. What was needed here was testing in practice. This was natural if we sought to maintain and develop friendly relations with both organizations, providing time for the course of events and comradely discussion to generate the necessary foundations for unanimity and produce the necessary regroupment.

Of course, Russian Oppositionists who have ended up abroad (not by their own choosing but by Stalin’s) can make and have made one gross mistake or another. I am ready to admit this without dispute. It is necessary also to add here how extremely isolated Moscow is from foreign countries. But, in general, relations between the Russian Opposition and the foreign Opposition organizations are dictated by the principled conceptions mentioned above, which still remain in force even to a significant extent today.
2. In connection with what has been said, let me pose the question of how the Leninbund itself relates to the struggling foreign Opposition groupings.

Concerning the Soviet republic, this was said above: the Leninbund's official line passes between the Bolshevik-Leninists and the Decemists. But how about the Opposition in France where groupings, unfortunately, are very numerous? The Leninbund leadership simply has no position. From time to time it prints articles of the French comrades, selecting chiefly those aimed against the point of view of the Russian Opposition. For the Leninbund leadership it is as if the French Opposition's internal problems do not exist. And what about Austria? Approximately the same thing. I do not demand at all that the Leninbund this very moment officially "recognize" some Opposition groups and reject others. The time for this has not yet come. But one can and ought to demand that the Leninbund leadership genuinely feel part of the international whole and approach the problems of the foreign Opposition from the standpoint of its internal needs and tasks.

3. You state in your letter that in your publications there was not one statement "after 1929" to the effect that the Russian Opposition "does not go far enough" (a reproach that the Decemists made against us hundreds of times). You stipulated 1929, obviously, because on December 21, 1928, in Die Fahne des Kommunismus (number 51) you accused me of being too slow in my assessment of the tempo of deterioration of Soviet power, and at the same time proclaimed that the "optimistic conceptions" in my article "At a New Stage" had already been outstripped by events (ueberholt). In this article, it was precisely Thermidor that was under discussion. Your position notwithstanding, subsequent developments proved the capacity of the proletariat as a whole and of the proletarian nucleus of the party in particular to force the centrist apparatus toward a prolonged left zigzag. My article took into account the very possibility of this improvement while your polemic against me did not foresee it, turned out to be mistaken, and therefore was actually "outstripped by events" a long time ago.

True, you can say that this was written ten days before 1929. But have you really repudiated in 1929 what you wrote in 1928? Even as regards 1929, your statement is totally mistaken. In Volkswille of February 16 there is, under the heading "Workers' Correspondence," a short article especially devoted to counter-
posing the line of Urbahns to the line of Trotsky (and under the heading "As Trotsky Goes, So Goes the Russian Opposition"). Finally, in Volkswille of May 18, 1929, it says that Trotsky's formulas concerning the situation in the Soviet republic (the Thermidor question again) "do not go far enough." How could you yourself forget what you wrote not so very long ago? If I had more time, I could find other such quotations, or, still worse, disguised or half-disguised allusions. Of course, no one can dispute your right to have differences with the Russian Opposition in general or with Trotsky in particular. But this should be done clearly, precisely, and openly, without resorting to tricks and evasiveness. Don't forget that we are talking about fundamental questions of the Opposition's policy.

4. Comrades, is it appropriate to play that game you do in your letter on the theme of whether I did or did not read Volkswille? Yes, on June 5 I wrote you that I was not yet well enough acquainted with Volkswille. This was just at the time when I was becoming acquainted with your publication—not haphazardly, but more substantially, on various questions. On June 13 and August 24 I had, in my letters, already formulated a general evaluation of your line. Is it possible that you think a month is not enough for this, or for that matter only one week? From my present letter you can, in any case, be sure that I have a sounder knowledge of what you wrote in your newspaper in 1929 than the editors themselves.

5. Your attacks on Comrade Frankel were totally uncalled for and represent an attempt to inflict upon Frankel sentiments that in fact you should have aimed at me. Indeed, this would have been franker and better. I never do my writing on the basis of what "the secretaries" tell me, as you describe. I take responsibility for what I write. As regards Comrade Frankel, he independently subjected Volkswille to criticism in connection with May 1. He did this in a personal letter, very calm and comradely in tone. Urbahns attacked him in a totally uncomradely tone. On the basis of this one example it is possible without difficulty to imagine what kind of methods Comrade Urbahns is applying with respect to internal criticism in general.

6. You write that you are prepared to very willingly accept my help in the matter of working out, correcting, and making more precise the Leninbund's position. This matter, of course, involves not only me. I spoke about the need to establish more correct relations with the Russian and international Opposition as a
whole. But in all candor it must be said that my personal experience categorically disproves your very amicable-sounding words. There are so many examples that my only difficulty lies in making a selection.

a. While still in Alma-Ata I wrote (in a very cautious and friendly tone) an article against some of Comrade Urbahns's statements which could not be interpreted in any other way than as an offer to form a bloc with Brandler. Members of the Leninbund did not find out anything about this article at the time. Several months ago, when I was already in Constantinople, Brandler printed my article. Only afterward did it appear in Volkswille. It goes without saying this could have been explained as accidental. But unfortunately the whole series of accidents that have taken place recently show that what is going on is not accidental but systematic.

b. At the time we made it, the Leninbund leadership interpreted our demand for a secret ballot in the party in the spirit of general democratic freedoms. In a short letter, without any sort of polemicizing whatever, I explained the real meaning of our demand. My letter appeared in other Opposition publications but Volkswille did not print it. Only as a result of a long polemical correspondence did my letter appear in the pages of Volkswille, many weeks after it was received by the editors.

c. The Leninbund leadership conducted the campaign in connection with my exile in the spirit of sensational news. Comrades in various countries expressed a fully justified bewilderment over this agitational character. No principled conclusions were made from the entire Volkswille campaign. I wrote an article especially for Volkswille (or for Die Fahne des Kommunismus) in which I tried, without being in the least polemical, to introduce what needed to be added to the Leninbund's campaign. My article ("A Lesson in Democracy I Did Not Receive") was printed in almost all the Opposition publications in Europe and America—except in the publications of the Leninbund, for which it was intended since it was precisely Germany that the article was about. To my inquiry about this the editors replied that this question was no longer "topical" in Germany. I could not understand this. From the point of view of sensational politics this explanation could perhaps hold true; but from the point of view of principled propaganda which should be the most important part of all the Leninbund's work, Comrade Urbahns's answer seemed most improbable.
But there is one case that surpasses all the others and is in and of itself sufficient to characterize the methodology of the Leninbund editorial staff. On June 12, I sent Comrade Urbahns an open letter called “Once More on Brandler and Thalheimer.” In this article I for the first time said openly for publication that I was far from agreeing with the Leninbund leadership. I believe that as an active collaborator of the Leninbund’s publications I had the right or rather the duty—with respect to the Russian and the international Opposition—to make note of my differences with the Leninbund leadership. How did the latter respond? To put it purely and simply, it distorted my article. It published that part of the article which was aimed against Brandler but left out the paragraphs that were devoted to criticizing the Leninbund. The editors left out of my article the following paragraph:

“I am not in the least taking up the defense of the policy of Maslow and the others. In 1923 Maslow’s verbal radicalism stemmed from the same passivity as in Brandler’s case. Not understanding the ABC’s of the problem, Maslow tried to ridicule my demand that a date for the uprising be set. At the Fifth Congress he still believed that the revolution was gaining momentum. In other words, on the most fundamental questions he made the same mistakes as Brandler, serving them up with an ultraleftist sauce. But Maslow tried to learn until he fell into the swamp of capitulationism. Other former ultralefts did learn a few things. I am by no means taking responsibility for the Volkswille line as a whole. In it now there are many regurgitations from the past, i.e., a combination of opportunist and ultraleft tendencies. But nevertheless these comrades have learned a great deal and many of them have shown that they are capable of learning more. On the other hand, Brandler and Thalheimer have taken a gigantic step backward, raising their revolutionary blindness into a platform.”

Why did you discard these lines? Perhaps to save space? Or to more clearly show how willingly you accept criticism? If the editors proceed in such a way with my articles, it is not difficult to imagine how they handle critical articles from members of your own organization.

You entitled the article “From Comrade Trotsky’s Letter” in order to, in that seemingly innocent way, conceal the inadmissible operation you had carried out, which I would rather not call by its proper name. You had, dear comrades, the formal right not to print my article at all. You had both the formal and the
political right to speak out against the article in the most categor­
cical of polemics. But you had no right—either political or formal—to distort my attitude toward Opposition groupings in
the eyes of the German workers.

d. You reprinted at the time my criticism of the Comintern program. But even here you selected for your own purposes things that were neutral, circumventing the most crucial problems. Thus you did not quote from the second chapter what was said about the Fifth Congress and about the whole ultraleft zigzag of 1924-25 that caused the Comintern disasters of incalculable proportions. If you did not agree with my criticism, you should have openly spoken out against it. But you simply avoided one of the most important problems in the development of the Comintern con­cerning your own past (and not simply the past). With such practices it is impossible to educate revolutionary cadres in the spirit of Marxism.

Likewise, you did not quote what I said in the third chapter about permanent revolution as applied to China. I argued there that the theory of permanent revolution—if you leave aside the polemical episodes of the remote past that no longer have significance—fully concurs with the very essence of Leninism. You have also avoided this question, fundamental for the entire East and that means one of the most important for the Interna­tional.

One never knows what you agree with and what you disagree
with.

e. At the present time Die Fahne des Kommunismus for many weeks allots a full third of its meager space to articles by Radek, Smilga, and Preobrazhensky aimed against the Russian Opposi­tion and against me in particular. These articles were sent abroad for informational purposes. If Comrade Urbahns were capable of the most elementary sense of solidarity with the Russian Opposi­tion, he would first of all send me these articles (especially since they were intended for me). This would have made it possible for me to provide a timely response to the new arguments of the capitulators. Comrade Urbahns has acted otherwise. He prints the articles of the capitulators aimed against the Russian Opposi­tion, provoking general perplexity among the readers who are not committed to Comrade Urbahns's special teams and combina­tions. Why, in fact, are these articles, the place for which is the organs of Thalheimer and Brandler, being printed from week to week in the Leninbund’s organs? The sole conceivable political
explanation is the following: the editors are trying with the hands of Radek and Company to undermine the leadership of the Russian Opposition, without in the process bearing direct responsibility.

f. This, however, does not exhaust the matter. I will not dwell on the bartering of essential points. But I cannot overlook the Trotsky Aid question. Since the time of my arrival in Constantinople, the problem of this organization has become a subject of concern to me. I wrote Comrade Urbahns a number of letters in which I explained to him that if I experienced material need, then, of course, I would see absolutely nothing wrong with such voluntary collections among the workers on the condition, it goes without saying, of full public knowledge of the collections and strict accountability. But because I required no help, the collected money should either have been returned to those people who had contributed or by common agreement and absolutely openly have been used toward other ends. I offered to send the collected resources to aid arrested and exiled Russian Oppositionists and their families. My letter to this effect was later made public in a number of publications, including Volkswille. Comrade Urbahns answered one of my reminders with a letter in which there could be seen a note of outright indignation. Here is what he wrote to me on May 2: "What kind of factual charges or suspicions about Trotsky Aid and its collections were brought to your notice? Where do these charges and suspicions come from? I think it is absolutely necessary that these questions be clarified. . . . I share your opinion that the confidence of the workers, which has often been betrayed, makes it impermissible for any questions whatever to remain unclear. . . ."

These words reassured me. But, alas, only for a short time. No account of the collected and distributed funds was ever published, despite all the subsequent requests. It goes without saying there could be no question of personal abuses. But how does one refute the assertion that the money was spent to meet the Leninbund's needs?

7. One could argue that the question of a fund, however important it is in and of itself, does not have a direct relationship to the differences being considered. But such an argument would be superficial. Our concern this time is not only the Leninbund's principled line, to which I devoted my first letter, but also the organizational methods of the Leninbund leadership. It is not difficult to show that the one is closely linked with the other. The
precepts of Marxism assume first and foremost a correct attitude toward the masses and toward the class. Hence emerges the demand for revolutionary loyalty. We know no ethical norms that stand above society and above classes. But we know very well the requirements for revolutionary morality that flow from the needs of the struggle of the proletariat. The greatest bane of Stalinism is that it is buying its successes at the expense of the internal bonds of the proletarian vanguard and by so doing is preparing catastrophes in which something more than the Stalinist bureaucracy can perish.

But political disloyalty is not a feature of the Stalinist apparatus alone. A sectarian attitude toward the masses also contains the desire to outwit the class and outwit history with the aid of adroit routes and machinations that are always linked with violation of the requirements of revolutionary loyalty. Political leaders who are preparing for a prolonged struggle for the conquest of the proletarian vanguard would never allow themselves such negligence on a question so acutely affecting the confidence of the masses.

For me, the incident with the fund, like for example the incident with the distortion of my article, represent to an equal degree a manifestation of the wrong attitude toward the worker, the reader, and the masses.

I repeat: Stalin does not have a monopoly on disloyalty. Zinoviev, who in his own way established a whole school, worked right alongside him. Maslow and Fischer were undoubtedly the most outstanding representatives of this school. Its characteristic feature is moral cynicism, not stopping short of falsification, misrepresentation of quotations, and slander as methods of struggle for influence over the masses. The bureaucracy of the Comintern has been profoundly corrupted by such methods. The Opposition must carry on an irreconcilable struggle against them—above all in our own midst.

By this I do not at all wish to say that the people who have gone through Zinoviev's school are thereby forever condemned. Of course this is not so. One can pass over from a sectarian and adventurist (or semisectarian and semiadventuristic) track to a Marxist and proletarian track. The matter is ultimately decided by correctness of line, correctness of perspectives, and correctness of revolutionary methods. Abstract moral propaganda, isolated from politics, is simply absurd—not to say stupid. But one can and must demand that the methods and procedures be in keeping with the ends. And this we do demand.
8. The question of the fund has not only the principled importance indicated above but also practical importance. Never in the entire history of revolutionary struggle (if one does not count China) have revolutionaries been placed in such grave conditions as those in which the Oppositionists in the Soviet republic find themselves. The extent of their day-to-day isolation and their material need defies description. Nothing like this happened or could have happened under czarism. This is also one reason, and by no means the least important, for the capitulationist epidemic.

One of the necessary means for struggling against the Stalinist bureaucracy right now is material support for the persecuted Oppositionists. This is the direct responsibility of the international Opposition. In the meantime, the Trotsky Aid episode totally closed this route to us. We no longer have the opportunity to appeal to the workers, whose confidence in this matter has already been abused. Can there be any thought of tolerating such a situation any longer?

9. Your letter portrays the matter as if you wanted my cooperation but I refused to give it. It has already been shown above that the contrary is true. The circumstances that directly gave rise to your recent answer, in particular, serve as clear evidence of this. On the questions it takes up I have written you more than once. On June 13 I insisted on the soonest possible meeting. You responded with agreement. But at the same time—as in a number of other cases—your promise did not at all mean that you actually intended to undertake steps for its fulfillment. You plainly and simply remained silent. You did not respond to the questions in my letter. Almost three months passed and only after I sent around a copy of my August 24 letter to you to other groups in the international Opposition did you answer with the letter that I am analyzing here.

10. To your principled polemic on Thermidor and the nature of the Soviet state, which you have turned over to the press, I am responding with a pamphlet that should be published in the immediate future in several languages. The problems are not such that can be reconciled with reservations. The entire international Opposition must examine, discuss, think out, and debate these questions with all the necessary latitude. Every Opposition cell, having at hand all the necessary documents and material, must directly take part in this discussion. Such is the elementary requirement which you, I hope, will not have any principled disagreement with and which (and this is more important) you will not oppose in practice.
11. I will make here only a few additional remarks on programmatic questions.

My pamphlet was written before I received your last letter and before the appearance of the recent theoretical article in Die Fahne des Kommunismus. Both the article and the letter serve more than anything else as evidence that the tone I took in the pamphlet was too “conciliatory.” After taking a half-step backward, the editors took up a theoretical “extension” of the question and an open distortion of the Marxist theory of the state, which Lenin had defended from distortion. You would make it seem as though the Russian state under Kerensky was not a bourgeois state, but bourgeois-imperialist, and that the Soviet republic under Stalin is not a proletarian and not a bourgeois state. All of this is appalling from beginning to end, and I ask myself in alarm: Where is this line going to take you if you persist with it in the future?

12. In proposing to the Russian Opposition a program of democratic freedoms toward the end of converting the Russian Opposition into an independent political party, you add: “This demand has nothing in common with the demand for a second revolution.” These striking words that you repeat twice attest that you do not want to make ends meet. If you consider the Soviet Communist Party hopeless, if you renounce winning over its proletarian nucleus (and to win them over means to win the party), if you set up in opposition to the Soviet CP a second party under calls for democracy, this means opening a struggle for power not only apart from the party but against it. What other way can one fight for power than through a second revolution? Or do you think that there can be an independent party that is not fighting for power in the state? What does all this mean? What purpose does it have? It has none, comrades. You did not think the problem all the way through. This is precisely why you have such a passion for reservations and equivocations.

13. Your letter unexpectedly states as if in passing that you consider the analogy with Thermidor to be “unfortunate.” I admit that it is difficult for me to even understand such an ignorant attitude toward foreign ideas and toward our own. The Russian Opposition has been using the Thermidor analogy for as long as five years. The Bukharin school argued the “inadmissibility” of this analogy. We in reply explained that to reject historical analogies would mean to reject the use of historical experience in general. In a number of documents we defined with absolute
clarity and precision what the real content of the analogy was for us. The idea of a Soviet Thermidor has come to be used internationally. You yourself have used it dozens of times, although incorrectly. Now, when you have driven yourself into an ideological blind alley, you unexpectedly state that the analogy itself is “unfortunate.” Can one go further down the road of muddleheadedness?

I should add still further that Radek, who spoke and wrote hundreds of times about Thermidor in 1926-27, in 1928 unexpectedly felt doubts about this analogy. I responded to him in a special document where I explained once more the Marxist meaning of the analogy with Thermidor. You have this document. You have even promised to publish it; you made a statement to this effect in Volkswille. You sent me the issue of Volkswille containing this announcement, having underlined it with a blue pencil. Nevertheless, although you have my document against Radek, it has not appeared. However, Radek’s very extensive document against me has appeared.

On the essence of the question of Thermidor, i.e., whether the analogy with Thermidor is fortunate or unfortunate, I prefer to speak about this in the press.

14. In conclusion, I would like to direct your attention to a state of affairs that has decisive significance.

In your publications you write about the USSR, the Communist International, and the German Communist Party as if all this was totally foreign to your concerns. You start from the fact that the Soviet republic has been irretrievably destroyed, that the Comintern and with it the German Communist Party have perished, that all the other Opposition organizations are not going far enough, and that you alone must build everything up anew. You do not always express this; sometimes, especially under the influence of criticism, you specify the opposite. But such precisely is the basis of your attitude. It is a sectarian basis. It can destroy the Leninbund.

No one can say beforehand what kind of organizational forms the subsequent development of the Comintern and its different parties will take, what kind of splits, blocs, etc. there will be, i.e., by what kind of concrete routes the proletarian nuclei of the Communist parties will free themselves from the centrist bureaucracy and establish for themselves the correct line, a healthy regime, and the proper leadership. But one thing is clear: for the Leninbund to turn its back on the Communist Party is even more
dangerous than for the Communist Party to turn its back on the trade unions. To think that you can simply push aside the Communist Party, counterposing yourself to it as an alternative, and so forth—this, for the foreseeable future, is the purest utopianism. In the first place, it is necessary to make efforts so that the proletarian nucleus of the party, in particular the young workers who as a result of Thaelmann’s criminal and adventuristic calls went out into the street on May 1, built barricades, and faced death—it is necessary that these proletarian elements trust you, want to listen to you, and understand what you want. And for this, it is necessary that they in fact be convinced that you are not foreign to them. Your entire tone must be different. The struggle against centrism and adventurism must not be softened one iota. There must be complete irreconcilability. But with respect to the party masses and the millions of workers who follow the party, it is quite another matter. It is necessary to find the right course.

When the police crushed Die Rote Fahne, it was necessary without concealing disagreements to speak out in its defense with unbounded energy, not stopping for fear of the closing of Volkswille, but consciously confronting this danger. Instead, the editors of Volkswille printed a statement in the spirit that, because Die Rote Fahne was closed by the police, Volkswille, thank god, was now the only communist newspaper. I cannot call this conduct anything other than scandalous. It is evidence of the wrong attitude toward the party and complete absence of revolutionary feeling.

15. Your call to defend the USSR has absolutely the same character. You do not realize the international significance of the problem. Your calls are forced and labored. They are calculated not to raise the workers to defense of the USSR but to keep from overly offending the “sympathizing” Korschists.

16. In Belgium or America where the official Communist Party is very weak, and the Opposition relatively strong, the Opposition organizations can function with a policy totally independent of the official party, i.e., they can appeal to the masses over the party’s head insofar as this is in general practicable. In Germany, it is quite another matter, and to a significant degree in France as well. In these countries there is quite another relationship of forces. The Opposition numbers in the hundreds or thousands, the official parties number in the hundreds of thousands. It is necessary to form our policy with this in mind.
You think that the Russian Opposition needs “democratic” slogans in order to more quickly convert itself into a party. But I think, on the contrary, that you need to take off this overly weighty armor of a party and return to the status of a faction. Volkswille in its present form has no future. It is three-fourths full of material for a daily newspaper which, however, it does not replace. What you need above all is a good, seriously produced weekly that is capable of effectively educating a Marxist revolutionary cadre. The problem of a daily newspaper can arise only at the next stage.

Some conclusions:
1. Do I regard the conduct of the Leninbund leadership as a split? No. But I see in this conduct the danger of a split. It seems to me, moreover, that some comrades in the Leninbund leadership are consciously carrying out a course toward a split.
2. I not only do not intend to help them, but, on the contrary, I believe it is necessary by all means available to avert a split which would deal a serious blow to the international Opposition, and for the Leninbund would mean the perspective of a national and sectarian degeneration.
3. In what ways can this danger be opposed? By a public and extensive debate and honest discussion. Without haste. Without seeking to outwit one another.
4. It is necessary to openly recognize that even within the Leninbund leadership there is a minority that on disputed questions has the same point of view as the Russian Opposition and not of Comrade Urbahns and his cothinkers. This minority must have the opportunity to speak its views on the questions under dispute in the pages of Die Fahne des Kommunismus.
5. In the discussion of the problems, the international Opposition must take part. The Leninbund publications must honestly bring the international Opposition’s voice to the attention of its organization.

Only discussion, equipped with such minimal guarantees of party democracy, can avert the danger of a split in the Leninbund or of the Leninbund splitting with the most important groupings in the international Opposition.

I, for my part, am ready by every available means to promote the peaceful and amicable overcoming of the differences.

My present letter is pursuing precisely this aim and none other.

L. Trotsky
A LETTER TO THE
ITALIAN LEFT COMMUNISTS

Followers of Comrade Amadeo Bordiga

September 25, 1929

Dear Comrades,

I have become acquainted with the pamphlet “Platform of the Left,” which you issued back in 1926 but which has only just now reached me. Similarly, I have read the letter you addressed to me in issue number 20 of Prometeo and some of the leading articles in your paper, which enabled me to renew, after a long interruption, my fairly good knowledge of the Italian language. These documents along with my acquaintance with the articles and speeches of Comrade Bordiga, not to mention my personal acquaintance with him, permit me to judge to a certain extent your basic views as well as the degree of agreement there is between us. Although the answer to this last question depends decisively not only upon principled theses but also upon their political application to current events (we were sharply reminded of this by the Sino-Soviet conflict), nevertheless I am of the opinion that at least our agreement on the basic questions is quite far-reaching. If I do not now express myself more categorically it is only because I want to leave to time and events the verification of our ideological closeness and mutual understanding. I hope that they prove to be complete and firm.

The “Platform of the Left” (1926) produced a great impression on me. I think that it is one of the best documents published by the international Opposition and it preserves its significance in many things to this very day.

Extremely important, especially for France, is the circumstance that the platform poses the question of the nature of the party, its basic principles of strategy and tactics, as the cornerstone of the revolutionary policy of the proletariat. In recent years we have
seen that, for a number of leading revolutionists in France, opposition has served only as a stage on the road of retreat from Marxism—a retreat to reformism, trade unionism, or simply to skepticism.

You are, of course, acquainted with the pamphlet of Loriot, who has revealed complete misunderstanding of the nature of the party and its historic function in relation to the class, and who has slid down to the theory of trade-union passivity, which has nothing in common with the ideas of the proletarian revolution. Loriot's pamphlet, which represents direct ideological reaction in the camp of the labor movement, is, unfortunately, still being propagated by the Revolution prolétaire group. The decline in the ideological level of the revolutionary movement in the last five or six years has not passed without leaving its mark on Monatte's group. After drawing close to Marxism and Bolshevism in 1917-23, this group has in recent years taken several steps back, to the side of syndicalism. But this is no longer the militant syndicalism of the early part of the current century, which represented a serious step forward in the French labor movement. No, this is a rather dilatory, passive, and negative syndicalism, which falls more and more frequently into pure trade unionism. And this is hardly surprising. Everything that was progressive in prewar syndicalism merged with communism. A retreat from revolutionary communism nowadays leads invariably to trade unionism. Monatte's chief trouble is an incorrect attitude to the party and bound up with it a fetishism of trade unionism which is approached as a thing in itself, independently of its guiding ideas. Yet if both of the French labor confederations were to unite today and if they were to encompass on the morrow the entire working class of France, this would not for a moment remove the question of the guiding ideas of the syndicalist struggle and its methods, and of the connection between the partial tasks and the general, that is, the question of the party.

The Syndicalist League, led by Monatte, is itself an embryonic party, selecting its members not on trade-union but ideological grounds, on the basis of a certain platform, and seeking to influence the trade unions from the outside, or, if you prefer, to “subject” them to its ideological influence. But the Syndicalist League is a party which is neither carried through to the end nor fully shaped, which has no clear theory and program, which has not become conscious of itself, which masks its nature and thereby deprives itself of the opportunity of development.
Souvarine, in the struggle with the bureaucratism and the disloyalty of the official Comintern apparatus, has also arrived, although by a different route, at a denial of political activity and of the party itself. Proclaiming the International and its French section dead, he considers it at the same time unnecessary for the Opposition to exist, since, according to him, the necessary political conditions are lacking for it. In other words, he denies the need for the existence of the party—at all times and under all conditions, as the expression of the revolutionary interests of the proletariat.

That is why I attach such importance to our solidarity on the question of the party, its historical role, the continuity of its activity, its obligation to struggle for influence over any and all forms of the labor movement. On this question, for a Bolshevik, i.e., a revolutionary Marxist who has passed through Lenin's school, there cannot be any concessions.

On a number of other questions the 1926 platform gives excellent formulations, which preserve their meaning to this very day. Thus the platform asserts with complete clarity that the so-called independent peasant parties "invariably fall under the influence of the counterrevolution" (page 36). It is possible to say boldly that in the present epoch there is not and there cannot be any exception to this rule. In those cases where the peasantry does not follow the proletariat, it follows the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Despite the experience of Russia and China, this was not understood by Radek, Smilga, and Preobrazhensky, and they stubbed their toes precisely on this question. Your platform criticizes Radek for "obvious concessions to German nationalists." Now, it is necessary to add to this: absolutely unjustifiable concessions to the Chinese nationalists, the idealization of Sun-Yat-senism, and the justification of the entry of the Communist Party into a bourgeois party. Your platform points out quite correctly (page 37), precisely in connection with the struggle of the oppressed peoples, the need of the complete independence of the Communist parties. Violation of this basic rule leads to the most ruinous consequences, as we have seen in the criminal experience of the subordination of the Chinese Communist Party to the Kuomintang.

The ruinous policy of the Anglo-Russian Committee, which naturally enjoyed the complete support of the present leadership of the Italian Communist Party, grew out of the desire to hastily
shift from the tiny British Communist Party over to the huge trade unions. Zinoviev openly formulated this idea at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern. Stalin, Bukharin, and Tomsky nursed the same illusion. This is what comes of playing with the idea of the party! Such play never passes unpunished.

In the Soviet republic we see another form of the weakening and falling apart of the Communist Party: in order to deprive it of independence and activity it is being artificially dissolved into the masses, terrorized by the state apparatus. That is why the Opposition, selecting and educating new revolutionary cadres, is blood of the blood of the Bolshevik Party, while Stalin's faction, which speaks formally in the name of a million and a half party members and two million YCLers is in reality undermining and destroying the party.

I note with pleasure that on the basis of your letter in Prometeo there is complete agreement between you and the Russian Opposition on the question of defining the class character of the Soviet state. On this question the ultralefts, including the Italians (see l'Ouvrier Communiste, number 1) especially strikingly disclose their break with the foundations of Marxism. In order to decide the question of the class character of a social regime, they limit themselves to the question of the political superstructure, reducing this latter question, in turn, to the degree of bureaucratism prevailing in administration and so on. The question of the ownership of the means of production does not exist for them. In democratic America as in fascist Italy, men are jailed, shot, or electrocuted for preparing for the expropriation of factories, mills, and mines from the capitalists. In the Soviet republic, even to this day—under the Stalinist bureaucracy!—they shoot engineers who are seeking to prepare the return of factories, mills, and mines to their former owners. How is it possible not to see this basic difference, which determines the class character of a social order? I will not however dwell any longer on this question to which I have devoted my latest pamphlet ("Defense of the Soviet Republic and the Opposition") which is aimed at certain French and German ultralefts who, to be sure, do not go as far as your Italian sectarians, but who precisely for this reason can prove all the more dangerous.

In connection with Thermidor you make the reservation to the effect that it is incorrect to draw an analogy between the Russian Revolution and the Great French Revolution. I believe that this
remark is based on a misunderstanding. To judge the correctness or erroneousness of a historical analogy it is necessary to clearly define its content and its limits. Not to resort to analogies with the revolutions of the past epochs would mean simply to reject the historical experience of mankind. The present day is always different from the day that has passed. Yet it is impossible to learn from yesterday in any other way except by the method of analogy.

Engels’s remarkable pamphlet on the peasant wars is wholly constructed on an analogy between the Reformation of the sixteenth century and the revolution of 1848. To hammer out the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat Marx heated his iron in the fires of 1793. In 1903 Lenin defined the revolutionary social democrat as a Jacobin, tied up with the mass labor movement. At this time I raised against Lenin academic objections to the effect that Jacobinism and scientific socialism rest on different classes and employ different methods. In itself this was of course correct. But Lenin did not at all identify the Parisian plebeians with the modern proletariat or Rousseau’s theory with the theory of Marx. He bracketed together only the common traits of the two revolutions: the most oppressed popular masses who have nothing to lose but their chains; the most revolutionary organizations, which lean upon them and which in the struggle against the forces of the old society institute the revolutionary dictatorship. Was this analogy consistent? Completely so. It proved very fruitful historically. Within the same limits the analogy with Thermidor is likewise legitimate and fruitful.

What was the distinguishing trait of French Thermidor? This, that it was the first stage of the triumphant counterrevolution. After Thermidor the Jacobins were able (if they could do it at all) to regain power only by means of an armed uprising. In this way the stage of Thermidor was in a certain sense decisive in character. But the counterrevolution was not yet completed, that is, the masters of the situation did not yet assume power. For this another stage was necessary: 18th of Brumaire. Finally, the most complete victory of the counterrevolution, with the restoration of the monarchy, indemnification of the feudal proprietors, and so on, was assured by the aid of foreign intervention and the victory over Napoleon.

In Hungary the counterrevolution, after a brief Soviet period, triumphed at a single stroke and completely by force of arms. Is such a danger excluded for the USSR? Of course not. But such.
an open counterrevolution would be recognized by everybody. It does not require any commentary. When we speak of Thermidor, we have in mind the creeping counterrevolution which is being prepared in a masked way and which is being accomplished in several stages. Its first stage, which we conditionally call Thermidor, would signify the passage of power into the hands of new “Soviet” proprietors, backed by a faction of the ruling party as was the case with the Jacobins. The power of the new proprietors, predominantly petty ones, could not last long. Either the revolution would return, under favorable international conditions, with the dictatorship of the proletariat, which would inescapably require the application of revolutionary force; or the counterrevolution would be crowned with the victory of the big bourgeoisie, of finance capital, perhaps even with a monarchy, which would require a supplementary overturn, or maybe even two overturns.

Such is the content of my comparison with Thermidor. Naturally, if the legitimate limits of the analogy are transgressed, if one orients along the purely superficial mechanics of events, the dramatic episodes, the fate of individual figures, then one can without difficulty confuse himself and others. But if we take the mechanics of class relations, then the analogy becomes no less instructive than for example the comparison made by Engels between the German Reformation and the revolution of 1848.

The other day I read the above-mentioned first issue of l’Ouvrier Communiste, published apparently by a group of Italian ultralefts who split from your organization. If there were no other indications, this single issue would be sufficient proof that we live in the epoch of ideological decay and confusion which always sets in after major revolutionary defeats. The group that publishes this periodical seems to have set as its goal to compile all the mistakes of outlived syndicalism, adventurism, left phrase-mongering, sectarianism, theoretical confusion, and invest all this with a sort of sophomoric carelessness and rowdy quarrelsomeness. Two columns of this publication suffice to explain why this group had to break with your organization which is Marxist, although this group seeks amusingly enough to hide behind Marx and Engels.

As regards the official leaders of the Italian party, I had an opportunity to observe them only in the ECCI in the person of Ercoli. A man with a rather flexible mind and a loosely hinged tongue, Ercoli is in the best possible way adapted to deliver the
prosecutor's or defense attorney's speeches on a given theme, and in general to carry out instructions.

The barren casuistry of his speeches is always directed in the last analysis to the defense of opportunism, representing the diametric opposite to the living, muscular, and full-blooded revolutionary thought of Amadeo Bordiga. Wasn't it Ercoli, by the way, who tried to adapt to Italy the idea of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" in the form of a slogan for an Italian Republican Assembly, resting on "workers' and peasants' committees"?

On the questions of the USSR, the Chinese revolution, the general strike in England, the overturn in Poland, or the struggle against Italian fascism, Ercoli, like the other leaders of the bureaucratic formation, invariably held an opportunist position, in order later, when the occasion offered, to correct it by means of ultraleft adventures. At present, apparently, the season has again come for the latter.

Having on the one flank centrists of the Ercoli type and on the other ultraleft confusionists, you comrades are thus called upon to defend, under the harshest conditions of fascist dictatorship, the historical interests of the Italian and international proletariat. I wish you success with all my heart.

Yours,
Leon Trotsky
Dear Comrades,

I received your August 22 declaration in Constantinople on September 22.

Although I took no part in drawing up your declaration and consequently can have no responsibility for all its formulations, I append my signature to it since fundamentally it is along the political line of the Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition).

We have always sought to provide for the mass of the party members the possibility of verifying and overcoming the deep differences which had arisen and developed since 1923 inside the framework of a united party. We thought that given sufficiently flexible democracy and a sense of revolutionary responsibility in the leading elements of all currents in the party, it would be possible to provide factual verification and correction of the party’s political line without the shocks which increasingly undermine the dictatorship of the proletariat. Because of these considerations, we dictated the declarations of October 1926, July 1927, at the time of the Fifteenth Party Congress, and finally at the time of the Sixth Comintern Congress. Each of these declarations confirmed our unshakable fidelity to the theoretical and political ideas which constitute the platform of the Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition), and, at the same time, showed our total readiness to subordinate our struggle for these ideas to the norms of the statutes and to the discipline of a party guided by proletarian democracy.

As is said above, we made these declarations at a time when the centrist and right currents in our party still constituted an indivisible bloc which declared that the platform of the Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition) was an antiparty document.
There is no need to show here that all the main arguments formulated by the official leadership against our platform, if they are taken as a whole, constitute the platform of the present right wing. Nor will I stop here to say to what extent the party regime is characterized by the fact that the split in the leadership and its abrupt change of course took place between two congresses of the party and on the morrow of the Comintern Congress, and to what extent this circumstance not only compromised the stability and continuity of the party's policy but is heavy with dangerous consequences. Your declaration says it in terms that are measured but in no way equivocal.

The fact of the turn by the official leadership to the left is patent. Since 1926, we predicted more than once the inevitability of such a turn under the blows of the class struggle which have without any difficulty destroyed the framework of the right-center policy. Likewise, there is no need to show here the incontestable fact that, if the struggle against our platform has been conducted with the arguments of the present Right group, the official struggle against the latter is conducted with arguments borrowed completely from our platform. To renounce it in these conditions would mean not only giving evidence of deliberate dishonesty with respect to the ideological obligations imposed on us by Marxist theory and Lenin's revolutionary school, but it would in addition be throwing more confusion into the mind of the party which is confused and disoriented enough without it.

But it is absolutely clear that if we thought it possible and obligatory for us to maintain our position inside the framework of a united party, in the period when the right-center bloc was indivisible and when the ideas of the Right dominated in fact the whole line, the more so are we able with as much assurance and pertinacity to take upon ourselves the same obligation now, when the problems we posed as political forecasts are openly and imperiously formulated in the very course of the class struggle and have already provoked such considerable regroupments in the party. At the peak of the repression and persecution we declared that our fidelity to Lenin's party and to the October Revolution remained unshakable.

A Marxist would have to refuse to sign your declaration only were he to come to the conclusion that Thermidor is an accomplished fact, the party is a corpse, and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat lies through a new revolution. Although this opinion has been attributed to us dozens of times, we have noth-
ing in common with it. That is why the declaration of August 22 shows itself to be a natural stage on the political road of the Opposition.

Although the formal break between the Right and the center, the shift of the official leadership to the left, and the extensive use of the ideas and slogans of our platform in the struggle against the Right should—arguing purely theoretically—facilitate immensely the reconstitution of the unity of the party on a Leninist foundation, the real circumstances, unfortunately, do not give us any reason for adopting optimistic conclusions for the near future. The fact that many of the slogans, ideas, and formulations of our platform have now officially become party property in no way prevents the authors and defenders of that same platform from being in prison and exile. If the present turn of the leadership had removed the basic disagreements, that would have been just as clear to the leadership as to us. In that case, the repression applied to the Opposition would have been absolutely inexplicable unless it were described quite simply as naked bureaucratic banditry. But we were and we remain far from such an appraisal. The leadership maintains and even reinforces repression because the coincidence of the many extremely important practical measures it has taken in its present policy with the slogans and formulations of our platform in no way removes for it the dissimilarity in the theoretical principles from which the leadership and the Opposition set off in examining the problems of the day. To put it in other words, the leadership, even after having absorbed officially a good number of our tactical deductions, still maintains the strategic principles from which yesterday's right-center tactic emerged. Hence the disquiet and distrust of the two sides about the future.

You think it is possible to undertake to submit to the party's discipline, since there is no doubt that our theoretical criticism will objectively help to liquidate incorrect strategic principles just as it has already helped to liquidate a good number of incorrect tactical conclusions. But that is precisely why the leadership is opposed, with redoubled efforts, to the reintegration of the Opposition into the ranks of the party.

You are absolutely correct to point out that the five-year plan of socialist construction can become a very important stage in the development of the October Revolution. In terms that are measured but not equivocal, you point out the conditions that would be needed for it but which do not exist as yet. Rejecting, further,
the theory of socialism in one country, you say in the same connection that, even if the indispensable internal conditions existed and the five-year plan were realized in fact, the fundamental problem of the October Revolution—*the transformation of bourgeois society into a socialist society*—cannot in any case be fully resolved without a parallel development of the international revolution, and without its victories in the advanced capitalist countries.

That presupposes that the Comintern has followed a correct line. However, it must be said clearly: despite the sharp turn, the leadership of the Comintern today departs no less, probably, from the Leninist line than it did when it oriented itself toward the Kuomintang and the Anglo-Russian Committee. You write correctly that “the leadership of the Comintern has not emerged from the period of ideological fluctuations.” To that must be added that the combination of ultraleft conclusions with Right principles continues to have fatal results for the daily policies of the main sections of the Comintern, as a result of which, under all the noise that is made in articles and speeches about the “third period” and “new upsurge,” there is being produced in fact a further weakening of the Comintern, in its organization and in its policy. This process has not yet stopped, in any country, and therein lies the chief danger which threatens the October Revolution as well as the world working class.

You have published your declaration at a time when the internal and international situation of the Soviet republic is extremely complicated. Great dangers lie ahead. They can, under specific conditions, arise much more quickly than we might expect. For the October Revolution, under the banner of Lenin, the Oppositionists will fight in every case and in all circumstances. That is a duty higher than organizational norms and formal party membership. In your declaration you say only that the interests of the revolution demand that the Opposition have the possibility of carrying out its duty by normal means within the ranks of the party. I associate myself entirely with this aim. I hope with you that independently of the fate to be reserved in practice for our declaration it will “win the sympathy and support of the overwhelming majority of the ranks of the party and of the working class.”

With communist greetings,

L. Trotsky
LETTER TO THE USSR
ACCOMPANYING
THE AUGUST 22 DECLARATION

September 25, 1929

Dear Comrades,

I am sending you the declaration to the Central Committee and Central Control Commission by exiled and arrested Oppositionists. The declaration was drawn up by Comrades Rakovsky, V. Kosior, and M. Okudzhava. By early September, some four hundred Oppositionists, scattered out in some eighty-five different exile colonies and prisons, had subscribed to the statement. Among those who signed, in addition to the three mentioned above, were N. Muralov, B. Mdivani, L. Sosnovsky, Kavtaradze, V. Kasparova, Malyuta, V. Sibiryakov, Yu. Solntsev, M. Lazko, Rafail, and N. Nechaev. I.N. Smirnov has brought out a draft declaration of his own which, we are told, is capitulationist in character.

Since the declaration is rather long and not all Opposition publications will be able to print it in full, I have marked the margins to indicate the most important passages, in case of need.

At the same time I am enclosing a copy of my open letter to comrades who signed the above-mentioned declaration, and I ask that you print this open letter.

It seems to me that things should not be limited simply to publishing the enclosed documents. This is too important a question, and with a correct policy on our part it could play a major role in the development of both the Russian and the international Opposition.

Certainly a number of critical observations could be made concerning the text of the declaration. I have presented some of these, in positive and constructive form, in my open letter. It cannot be forgotten that the document was formulated through correspondence between exiled and imprisoned persons and constitutes, as always in such cases, a compromise among various shades of opinion. There will be dissatisfaction with it both from the left and from the right. But one must know how to single out
the central idea of the document. At a time of severe foreign and
domestic difficulties for the USSR, the Opposition is demanding a
place for itself in the party, so that it may defend the cause of the
international revolution in a way consistent with its own views.
At a time of increasing defections from the Comintern to the
Right Opposition and even to the social democracy directly, the
Communist Left Opposition is demanding a place for itself in the
ranks of the Comintern and first of all in the Soviet Communist
Party.

What is the task of the international Opposition in relation to
this important step taken by the Russian Opposition? To take
advantage of it to expose the lies about the "defeatist, counter-
revolutionary," etc., character of the Opposition, before the eyes
of worker Communists who have been deceived. The declaration
must be used to shake, loosen, and knock over the artificial
barriers that the Comintern leadership has erected between the
members of the official Communist parties and the Left Opposi-
tion.

The declaration is written in a very cautious tone, which is
consistent with its purpose. This purpose is indicated quite
clearly in the last two lines: The signers do not of course hope for
immediate practical results but wish "to win the sympathy and
support of the overwhelming majority of the ranks of the party
and of the working class." What is involved here is the use of a
united-front policy toward the official Communist parties. Some
of those who signed the declaration may still go off to the right,
that is, toward the capitulators, when they receive the Stalinists' 
answer, the nature of which is obvious beforehand. But it is
likewise to be expected that there will be wide discussion in party
cells about the very existence of the declaration, that it will
attract the attention of many revolutionary-minded workers and
increase the Opposition's contacts and influence within the ranks
of the party.

Some ultralefts will perhaps see the declaration as a capitula-
tionist move. But if we gave in to such ultralefts, we would
inevitably turn into a sect. That is why the question of the
declaration, of how to interpret it, and of the agitational cam-
paign we should develop around it in order to break through to
the party rank and file—these questions, it seems to me, can have
no less importance than the Sino-Soviet conflict for the further
evolution of the groupings within the international Opposition.

With greetings,

L. Trotsky
I think it is necessary to provide a special answer to the article of Comrade Van Overstraeten\textsuperscript{234} in \textit{Le Communiste}, number 25, for three reasons: a) the question itself is of decisive importance for defining the Opposition's road; b) the Belgian Opposition occupies a high place in our international ranks; c) Comrade Van Overstraeten rightly occupies a leading place in the Belgian Opposition.

At a time when in Germany as in France or in Czechoslovakia the Left Opposition can and must be only a faction, the Belgian Opposition can become an independent party in direct opposition to the Belgian social democracy. It is the direct duty of the international Opposition to help the Belgian Opposition occupy the place which rightly belongs to it, and, above all, to help it publish its weekly paper.

Hence all the more important for the international Opposition as a whole is the political line of our Belgian friends in every specific question. The mistake by \textit{Contre le Courant} had only symptomatic significance. A mistake by \textit{Le Communiste} can have political significance. That is why I think it necessary to consider separately Comrade Van Overstraeten's position on the Sino-Soviet conflict. I shall do it as briefly as possible, in the form of a few separate points, since I have already developed the main considerations on this question in my pamphlet "Defense of the Soviet Republic and the Opposition."

1. Van Overstraeten writes, "The assertion that Thermidor has been accomplished would be, in our view, a monstrous absurdity. It would lead not only to the worst mistakes. It would be a complete break with any possibility whatsoever of revolutionary activity."

That is a principle important to the highest degree which separates us irreconcilably from the ultralefts. Here there is complete solidarity between Van Overstraeten and us.
But Van Overstraeten is not right in thinking the question of Thermidor has no direct connection with the appraisal of the Sino-Soviet conflict. Comrade Patri (in *La Lutte de classes*) has perfectly correctly exposed the fundamental mistake of Louzon who understands imperialism not in the manner of Marx and Lenin but of—Duehring. From the Marxist point of view, imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism and is conceivable only on a capitalist base. For Louzon, imperialism is a policy of “intervention” and “conquest” *in general*, independent of the regime, of the conditions and aims for which these “interventions” and “conquests” are carried out. That is why the class definition of the Soviet regime is a fundamental postulate in the whole argument. Louzon, who is a formalist, does not see this. But Van Overstraeten is a Marxist. The aid he brings to Louzon on this question is a clear misunderstanding.

2. Comrade Van Overstraeten supports Louzon in another of his mistakes. Concerning my demonstration that keeping the Chinese Eastern Railroad in the hands of the Soviets is important not only for the security of the Russian Revolution but also for the development of the Chinese revolution, Van Overstraeten writes, “R. Louzon says correctly that such a kind of action really places on the USSR the elementary duty of merciless struggle for the liberation of the whole of Manchuria from every kind of reactionary oppression.”

In other words, either the Soviet republic should voluntarily give up the railroad to Manchuria’s worst oppressor or it is obliged at a single blow to liberate Manchuria from every kind of oppression. This alternative corresponds to nothing. If the Soviet republic were strong enough it would clearly be obliged to come to the help of the oppressed masses of Manchuria and of the whole of China, with weapons in hand. But the Soviet republic is not strong enough to do so.

However, this lack of strength does not impose on it the diametrically opposite political obligation to give up the railroad voluntarily to Manchuria’s reactionary oppressor and to the agent of Japan who, it is relevant to recall, is opposed, actually, to the unification of China, even under the rule of Chiang Kai-shek.

3. Van Overstraeten writes, “An offer simply to return the Eastern Railroad would directly show the Chinese masses the entire falsity of the charge of red imperialism brought by Chiang Kai-shek against the Soviet Union.”

Here the return of the railroad to the enemy is considered from the point of view of propaganda and of the best methods for
unmasking Chiang Kai-shek. But if the argument is extended, it follows that by surrendering all its arms to its bourgeois neigh-
bors Soviet Russia would refute better than in any other way the
charge of red militarism. The best way of showing you are not
preparing to attack anyone is to cut your throat.

4. Van Overstraeten formulates my “mistake” in the following
way: “He [Trotsky] substitutes the fictitious defense of the revolu-
tionary interests of the Manchurian proletariat for the real de-
fense of the economic interests of the USSR.”

Here two false ideas are joined. Firstly, I have nowhere consid-
ered the question from the standpoint of the fundamental inter-
est of the Manchurian proletariat. For me, it is a matter of the
interests of the Russian and Chinese revolutions as a whole.
Manchuria is one of the main and most solid bridgeheads of the
Chinese counterrevolution. Even Chiang Kai-shek’s Kuomintang
could not make itself master of the situation in Manchuria—
neither formally nor factually—except by waging war against the
Northerners. In the event of such a war breaking out, the railroad
would be in Chang Tso-lin’s hands, a formidable weapon even
against the bourgeois unification of China. In the event of a new,
i.e., a third Chinese revolution, Manchuria would play the fatal
role that the Don and Kuban played in the Russian Revolution, or
the Vendee in the French Revolution. It goes without saying that
the railroad would also be included in that role.

The second error in the lines quoted is that for some reason it
speaks only of the economic interests of the Soviet republic in the
East, which in reality play a tertiary role. We are dealing with the
situation of the USSR in international encirclement. Imperialism
is probing the resilience of the Soviet republic at different points.
Each “probe” of this kind poses or can pose the question: Is it
worthwhile undertaking a war for the Chinese railroad? Is it
worthwhile for Mongolia? Or for Karelia? Is it for Minsk and
Byelorussia? Or is it for Georgia? Is it worthwhile undertaking a
war over the repayment of American debts? Is it for the resta-
ration to the Americans of their former factories? Is it for the
recognition of the rights of the Russo-Asiatic Bank? And so on.
Only a formalist can make principled distinctions between these
questions. In essence, they are practical variants of one and the
same question: Is it necessary, in the present case, to give battle
or is it more advantageous to withdraw before imperialism’s
attack? Circumstances can dictate retreat (and they did dictate it,
often). But, then, it is necessary to call the abandonment of a
position a compulsory, partial capitulation and not cover oneself
with the principle of "national self-determination," i.e., without making a virtue of necessity, as the Germans say.

5. Van Overstraeten sees my main mistake in the fact that I pose "the question of the defense of the USSR even before giving an answer to the question of the defense of peace."

Here, unfortunately, Van Overstraeten gets completely lost in pacifism. Defense of peace in general does not exist, certainly if we do not count the belated discoveries of Briand on the need to educate children in the spirit of love for neighbors (and for German reparations). For the revolutionary proletariat the Sino-Soviet conflict poses the question not of the defense of peace in general—which peace? on what conditions? in whose interest?—but precisely of the defense of the Soviet republic. This is the main criterion. Only afterwards does the second question arise: How to ensure the defense of the Soviet republic in the present concrete circumstances: by hostilities or by temporary retreat in order to protect oneself against an attack? This question is resolved in approximately the same way as the trade unions resolve the question of whether to make concessions to the capitalists cutting wages or whether to call a strike. If it is headed by revolutionists, the trade union resolves the strike question according to the total situation which determines the relation of forces of the two sides, but in no way according to the principle of preserving "industrial peace." If one approaches the Sino-Soviet conflict with a Marxist criterion, it is impossible not to recognize that the defense of peace in general is as unacceptable as the defense of industrial peace, for in both cases it is a question of class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, on national or international scales.

If Van Overstraeten had simply said, "Better to pull out from the Chinese Eastern Railroad but preserve peace," one could understand the position. Certainly the question would still be open whether this concession would not sharpen the appetites of our (many) enemies and whether it would not aggravate the situation still further. But that is a practical question of simple analysis which has nothing at all to do with the philosophy of Soviet "imperialism." What would then be involved would not be doing one's pseudoduty with regards to Chinese pseudoindependence, but of buying off the enemy. That would mean, not putting the defense of peace above the defense of the Soviet Union, but only considering that in the given conditions the defense of the Soviet Union can be better assured by conceding a part of its property to the class enemy.
After the crushing of the Chinese revolution, given the strengthening of stability in Europe, war is particularly disadvantageous for the Soviet republic. Of that there can be no doubt. But the enemy camp also finds it difficult to decide on war. Chiang Kai-shek can undertake it only with the active intervention of world imperialism. Now, for this last, the attitude of the proletariat, even of individual sections of the proletariat, is of immense importance. He who shouts: give up to the Japanese agent Chang Tso-lin or to the counterrevolutionary Chiang Kai-shek the railroad which belongs to the Soviet republic; he who conceals the meaning of the slogan "Hands off China"; he who, directly or indirectly, supports the charge of red imperialism, thereby modifies the relation of forces to the advantage of Chang Tso-lin, Chiang Kai-shek, and world imperialism, and consequently, in the present circumstances, in practice increases the chances of military conflict.

6. In the first weeks following the seizure of the railroad, the newspaper reports, like the statements of the representatives of the Soviet government, allowed one to think with enough certainty that there would be a peaceful settlement of the conflict. However, its prolonged character not only complicates the situation extremely, but allows one to think that a third force whose role we know only too little as yet is taking a part in the game. Has Soviet diplomacy maneuvered well or badly?—that is the fundamental question. To solve it we do not have at our disposal all the necessary elements. But if it has committed tactical mistakes, which is very likely, it is not in the sense of an imperialist breach of China's national rights, but in the sense of a factual appreciation of the situation. If, as l'Humanite firmly forecasts in an article of September 25, war will break out this fall, the consequence can be regarded as incalculable. We don't know the source of l'Humanite's information. But the Opposition must be firmly prepared for this kind of sharp turn, too.

Van Overstraeten ends his article with two slogans: "For the defense of the Soviet Union!" "Against Stalinism!" The two slogans are completely correct. The Russian Opposition has always posed the question in this way. But that also means precisely that, in the event of war, the Oppositionists will be entirely and without reservation on the side of the Soviet republic. And they must, as of now, before the working masses, implacably set themselves off from all those who, on this cardinal question, adopt an ambiguous position.
Dear Comrade,

Many thanks for your letter. It helped me very much. Above all it reinforced my appraisal of the policy that the present Leninbund leadership is carrying out. It seems to me that on all the most important questions our views coincide with yours.

1. You demonstrate that the Leninbund is getting weaker. Of course, there are objective reasons that lead simultaneously to a weakening of communism in relation to the social democracy and to a strengthening of the right wing within communism. But you are absolutely right when you see as one of the reasons for the weakening of the Leninbund its incorrect policy, particularly with respect to the Communist Party.

2. The Leninbund should feel and function like a faction within German communism and not like an independent party. Putting forth your own candidates in elections is a mistake. Persistent repetition of this mistake will destroy the Leninbund.

3. You enumerate a number of instances when on the basis of the current struggle of the workers you managed to force a local Communist organization to take one step or another, and at the same time brought you closer to the rank and file members of the official party. This is certainly the correct policy. The Communist Left Opposition in Germany must carry out a united-front policy in relation to the official party. Otherwise the Opposition will remain a sect and fall into decay.

4. It goes without saying that the policy of a united front has its dangers, above all the danger of a gradual reconciliation with the ultraleft zigzag or a dissolution into centrism. Thus, the official Communist parties, carrying out a policy of a united front with
the social democracy, more than once moved into the social
democratic camp. But it is impossible to devise a universal recipe
against this danger. What is needed is a correct theoretical posi-
tion, a serious international organization, a democratic regime
within the Opposition, and so on.

5. You write that some of the leaders of the Leninbund argue
the following: Because socialism in one country is impossible and
because the European revolution is not on the agenda, the de-
struction of the October Revolution is inevitable, irrespective of
the policy of the Communist Party in the USSR. It is worth
noting that the Stalinists have for a long time now tried with all
their might to attribute this monstrous argument to the Russian
Opposition, but the Opposition has persistently kicked it onto the
garbage heap. Who has determined in advance the dates for
European revolution? Who has figured out ahead of time how
many years the dictatorship of the proletariat can hold out in the
Soviet republic, given the correct policy? I do not know. It is
enough for me that a correct policy in the Soviet Union can
strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat and prolong its
isolated existence for more than three, five, or ten years. It is
enough for me that a correct policy in the Comintern can bring
the victory of revolution in Europe closer by three, five, or ten
years. And this means that the dictatorship in Russia can survive
until the dictatorship is established in Europe. To ensure this
course is our fundamental task. The person who decides before-
hand that this is impossible is a pathetic blabbermouth, not a
revolutionary.

6. According to your words, these very same theorists say that
the Soviet republic must move into a “third state,” i.e., the “dem-
ocratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.” In
other words, these gentlemen see Thermidor as the only alterna-
tive. Is this really not clear? A “third state,” i.e., one that is
neither imperialist nor proletarian, is a petty-bourgeois state. And
Thermidor, in fact, means the danger of power passing from the
hands of the proletariat into the hands of the petty bourgeoisie.
The latter could, of course, really retain power for only several
months or, more likely, several weeks. This third state would only
be a short bridge to a fascist-imperialist Russia.

7. The “third-state” theorists are hiding Thermidor by naming
it the “democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peas-
antry.” It is difficult to imagine worse political charlatanism.

Lenin advanced the hypothesis of a democratic dictatorship of
the proletariat and the peasantry as the formula for the coming revolution in Russia. This hypothesis had profound historical content. But the course of the revolution's development led not to a democratic dictatorship but to a proletarian dictatorship. Lenin explained why the democratic dictatorship was not realized and why it could not come into existence as an independent regime. After the experience of the February revolution, and especially after October, Lenin refused to devote any attention to the philosophers of a third state, considering them nothing more than petty-bourgeois reactionaries or Thermidoreans.

8. You write that the theorists sermonize on the need for the German Opposition to separate itself from the Russian Opposition, and "not dance to its tune" and so on. This is also very symptomatic, since it shows that some petty-bourgeois theorists are converting the struggle against the bureaucratism, command, and administrative-financial direction of the Comintern into a struggle for the transformation of the German Opposition into a nationally exclusive faction. The Russian Opposition has neither the pretensions nor the means to be in charge of or give orders to the other Opposition sections. The relations between these sections can be defined only by ideological factors. Questions of national policy cannot, however, be approached otherwise than from an internationalist point of view. It is necessary to dance not to a Russian tune but to a Marxist tune. Or is it possible for the Russian Opposition to reject Marxism on the grounds that it is a "German" tune? Along this course, one can go very far astray. I am afraid that some leaders of the Leninbund have already gone much further astray than they imagine.

9. On the question of my work, I can answer briefly that I am now busy with the problem of the "third period." I am devoting a special pamphlet to this question. I hope to demonstrate in it that the fundamentally mistaken theory and practice of the "third period" will inevitably prepare not only new defeats but also conditions for a new turn to the right by the Comintern leadership.

With communist greetings,

L. Trotsky
WHAT NEXT?
THE BOLSHEVIK OPPOSITION
IN THE CPSU

October 1929

Many Oppositionists have rallied, as we know, to the declaration of Rakovsky, Kosior, and Okudzhava. This declaration introduces no change in the fundamental line of the Opposition. On the contrary, the sense of it is a confirmation of this line at a new stage. The declaration rejects the tactic that the Stalinists have so perfidiously and persistently attributed to the Opposition: an armed struggle for power against the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The declaration reiterates that the Opposition remains wholly on the path of internal reform and that, as before, it is prepared to pursue its work within the framework of a single party. This attitude is dictated to it by the unshakable conviction that, under conditions of party democracy, the Opposition by normal methods will win over the proletarian core of the party. But, it will be said, you yourself admit that this is possible only through real party democracy. The complete absence of democracy constitutes the principal characteristic of Stalin’s regime. Under these conditions, doesn’t the declaration become a fiction? No, the declaration is not a fiction but a new public examination of the party regime. In spite of past experience, is this regime today capable or not of correcting, even only partially, the enormous harm it has caused the party and the revolution? Is it capable or not of some initiative in putting an end to the dangers that only a blind man can fail to see? Is it capable or not—after the events of the last years, the zigzags, the severest losses, and the unrelenting decline in authority suffered by the party leadership—is the apparatus of Stalin capable or not of taking a serious step toward Leninist methods of party life and leadership?
The declaration of the Opposition poses this question again on a new plane. The extremely reserved tone of this document, the absence of indications of the pernicious character of the centrist policy from the international point of view, and the remarks on the evolution of the centrists toward the left on various questions—all this was undoubtedly motivated by the desire to make it easier for the apparatus to take the first steps toward a healthier party regime. Furthermore this tone should once again demonstrate to the party that the Opposition puts essence above form and the interests of the revolution above personal, group ambitions. It is ready to occupy the most modest place in the party. But it is willing to occupy it only by remaining what it is, not only by retaining fully its point of view, which in the course of events has received such striking confirmation, but also by defending its right to internal struggle in order that its point of view may become that of the party. This is the significance of the August 22 declaration.

Now we have a reply to this declaration, an unofficial but quite authentic reply, in the form of an article by Yaroslavsky. For us the matter involves enormously important questions, the future of the CPSU and the revolution. Everyone will understand that for this reason we would have preferred to disregard a dishonest article and its impudent author. But Yaroslavsky is now the guardian of the party apparatus. His article is the document of a responsible person. Because of this it is impossible to ignore it.

Yaroslavsky's article characterizes the declaration of the Opposition as an attempt to deceive the party. By this evaluation, as we shall demonstrate, Yaroslavsky not only makes a crushing criticism of Stalin's regime but confirms the tactical correctness of the declaration.

Where and how does the declaration deceive the party? Yaroslavsky gives a policeman's reply to this, not a political reply. He constructs his "accusation" by tearing quotations out of a letter confiscated from a deported Oppositionist, and by pure fraud. The political significance of our declaration simply does not exist for him. Nevertheless its significance is obvious to those who deceive the party and to those who utilize this deception.

When Radek declares in his conversations and private letters that "the platform of the Opposition is brilliantly vindicated" and then officially disavows this platform as being allegedly false, Radek is deliberately deceiving the party. Yaroslavsky is perfectly informed on such matters, for he lives on the confiscation of letters.
tion of Opposition letters. As far as ideological deception of the party is concerned, Yaroslavsky is not only the custodian of the party but also the inspirer of Radek.

When they were part of the Opposition, Zinoviev, Kamenev, etc., related in detail how they, in league with Stalin, Yaroslavsky, etc., had invented the myth of “Trotskyism” in order to conduct a struggle against Trotsky. Now these people abjure Trotskyism at the demand of Yaroslavsky; are they not buying their return to the party at the price of a deception?

When, at the time of the Sixth Congress and afterward in August 1928, Stalin publicly announced that there were no differences in the Central Committee and that rumors of a struggle between the centrists and the right wing were invented by the Trotskyists, Stalin was deceiving the party in order to transform the ideological struggle against the Right Opposition into organizational machinations and to prevent the party from understanding that he quoted only a few scraps and bits from the Opposition platform. The number of these examples could be multiplied without end, for a regime of centrist instability and bureaucratic violence is necessarily a regime of systematic deception of the party.

But where is there deception on the part of the Opposition? It states only what is. It does not disavow its opinions out loud in order to preach them in an undertone. It does not attribute to itself the mistakes committed in fact by the Central Committee. Without sham, without a change in course, without camouflage, it has once again knocked on the door of the party. To the question of the doorkeeper, “Who’s there?” it replies, “The Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition).” To the question, “Do you renounce your opinions?” it replies, “No, we consider them absolutely correct.” “Then what do you want?” “We want,” replies the Opposition, “to fight with the party against the class enemies and to fight in the party for our opinions with the methods of persuasion of a normal party.” Where is there deception? Where is there the shadow of deception? And what can shabby tricks and quotations from a personal letter change in this clear and direct dialogue?

But the candor with which the Opposition demands its readmission into the party does not appear at all accidental to the guardian of the apparatus, who sees in this itself an attempt at deception. Don’t the Oppositionists know—this is Yaroslavsky’s private but quite obvious idea—that he can only let in people who have broken spines and who declare that white is black? By what
right do people who have kept their political spine intact dare to knock on the door and disturb the peace of the doorkeeper? Obviously to deceive the party!

To the proposal of the Opposition to reestablish the *unity of the party on a Leninist basis*, Yaroslavsky slavishly repeats the answer that the social democrats give to the communists when the latter attempt to establish a *united front of struggle against the bourgeoisie*. The leaders of the social democracy, we know, invariably declare that the communists do not really desire a united front, that, on the contrary, they aim to divide the working class, and that they propose a united front only to deceive the masses. In doing this, the social democrats don’t refer to confiscated (and distorted) personal letters, but to the articles and speeches of leading communists. The indignation of the social democrats feeds in this case on the knowledge of their impotence in struggle: the communists know that we cannot and do not want to struggle against the bourgeoisie. Why do they offer us a united front? They are deceiving the masses!!! No, reply the communists, it is you, by pretending to be fighters, who deceive the masses and we are unmasking you before them. If you do not want to be unmasked, prepare to fight!

It is by representing Stalin’s faction as the guardian of the unity of the party that Yaroslavsky deceives the party. Not only the CPSU but all the parties of the International are split into three parts. All the organizers and leaders of the Comintern in the epoch of Lenin have been removed, and, in overwhelming number, expelled from the party. The prestige of world communism continues to decline. He who says the contrary deceives the party. The five-year industrial plan, the statistical draft for economic development—that does not settle the question. The party is the historical and fundamental arm of the proletariat. In its present state, with its present programmatic orientation, with its present regime and leadership, the party cannot succeed in its task.

In the Soviet republic, the facade of the government apparatus, heritage of the October Revolution, conceals the real state of the party. This does not happen in the capitalist countries. International communism is suffering losses all along the line and continues to retreat. And without a properly directed International, no five-year plan will lead to socialism. Under these conditions, the Opposition has made an attempt to reestablish the unity of the party. We never doubted for a minute of course
that this attempt would be rejected. Now it has been. The reply has been given. The necessary clarity, which some still felt was needed, has been established. Many Oppositionists who signed Rakovsky’s declaration will yet break with the fundamental nucleus. Good riddance! This fundamental nucleus has been able, in these last months, to recover completely from the stab in the back by those who capitulated. The effect at the time was inordinately severe because of the isolation of the Oppositionists. The worst moments were in June and July. It was no accident that Yaroslavsky was obliged to quote from a June letter.* The editorial board of the Biulleten is now receiving dozens of letters indicating that the crisis of the Opposition has been overcome. The reply of Yaroslavsky highlights a whole period. The left centrists, who out of necessity were a part of the Opposition up to the split of the Right-centrist bloc, withdrew from it when official centrism turned to the left. That is in the nature of things.

The Leninist Opposition closes ranks again. We must regroup ourselves on a national and on an international scale. Toward the USSR and the CPSU, as toward the International, our line remains as before the line of reform. But we are not ready to fight for these reforms within the limits of legality that Stalin and Yaroslavsky, in their struggle for self-preservation, constantly narrow. We consider it necessary to redouble our efforts to organize the Bolshevik-Leninists as a faction within communism, to publish systematically Biulleten Oppozitsii, to introduce it into the USSR, and to distribute it regularly among the vanguard workers of the Soviet republic. We call upon those who think as we do to resolve to help us in this cause.

*In not subjecting Yaroslavsky’s article per se to criticism, we are not refuting the lies it contains. Yaroslavsky has a very consistent reputation on this score, one going far beyond the bounds of the Opposition. While attributing to Comrade Trotsky a program for civil war and toward this end crudely garbling quotes from his 1928 letters, Yaroslavsky in a careless manner cites from these letters some extraneous material that fully undermines the “charge” he is putting forth. We are brushing all this aside as we did in the case of the patent distortions of Comrade Solntsev’s letter.
We print below extracts from an open letter by Comrade F.N. Dingelstedt about some capitulations. Comrade Dingelstedt is an old member of the Bolshevik Party (he was a member of the Petrograd party in the period of the February revolution). From 1923, he was one of the leaders of the Opposition in Leningrad. On instructions from the Soviet he assumed the duties of director of the Forestry Institute. At the end of 1927, Comrade Dingelstedt was arrested and, after a six-month term in prison, was sent to Siberia, to the town of Kansk from where, presumably, the letter we are printing was sent.

The letter is addressed to Kharin, evidently a representative of those among the capitulators who merit no other name than careerists and double-dealers.

Kharin lived in Paris during 1928, working in the trade delegation, and carrying on Oppositional activity. On May 27 of this year he was still writing to Constantinople: “Yesterday I received from you Biulleten number 1. . . . I am ready to carry out any task if it is necessary.” In the same letter he asked to be given connections, addresses for correspondence, and so on. Not long before this, Kharin suggested going back to Russia to reestablish connections or, as he himself expressed it, in order “to set up—indispensable for us—exchange of material with Russia.” Not one of these letters contained even a shadow of ideological hesitation or doubt. On the contrary, the author adopted a most “irreconcilable” attitude. This did not prevent Kharin from handing over—at almost the same time he wrote the above-mentioned letter—all the material and letters he had (including even the original first issue of our Biulleten) to the authorities. As is completely obvious now, his last letters were dictated with this provocative aim: to get material from the Opposition, hand it over to where it was required, and thus make a little political capital.

Here is no ideologically confused person, empty or backward. No! Here is a miserable self-seeker, changing his standpoint within twenty-four hours for aims which have nothing in common with ideology.
How Can Europe Be United?

Briand senses the need of improving the historical lot of 350 million Europeans who are the bearers of highest civilization but who find it impossible to live through a single century without a dozen wars and revolutions. For the sake of pacifying our planet, MacDonald has crossed the Atlantic. On the agenda are the United States of Europe, disarmament, freedom of trade, peace. Capitalist diplomacy everywhere is cooking up a pacifist stew. Peoples of Europe, peoples of the world get out big spoons to dip into it.

Why all this fuss? After all, aren’t the socialists in power in the most important countries in Europe, or else preparing to assume power? Yes, that is just why! It is already apparent that Briand’s plan and MacDonald’s plan pursue the “pacification” of mankind from diametrically opposite directions. Briand wants to unify Europe as a defensive measure against America. MacDonald wants to earn the gratitude of America by helping her oppress Europe. Two trains are rushing to meet one another in order to save the passengers from—trainwreck.

A frown by the United States sufficed to cancel the Anglo-French naval agreement of July 28. This fact amply demonstrates just what the relationship of forces is in the world today. “Are you by any chance entertaining notions,” America intimated, “that I propose to adjust myself to any negotiations you may conduct on either side of the channel? If you want to discuss seriously, then take the trouble to cross the Atlantic.” And MacDonald promptly reserved a stateroom. This proved to be the most realizable part of the pacifist program.

At Geneva the would-be “uniters” of the European continent felt scarcely more at ease than the bootleggers on the other side of the ocean. They kept their eyes warily cocked on the American police. Briand began and ended his speeches by vowing that the
unification of Europe must in no case and under no circumstances be directed against America. God forbid. In reading these avowals the American politicians must have derived a twofold satisfaction: "Briand is rather scared of us. . . . But he won't put anything over on us, just the same."

While repeating Briand's words with respect to America, Stresemann at the same time launched into a veiled polemic against him. Henderson polemicized against both of them, especially against the French prime minister. By and large the discussion at Geneva fell into the following pattern:

Briand: "In no case against the United States of America."

Stresemann: "Absolutely so. But some people have hidden plans—America can rely only on Germany."

MacDonald: "I take my oath on the Bible that loyalty in friendship is exclusively the endowment of Britons, especially the Scotch."

That is how the "new international atmosphere" was created at Geneva.

The weakness of present-day Europe flows first and foremost from its economic dismemberment. The strength of the United States, on the contrary, is derived from its economic unity. The question is: How to arrange matters so that the unification of Europe is not directed against America, i.e., without changing the relationship of forces to America's disadvantage?

The Daily Herald, MacDonald's semiofficial organ, September 10, 1929, characterized the idea of the United States of Europe as "grotesque" and even as a provocation. Should, however, this fantasy be realized, then the United States of Europe would erect a monstrous tariff wall against the USA, so argued MacDonald's semiofficial organ, and as a result Great Britain would be caught between two continents as in a vise. And the Daily Herald then went on to add: How could one expect aid from America by steering a course toward the unification of Europe? "To act in this way would be insanity or worse." One could not speak more plainly.

No one knows just what the United States of Europe is supposed to signify in practice. Stresemann reduced the whole question to a common monetary unit and—postage stamps. That's a bit thin. Briand proposes to "study" the problem whose content nobody knows.

The basic task of unification must be economic in character, not only in the commercial but also productive sense. It is necessary to have a regime that would eliminate the artificial barriers
between European coal and European iron. It is necessary to enable the system of electrification to expand in consonance with natural and economic conditions, and not in accordance with the frontiers of Versailles. It is necessary to unite Europe's railroads into a single system, and so on and so forth ad infinitum. All this, in its turn, is inconceivable without the destruction of the ancient Chinese system of customs borders within Europe. This would, in its turn, mean a single, all-European customs union—against America.

There can be no doubt whatever that if the internal tariff barriers were swept away, capitalist Europe, after a certain period of crises of regroupment and readjustment, would attain a high level on the basis of the new distribution of productive forces. This is just as incontestable as the fact that, given the necessary economic conditions, large-scale enterprises are decisively superior to small ones. But we have yet to hear of small entrepreneurs voluntarily renouncing their businesses for this reason. To conquer the outlets the big capitalist must first ruin the small one. The situation with states is similar. Tariff barriers are erected precisely because they are profitable and indispensable for one national bourgeoisie to the detriment of another, regardless of the fact that they act to retard the development of economy as a whole.

Following the economic conference convened by the League of Nations in order to restore the reign of free trade in Europe, there has been an uninterrupted increase of tariffs. The British government has just proposed a two-year "tariff vacation," i.e., no increases in tariffs for the next two years. Such is the modest contribution toward the United States of Europe. But even that still remains on paper.

To defend the tariff walls, which have grown uninterruptedly since the war, there stand the national armies which have likewise increased above the prewar level.* This adequately shows

*Before the war Great Britain spent $237 million on its navy; today it spends $270 million annually. The U.S. fleet cost $130 million in 1913. The cost for the current year is $364 million. Finally, Japan's naval expenditures have increased in the same period from $48 million to $127 million, i.e., have almost tripled. It is hardly surprising that the ministers of finance are beginning to suffer from attacks of seasickness. The combined expenditures for militarism (land, sea, air) by the five greatest capitalist powers have grown in the last three years alone from $2,170,000,000 to $2,292,000,000.
how precious its own national tariff wall is to each national bourgeoisie of the thirty European countries. If a big capitalist must ruin a small capitalist, then a strong state must conquer weaker ones in order to batter down their tariff walls.

Comparing present-day Europe with old Germany where dozens of little German fatherlands had their own customs borders, Stresemann tried to find in the economic unification of Germany the precursor of the economic federation of Europe and the world. The analogy is not a bad one. But Stresemann omitted to point out that to achieve its unification—solely on a national basis—Germany had to pass through one revolution (1848) and three wars (1864, 1866, and 1870)—not to mention the wars of the Reformation. Meanwhile to this very day, after the “republican” revolution (1918), German Austria still remains outside Germany. Under the existing conditions it is hard to believe that a few diplomatic luncheons will suffice for the economic unification of all European nations.

**Disarmament a la Americaine**

But after all isn’t the question of the reduction of Europe’s armaments placed on the agenda side by side with the problem of unifying Europe? MacDonald has declared that the road of gradual disarmament is the surest way of guaranteeing peace forevermore. A pacifist may raise this as an objection. Of course, if all the countries disarmed, it would constitute a serious guarantee of peace. But self-disarmament is just as excluded as the voluntary demolition of tariff walls. In Europe today there is only one major country which is seriously disarmed, to wit, Germany. But its disarmament was accomplished, as everybody knows, by crushing it in a war, in which Germany itself had sought to “unite Europe” under its domination.

In general it is not hard to show that the problem of “gradual disarmament,” if examined closely, assumes the aspect of a tragic farce. The question of disarmament has been replaced by the question of reducing armaments. And finally the latter problem has been reduced to establishing naval parity between the United States and Britain. Today this “achievement” is being acclaimed in advance as the greatest guarantee of peace. This amounts to saying that the surest way of suppressing duels is by regulating the size of pistols to be used by the duelists. Common sense would indicate that the situation itself points to just the contrary. If two of the strongest naval powers haggle so furiously
over a few thousand tons, this only goes to show that each of them is simply jockeying, through diplomacy, for the most advantageous position in the coming military conflict.

However, what does the establishment of "parity" between American and British navies signify from the standpoint of the international situation? It signifies the establishment of a colossal disparity between them—in favor of America. And this is of course perfectly understood by all the serious participants in this game, above all by the admiralties of London and Washington. If they keep quiet about it, it is solely out of considerations of diplomatic shyness. We have no reasons for emulating them.

After the experience of the last war there is no one who does not understand that the next war between the world titans will not be brief but protracted. The issue will be determined by the relative productive power of the two camps. This means among other things that the combat fleets of the sea powers will be not only supplemented and renovated but also expanded and newly created in the very course of the war.

We have seen what an exceptional role the German submarines played in the military operations in the third year of the slaughter. We have seen how England and the United States created in the very course of the war powerful armies, better armed and equipped than the old armies on the European continent. This means that soldiers, sailors, ships, guns, tanks, and planes available at the outbreak of war represent only the initial stake. The issue will be decided in dependence upon the extent to which a given country is able, while under fire, to produce ships, guns, soldiers, and sailors. Even the czarist government proved capable of preparing certain reserves for the outbreak of war. But what was beyond its strength was to renew and supplement these reserves under fire. In the event of war with America the one theoretically conceivable condition of success for England is to assure itself, before the outbreak of war, a very great military-technical preponderance which would in some measure compensate for the incomparable technical and economic preponderance of the United States. But the equalization of the two fleets prior to the war means that in the very first months of war America will possess an incontestable preponderance. Not for nothing did the Americans threaten several years ago to turn out cruisers in an emergency like so many pancakes.

In the negotiations between Hoover and MacDonald it is not a question of disarmament or even of limiting naval armaments, but solely that of rationalizing war preparations. Ships are ren-
dered quickly obsolete. Today when the colossal experience of the war and the resulting flood of inventions and discoveries are just being elaborated for military needs, any and all instruments of military technology are rendered obsolete in a far briefer space of time than was the case before the war. This means that the main section of the fleet may prove outdated even before it has been placed in action. Under such conditions, what sense is there in accumulating ships in advance? A rational approach to the problem demands that the fleet be just large enough for the initial period of the war and of sufficient size in peacetime to serve as an adequate laboratory for testing and checking new inventions and discoveries with a view to placing them in standardized mass production in the course of the war. All the great powers are more or less interested in the “regulation” of armaments, especially such costly ones as naval armaments. But inexorably this regulation becomes transformed into the greatest advantage for the economically strongest country.

In recent years the U.S. war and navy departments have applied themselves systematically to prepare the entire American industry for the needs of the next war. Schwab, one of the magnates of maritime-war industry, recently concluded his speech to the War College with the following words: “It must be made clear to you that war in the present period must be compared with a great big industrial enterprise.”

The French imperialist press has naturally done everything in its power to incite America against England. In an article devoted to the question of the naval agreement, Le Temps writes that naval parity by no means signifies the equalization of sea power, inasmuch as America cannot even dream of securing such naval bases as England has acquired in the course of centuries. The superiorities of British naval bases are absolutely uncontestable. But after all, the accord on naval parity, if it is concluded, will not represent America’s last word on the subject. Its slogan is “Freedom of the Seas,” that is, a regime that must first of all place restrictions on Great Britain’s use of its naval bases. No less significant is another slogan of the United States: “The Open Door.” Under this banner America will act to counterpose not only China but also India and Egypt to Great Britain’s naval domination. America will conduct its offensive against British naval bases and points of support not by sea but by land, i.e., through the colonies and dominions of Britain. America will put its war fleet in action when the situation is ripe for it. Of course
all this is the music of the future. But this future is not separated from us by centuries nor even decades. *Le Temps* need not worry. The U.S. will take piecemeal everything that can be taken piecemeal, altering the relationship of forces in all fields—technical, commercial, financial, military—to the disadvantage of its chief rival, without for a moment losing sight of England’s naval bases.

The American press has referred with a contemptuous smile to England’s acclaim of Snowden when the latter gained at the Hague conference, with the aid of terrifying gestures, twenty million dollars to England’s profit, i.e., a sum of money that American tourists perhaps spend on cigars. Is Snowden the victor? asked the *New York Times*. No! The real victor is the Young Plan, i.e., American finance capital. Through the Bank of International Settlements, America is enabled by the Young Plan to keep her hand firmly on the golden pulse of Europe. From the financial shackles on Germany’s feet, there extend solid chains which encumber the hands of France, the feet of Italy, and the neck of Britain. MacDonald, who nowadays fulfills the duties of keeper to the British lion, points with pride to this dog collar, calling it the best instrument of peace. And mind you, to attain such results all America had to do was exhibit her magnanimity by “aiding” Europe to liquidate the war and “agreeing” to naval parity with a weaker Great Britain.

The Imperialist Dictatorship of America

Since 1923 we have had to conduct a struggle to have the leadership of the Communist International deign, finally, to take notice of the United States, and to understand that the Anglo-American antagonism constitutes the fundamental line along which world groupings and world conflicts occur. This was considered a heresy as far back as the Fifth World Congress (middle of 1924). We were accused of “overestimating” the role of America. A special legend was invented to the effect that we had proclaimed an epoch of the disappearance of European capitalist contradictions in the face of the American peril. Osinsky, Larin, and others spoiled not a little paper in order to “dethrone” the might of America. Radek, in the wake of bourgeois journalists, demonstrated that ahead lies an epoch of Anglo-American collaboration. Temporary, conjunctural, episodic forms assumed by the reciprocal relations have been confused with the essence of the world process.
Gradually, however, America came to be "recognized" by the official leadership of the Comintern which began to repeat our formulas of yesterday, without forgetting, naturally, to add each time that the Left Opposition overestimates the role of America. The correct appraisal of America was at that time, as everybody knows, the exclusive prerogative of Pepper and Lovestone.

However, no sooner was the course "to the left" inaugurated, than all reservations were cast aside. Today the official theoreticians are obliged to proclaim that England and America are heading directly to war. In this connection I wrote in February last year to friends exiled in Siberia:

"The antagonism between England and America has finally broken to the surface in a serious form. It seems that now even Stalin and Bukharin are beginning to understand what it is all about. But our newspapers oversimplify the problem by depicting matters as if the antagonism between England and America is being steadily aggravated and must lead directly to war. Undoubtedly several more breaking-points will occur in this process. War would prove too dangerous an enterprise for both sides. They will still make more than one attempt to come to an agreement and to reach a peaceable solution. But on the whole the development is proceeding with giant strides toward a bloody culmination."

The present stage has once again assumed the form of military-naval "collaboration" between America and England, and some French newspapers have even expressed fears of an Anglo-Saxon world dictatorship. The United States of course can and probably will utilize the "collaboration" with England to tighten the reins on Japan and France. But all this will represent phases not toward Anglo-Saxon but toward American domination of the world, including Britain.

In connection with this perspective, the leaders of the Comintern may once again repeat that we are unable to see anything ahead except the triumph of American capitalism. In much the same way, the petty-bourgeois theoreticians of Narodnism used to accuse the pioneer Russian Marxists of failing to see anything ahead except the victory of capitalism. These two accusations are on a par. When we say that America is moving toward world domination, it does not at all mean that this domination will be completely realized, nor, all the less so, that after it is realized to one degree or another it will endure for centuries or even decades. We are discussing a historical tendency which, in actuality, will
be crisscrossed and modified by other historical tendencies. If the capitalist world were able to endure several more decades without revolutionary paroxysms, then these decades would unquestionably witness the uninterrupted growth of American world dictatorship. But the whole point is that this process will inevitably develop its own contradictions which will become coupled with all the other contradictions of the capitalist system. America will force Europe to strive for an ever-increasing rationalization and at the same time will leave Europe an ever-decreasing share of the world market. This will entail a steady aggravation of the difficulties in Europe. The competition among European states for a share of the world market will inevitably become aggravated. At the same time under the pressure of America, the European states will endeavor to coordinate their forces. This is the main source of Briand's program of the United States of Europe. But whatever the various stages of the development may be, one thing is clear: *the constant disruption of the world equilibrium in America's favor will become the main source of crises and revolutionary convulsions in Europe throughout the entire coming period*. Those who hold that European stabilization is assured for decades understand nothing at all of the world situation and will inevitably sink head first in the swamp of reformism.

If this process is approached from across the Atlantic Ocean, i.e., from the standpoint of the fate of the USA, then here too the perspectives opened up resemble least of all a blissful capitalist idyl. The prewar power of the United States grew on the basis of its internal market, i.e., the dynamic equilibrium between industry and agriculture. In this development the war has produced a sharp break. The United States exports capital and manufactured goods in ever-greater volume. The growth of America's world power means that the entire system of American industry and banking—that towering capitalist skyscraper—is resting to an ever-increasing measure on the foundations of *world* economy. But this foundation is mined, and the United States itself continues to add more mines to it day by day. By exporting commodities and capital, by building up its navy, by elbowing England aside, by buying up the key enterprises in Europe, by forcing its way into China, etc., American finance capital is digging with its own hands powder and dynamite cellars beneath its own foundation. Where will the fuse be lit? Whether it will be in Asia, Europe, or Latin America—or what is most likely in various places at one and the same time—that is a second-rate question.
The whole misfortune is that the incumbent leadership of the Comintern is totally incapable of following all the stages of this gigantic process. It shies away from facts by means of platitudes. Even the pacifist agitation in favor of the United States of Europe has taken it by surprise.

**Soviet United States of Europe**

The question of the United States of Europe regarded from the proletarian standpoint was raised by me in September 1914, i.e., at the very beginning of the imperialist war. In the work *The War and the International*, the author of these lines sought to demonstrate that the unification of Europe was irrefutably advanced to the forefront by Europe’s entire economic development, but that the United States of Europe was conceivable only as the political form of the dictatorship of the European proletariat.

In 1923 when the occupation of the Ruhr once again posed acutely the fundamental problems of European economy (primarily coal and iron ore) and coincident with them also the problems of the revolution, we succeeded in having the slogan of the United States of Europe officially adopted by the leadership of the Comintern. But the attitude toward this slogan remained hostile. Not being in a position to reject it, the Comintern leaders regarded it as an abandoned child of “Trotskyism.” After the collapse of the 1923 German revolution, Europe lived the life of stabilization. The basic revolutionary questions disappeared from the agenda. The slogan of the United States of Europe was forgotten. It was not included in the program of the Comintern. Stalin explained this new zigzag with remarkable profundity: Since we cannot tell the order in which the various countries will accomplish their revolutions, it follows that it is impossible to predict whether the United States of Europe will be necessary. In other words, this means that it is easier to make a prognosis after the event than before it. As a matter of fact, it is not at all a question of the order in which revolutions will be accomplished. On this score one can only speculate. But this does not relieve the European workers, nor the International as a whole, from the necessity of giving a clear answer to the question: How can the European economy be snatched from its present state of dispersion and how can the popular masses of Europe be saved from decay and enslavement?

The trouble, however, is that the economic ground for the slogan of the United States of Europe overthrows one of the basic
ideas of the present Comintern program, namely: the idea of building socialism in one country.

The essence of our epoch lies in this, that the productive forces have definitely outgrown the framework of the national state and have assumed primarily in America and Europe partly continental, partly world proportions. The imperialist war grew out of the contradiction between the productive forces and national boundaries. And the Versailles peace which terminated the war has aggravated this contradiction still further. In other words: thanks to the development of the productive forces capitalism has long ago been unable to exist in a single country. But socialism can and will base itself on far more developed productive forces; otherwise socialism would represent not progress but regression with respect to capitalism. In 1914 I wrote: "If the problem of socialism were compatible with the framework of a national state, it would thereby become compatible with national defense."

The formula Soviet United States of Europe is precisely the political expression of the idea that socialism is impossible in one country. Socialism cannot of course attain its full development even in the limits of a single continent. The Socialist United States of Europe represents the historical slogan which is a stage on the road to the world socialist federation.

It has happened more than once in history that when the revolution is not strong enough to solve in time a task that is mature historically, its solution is undertaken by reaction. Thus Bismarck unified Germany in his own manner after the failure of the 1848 revolution. Thus Stolypin tried to solve the agrarian question after the defeat of the 1905 revolution. Thus the Versailles victors solved in their own way the national question which all the previous bourgeois revolutions in Europe proved impotent to solve. The Germany of the Hohenzollerns tried to organize Europe in its own way, i.e., by uniting it under its helmet. It was then that victorious Clemenceau decided to utilize the victory in order to slice up Europe into the greatest possible number of pieces. Today Briand, armed with needle and thread, is preparing to sew these pieces together again, even if he doesn't know where to begin.

The leadership of the Comintern, and particularly the leadership of the French Communist Party, is exposing the hypocrisy of official pacifism. But this is not enough. To explain away the course toward the unification of Europe solely as a means of preparing war against the USSR is, to put it mildly, puerile and
only compromises the task of defending the Soviet republic. The slogan of the United States of Europe is not a cunning invention of diplomacy. It springs from the immutable economic needs of Europe which emerge all the more painfully and acutely the greater is the pressure of the USA. It is especially now that the Communist parties must counterpose the slogan of the Soviet United States of Europe to the pacifist concoctions of the European imperialists.

But the Communist parties have their hands tied. The living slogan, with a profound historical content, has been expunged from the program of the Comintern solely in the interests of the struggle against the Opposition. All the more decisively must the Opposition raise this slogan. In the person of the Opposition the vanguard of the European proletariat tells its present rulers: In order to unify Europe it is first of all necessary to wrest power out of your hands. We will do it. We will unite Europe. We will unite it against the hostile capitalist world. We will turn it into a mighty drillground of militant socialism. We will make it the cornerstone of the world socialist federation.
A LETTER TO
FRIENDS IN THE USSR\textsuperscript{247}

October 1929

Dear Friends,

You are right when you insist on the need for a balance sheet to be drawn on the period just past. A beginning has been made with the thesis of C.G.\textsuperscript{248} Of course we cannot stop there. We must overcome the obstacles created by the terrible dispersion of our forces. We have only recently begun to receive \textit{Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn} [Economic Life] here. In addition, West European problems have suddenly thrust themselves forward, especially the problem of the third period. But then, these problems constitute the very bedrock of our platform.

Nevertheless, tactically the situation seems quite clear to me. The collective appeal [the August 22 declaration] was as far as anyone could go on the road of concessions to the apparatus. Whoever goes one step farther breaks with the Opposition. But we cannot stand still where we are, either. The Opposition must be rallied together around an appeal to the party. The outline for such an appeal would seem to me to be as follows:

* An explanation of the meaning of the declaration to the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission and of the answer to it (along the lines of the editorial “What Next?” in \textit{Biulleten Oppozitsii}, number 6).

* The point that it is nonsense to argue that the five-year plan, by itself, can change the party regime. On the contrary, changing the party regime is now the prerequisite not only for further success but also for protection against the dangers which are mounting more rapidly than the successes.

* A probe must be made, no matter what, of the new relationship of forces within the country and in the party itself, and it must be done at least to the same depth as at the time of the transition from War Communism to the NEP.
At this time, however, there remains in the country not a single organ by which one might judge the moods of the various layers of the proletariat or the overall relationship of class forces. Long-term planning statistics, control figures, etc., are no substitute for this, not in the least.

Even if we assumed that the Politburo reflects the apparatus as a whole, could we doubt even for a minute that at the first serious push by the elemental Thermidorean mass, not only Bukharin and Rykov but, even before them, Kalinin, Voroshilov, and Rudzutak would overturn the Stalinists—if the Stalinists tried to oppose the elemental mass itself and not just its prefigurations within the apparatus? Behind Kalinin and the others stand the Bessedovskys and the semi-Bessedovskys. What percentage do they constitute within the apparatus?

What is the attitude of the working class to the real results of the government’s policies? Have the masses experienced an improvement in their conditions of existence? What is the proportion of those who are discontented to those who are content? What is the proportion of those who are vaguely and elementally dissatisfied to those who are consciously hostile?

What are the proportions among the various layers in the countryside? How much real political weight does the poor peasantry have? What part of the middle peasantry is ready to side with the poor in the event of an open kulak revolt (which of course could not help but be reflected within the army)?

Reprisals were taken against the right wing by methods of a kind that only drew the noose tighter around the neck of the party and trade unions. That fact, with all its consequences, outweighs the positive features in the shrill, theatrical, harsh but not deep-going, break with the right wing.

The party continues to be held artificially in a state of ideological and organizational anarchy, above which the apparatus rises, with a very large percentage of it, too, eaten away by the same condition of anarchy.

In 1923, when the Opposition called for an initial five-year plan to be worked out in rough draft, they accused us groundlessly of making a fetish out of the principle of planning. Now having finally come round to working out a five-year plan, they themselves have turned it into a fetish standing above the real class relations and attitudes of the various layers of the proletariat. The carrying out of the five-year plan is a political task, in which concessions to class enemies, for reasons of maneuver, are possi-
ble and inevitable along the way, and therefore this task presupposes the presence of the basic instrument of proletarian politics, the party.

Politically a new point of departure for the five-year plan needs to be sought. The present starting point—of universal discontent and universal uncertainty—is completely worthless. The struggle with the kulak should be placed in the framework of a carefully thought-out economic system and not one of naked bureaucratic violence. But in order to do this, one must first of all take stock of one's own forces, as well as of the other forces in society—not in an a priori way, not statistically, but through living organizations, by means of proletarian democracy.

In these circumstances, the slogans "Party Democracy and Workers' Democracy" (in the trade unions and soviets) and "Unions of the Poor in the Countryside" are the first prerequisite for any success whatsoever.

Short of a party crisis of the most profound kind, which would in all likelihood be the result of a subterranean push by the Thermidorean forces, a transition to a new stage is, unfortunately, no longer conceivable. Such a new stage could be either a stage of revival or the Thermidor stage. A party crisis would be accompanied by a new crystallization of the Bolshevik Party out of the present apparatus-stifled ideological chaos. The intensified crackdown by the apparatus is prompted not only and not so much by fear of the Left Opposition as by fear of the chaos in the party itself.

Things being what they are, the sooner the crisis in the party begins, the better for the revolution.

To the extent that the capitulators, through their lying declarations, consciously support the authority of the apparatus and the predominance of the bureaucracy, standing over and above the chaos of the disorganized party, they are helping to pile up explosive materials under the tightly clamped lid of the apparatus. This means that the party crisis, instead of preceding the imminent class crisis of the revolution, could break out simultaneously with it, with the party being swamped in the midst of it and the chances of victory being reduced to the minimum.

The party crisis will above all be the crisis of centrist. What lines will the crystallization of the present chaos follow? Any you can name—except the centrist one. In all of its chaotic manifestations, the crisis will be directed against the Stalinist regime, the Stalinist apparatus, the Stalinist apparatchiks. The responsibil-
ity will be brought down on their heads not only for their real mistakes and crimes but also for all the objective difficulties and contradictions. It must be remembered that the reprisals, first against the Left Opposition and then against the Right, gave an outlet for a certain amount of discontent with the party. But now the denuded centrist apparatus stands face to face with the masses, who are keeping their thoughts to themselves, face to face with the unsolved problems, the growing contradictions, and the accumulating consequences of their own mistakes.

We have stated that we are willing to help the party, from within, to carry out an inspection and a cleansing of its ranks. The centrist apparatus has rejected this proposal once again. Can we under these conditions refrain from faction work? By no means. Are we steering a course toward a second party? No, we are, as before, building and reinforcing an ideological base for the proletarian core of the party, which will be compelled, under the blows of its enemies, to emerge from its present state of disorganization, asphyxiation, and passivity and to take up combat positions. At the time of danger, we and the proletarian nucleus of the party are sure to meet along the line of defense of the proletarian dictatorship. It is precisely for that purpose that we are tightening the ranks of the Left Opposition and strengthening our faction within the Soviet Union and on an international scale.

This must be stated clearly, openly, and without mincing words.
The twelfth anniversary finds the Soviet republic in such a state that outstanding progress is combined with the gravest difficulties; and at the same time both the progress and the difficulties continue to mount. In this is found the chief characteristic of the situation and its principal enigma.

Industry has made and continues to make gains unprecedented under capitalism. Much less significant but nonetheless obvious has been the progress made in recent years in agriculture. At the same time we are observing a total paradox. A severe shortage of goods prevails on the market, and despite economic successes this shortage persists from year to year, becoming extremely acute in certain periods. There is a shortage of the most needed manufactured goods despite the rapid growth of industry. But especially critical and grossly intolerable is the shortage of agricultural products despite the fact that the country is predominantly peasant.

What do these contradictions mean? They have causes of two kinds.

The fundamental causes are rooted in the objective situation of an economically backward country that, owing to the historical dialectic, ended up being the first country to arrive at the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist construction. The secondary causes are rooted in the erroneous policy of the leadership that is yielding to petty-bourgeois influences and carrying out a policy calculated to meet only the needs of the immediate situation, and is incapable of understanding circumstances at the proper time or taking the maximum advantage of the economic and political resources of the dictatorship.
The Twelfth Anniversary of October

The Soviet state does not pay interest on old debts. It does not, or virtually does not, pay any dues to the nobility, bankers, factory owners, and so forth. These two conditions, especially the second, are themselves generating a large fund for the country's industrialization.

Uniting industry and transport under one management, the workers' state—a necessary condition for a planned economy—opened up inexhaustible possibilities for the expeditious application of energy and resources, i.e., for the acceleration of the country's economic growth.

Such are the huge assets of the October Revolution. The liabilities—not of the revolution itself but of the conditions in which it was made—are the following: the low level of czarist Russia's capitalist development; the fragmented and extremely backward character of the peasant economy; the retarded cultural level of the popular masses; and, finally, the isolation of the Soviet republic, surrounded by the infinitely richer and more powerful capitalist world.

The need to spend hundreds of millions of rubles annually on the army and navy is but the most immediate and obvious result of hostile capitalist encirclement.

Another is the monopoly of foreign trade, as imperative for the Soviet republic as the army and navy are. The abolition or even weakening of the monopoly of foreign trade (Stalin attempted this under Sokolnikov's influence at the end of 1922) would spell not only Russia's return to the capitalist track but its transformation into a semicolonial country. But it must not be forgotten that the monopoly of foreign trade means Russia's automatic exclusion from the international division of labor on the basis of which Russia's capitalist development came about. Given the overall economic expansion, the direct consequence of this was a marked contraction of foreign trade. The rapid expansion of the facilities for industrialization is prompted, therefore, to a considerable extent by the need for the Soviet republic to produce for itself all the things that bourgeois Russia received from abroad more advantageously. If there were socialist regimes in other countries, the monopoly of foreign trade, of course, would not be necessary, and the USSR would receive the products it lacks from the more advanced countries on terms incomparably more advantageous than those enjoyed by bourgeois Russia. In the present situation, the monopoly of foreign trade, absolutely indispensable for protecting the foundations of the socialist economy, makes
gigantic investments in industry imperative for the country to simply survive. It is this state of affairs that has produced the chronic shortage of finished industrial goods during the time of a high rate of overall industrial growth.

The fragmented character of the peasant economy, inherited from the past, was further exacerbated by the October Revolution insofar as its first words were for a "democratic agrarian revolution." Fragmentation of the agricultural sector would present serious difficulties for the socialist reconstruction of agriculture in Russia even if the proletariat already held power in the more advanced countries. These difficulties are much greater with the country of the October Revolution totally left to its own devices. Meanwhile, the extremely slow pace of socialist reconstruction of the countryside is in turn causing a still further breakup of peasant holdings and, consequently, an increase in peasant consumption. This is one of the reasons for the shortage of agricultural products.

The high price of industrial goods is no less important. Through these high prices industry must pay for its transition from backward to more advanced technological forms and at the same time continue to procure new investments in the branches of industry that have become necessary as a consequence of the conditions created by the monopoly of foreign trade. In other words, the countryside is paying a high price for socialist industry.

The peasantry makes a rigid distinction between the democratic agrarian revolution completed by the Bolsheviks and the foundation the Bolsheviks laid for the socialist revolution. Transferring the landlord- and state-owned land into the hands of the peasantry—the democratic revolution—brought the peasantry around half a billion rubles by freeing it from payment of land rent. But due to the "scissors" of prices, the peasants are paying a much greater sum than this for the benefit of state-owned industry. Thus, for the peasantry, the balance sheet of the two revolutions, the democratic and the proletarian that were combined in October, all the same shows a deficit of hundreds of millions of rubles. This is an unquestionable and, moreover, very important fact for assessing not only the economic but the political situation in the country. We must be able to look this fact squarely in the face. It lies at the basis of the strained relations between the peasantry and the Soviet government.

The slow growth rate of the peasant economy, its further frag-
mentation, the "scissors" of agricultural and industrial prices—in a word, the economic difficulties of the countryside—create favorable conditions for the development of kulaks and for the kulaks to gain an influence in the countryside disproportionately greater than their numerical strength and the material resources at their command. The surplus of grain, held mainly by the village upper echelon, goes toward enslaving the rural poor and toward speculative sale to petty-bourgeois elements in the city and is thus cut off from the national market. Not only is there not enough grain to export but there is not enough to meet domestic needs. The extremely reduced volume of exports leads to the need to not only give up the importation of finished goods, but to drastically reduce the importation of machinery and industrial raw materials which in turn forces us to pay for every step of industrialization by stretching our economic resources to an extraordinary degree.

This is the fundamental explanation why, during the time of a general upsurge in the economy and an extremely rapid rate of industrialization, the Soviet republic is not emerging from the regime of "queues," the strongest argument against the theory of socialism in one country.

But queues are also an argument against the official economic practice. Here we are shifting from the objective factors to the subjective, i.e., above all to the politics of the leadership. It is unquestionable that even the most correct and farsighted leadership could not lead the USSR to the construction of socialism within its national borders, shut off from the world economy by the monopoly of foreign trade. If the proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries were to be delayed for several decades, the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet republic would inevitably fall victim to the economic contradictions—either in their pure form or coupled with military intervention. Translated into the language of politics this means: the fate of the Soviet republic under the conditions described above is determined by both the internal economic leadership and the leadership of the revolutionary struggle of the international proletariat. In the final analysis it is the latter factor that is decisive.

Correct economic leadership in the USSR means that the resources and opportunities are utilized in such a way that socialist advancement is accompanied by genuine and perceptible improvement in the life of the working masses. The practical concern now is not at all to "outstrip" the entire world economy—a
Writings of Leon Trotsky (1929)

fantasy—but to consolidate the industrial foundations of the proletarian dictatorship and improve the situation of the workers, strengthening the dictatorship’s political precondition, i.e., the union of the proletariat with the nonexploiting peasantry.

A correct policy in the USSR must prolong as much as possible the existence of the dictatorship under the conditions of isolation it finds itself in. A correct policy for the Comintern must as much as possible bring nearer the victory of the proletariat in the advanced countries. At a certain point these two lines must be joined together. Only under this condition will the present contradictory Soviet regime have a chance—without Thermidor, counterrevolutions, and new revolutions—to develop into a socialist society on an expanding base that must ultimately encompass the entire globe.

Time, which is the crucial factor of politics in general, is decisive when it comes to the problem of the fate of the USSR. However, the present leadership, beginning in 1923, has done everything conceivable to let time slip away. The years 1923, 1924, and 1925 were spent in struggle against so-called superindustrialization—the name used to refer to the Opposition’s demand that the rate of industrial development be accelerated; against the principle of a planned economy; against economic foresight in general. The acceleration of the rate of industrialization came about empirically, with jerks and a crude break of pace that immensely increased overhead expenses for construction and added to the burden of the working masses. Six years ago the Opposition demanded that a five-year plan be worked out. At that time this demand was ridiculed in a manner totally in keeping with the mentality of a petty-bourgeois proprietor who fears great tasks and great perspectives. We called this Menshevism in economics. As late as April 1926, Stalin asserted for example that we needed the Dnieper hydroelectric station about as much as a poor peasant needs a phonograph, and at the same time completely denied that the rate of our economic development depended on world developments.

The five-year plan came five years late. The mistakes, the rebuilding, and the adjustments of recent years occurred outside an overall plan, and for this reason the leadership learned very little from them. It is impossible not to recall here that the first draft of the five-year plan prepared in 1927 was fully imbued with the spirit of pettiness, minimalism, and economic cowardice. This draft was subjected to merciless criticism in the platform of the
Opposition. Only under the effect of our criticism, based as it was on the living needs of economic development, was the five-year plan revised from beginning to end over the course of one year. All the arguments against "superindustrialization" were suddenly discarded. The apparatus, having functioned for several years like economic Mensheviks, received an order to accept as heresy everything that had been considered Holy Scripture the day before and, on the other hand, to convert into official figures the heresy that had yesterday been called "Trotskyism." The apparatus—both the Communists and the specialists—was absolutely unprepared for this assignment. It had been trained in exactly the opposite spirit. The first attempts at resistance or timid demands for explanations were summarily and severely punished. And how could it be otherwise? To permit explanations would mean to expose the fact that the leadership has become ideologically bankrupt, shedding all its theoretical prerequisites. This time the apparatus has silently submitted. The following formula is attributed to the person [Rykov] who delivered the report on the five-year plan: it is better to stand for (i.e., support) a higher rate of development than to sit (in prison) for a lower one.

If the new plan was worked out under the lash, it is not hard to imagine what kind of opposition it will encounter from within the apparatus upon its implementation, nine-tenths of the apparatus being more right-wing than the official right wing. Meanwhile, the left wing, from whose platform the basic ideas for the new five-year plan were taken, continues to be under a hail of repression and slander. The apparatus lives in anticipation of new changes and turns, not having even ventured to call for the help of the union of rural poor. The party is presented each time with an accomplished fact. The apparatus does not trust the party and is afraid of it. Under these conditions no one sees in the new five-year plan the expression of a thought-out or in any way secure leftward course. No one, that is, except a handful of capitulators.

The same thing must be said with respect to the policy of the Comintern. From the union with Chiang Kai-shek, the theory of "the bloc of four classes," the call for a workers' and peasants' party, the amicable collaboration with the General Council—which beheaded the general strike—the Comintern in twenty-four hours switched to the slogan: no agreement with the reformists; fight social fascism for conquest of the streets. A new sharp zigzag was built on the theory of "the third period" as if espe-
cially timed for sowing illusions, encouraging adventurous undertakings and preparing for the next turn to come—to the right.

The twelfth anniversary of the October Revolution thus finds both the Soviet republic and the International amidst the greatest difficulties and contradictions which by reverse example show the correctness of the Marxist theory of the socialist revolution. With Lenin we entered the October Revolution profoundly convinced that the revolution in Russia could not have an independent and completed character. We believed that it was only the first link in the world revolution and that the fate of this link would be determined by the fate of the entire chain. And we continue to hold this position today. The progress made in socialist construction grows along with the contradictions, and the progress will inevitably be devoured by the contradictions if the Soviet republic is not supported in the future by successes of the international revolution.

The expulsion from the party and vicious persecution of the revolutionary wing inside the Soviet republic is a clear political expression of the contradictions of an isolated proletarian revolution in a backward country. However paradoxical it may be that the Bessedovskys—and they are innumerable—first expel the Rakovskys and later at the appropriate opportunity cross over to the side of reaction, it is nevertheless to be expected.

Spinoza taught: “Neither weep nor laugh but understand.” One must understand in order to further fight for the October Revolution.

The thirteenth year will be a year of deepening contradictions. A party that has been deprived of strength and strangled can be caught off guard. At the first great difficulty, Bessedovskys of all calibers will raise their heads. The centrist apparatus will show that it is an apparatus and nothing more. The proletarian nucleus will need leadership. And only the Communist Left, tempered in struggle, will be able to provide it.

We greet the thirteenth year banished, exiled, and imprisoned; but we greet it without the least pessimism.

The principle of proletarian dictatorship has made an indelible mark in history. It has shown the tremendous power of a young revolutionary class led by a party that knows what it wants and is able to unite its will with the unfolding objective developments.

These twelve years have shown that the working class, even in a backward country, can not only manage without bankers, landowners, and capitalists but is capable of giving industry a
more rapid development than it knew under the rule of the exploiters.

These twelve years have shown that centralized planned economy is immeasurably superior to capitalist anarchy, represented by powerful trusts who fight among themselves.

All the conquests, examples, and lessons are unshakable. They have entered into the consciousness and the practice of the world working class forever.

We regret nothing and repudiate nothing. We are living with the same ideas and attitudes that moved us in the days of October 1917. We can see beyond these temporary difficulties. No matter how much the river bends, it flows to the ocean.
Dear Comrades,

You cannot, in my opinion, better observe the twelfth anniversary of the October Revolution than by transforming The Militant into a weekly. It is a great step forward. A semimonthly made it possible to assemble the initial cadres of the faction. The weekly creates the possibility of direct and continuing intervention in the life of the whole working class.

The weekly, in turn, will have to prepare the way to a daily. But isn’t it utopian to speak of this now? I don’t think so. For it is in this direction that the road of development is leading.

In the USSR, in Germany, in France, the Communist Left Opposition represents a faction that is fighting for influence upon the proletarian nucleus of the official party. In Belgium the situation is quite different. The official party is entirely insignificant there. The Belgian Opposition can and must aim to become an independent party. Its task is to win over the proletarian nucleus, not of the Communist Party, but of the social democracy.

In America the situation is closer to that in Belgium than to that in Germany. The essential task of the American Communist Left consists of direct action upon the revolutionary elements of the class; the contest for the workers who belong to the official party or who are misled into joining the right wing has no great importance. That means that the Communist League of America has all the necessary prerequisites for developing into an independent party. Under these circumstances, the weekly can and must be a step on the road toward a daily.

I am sending you my article on the twelfth anniversary of the October Revolution for the first issue of the weekly, and along with it a promise of my most active collaboration and an assurance of my devoted support.

L. Trotsky
Trotsky at Prinkipo.
Question. May one ask how true the press reports are about the “capitulation” of you, Rakovsky, and others?

Answer. There is not one iota of truth in those reports. The rumors are inspired by the declaration which was submitted by several hundred exiled Oppositionists to the central bodies of the Soviet Communist Party. I added my signature to it. The declaration of the capitulators (Radek and others) is designed according to the following pattern: “We renounce our views, which were expressed in the platform of the Opposition, we confess our errors, and we ask to be accepted back into the party.” Rakovsky’s declaration, which is supported by the basic cadres of the Opposition, is drawn up on a different model: “Since events have fully confirmed the platform of the Opposition, and since you yourselves have been forced to borrow from it at every step, we demand that you correct your error by restoring us to the party.”

Q. Do you hope for practical results from this declaration?
A. Not in the least, if by practical results you mean the restoration of the Opposition to the party at the present time.

Q. What then is the immediate aim of the declaration?
A. It is stated quite clearly in the declaration itself. The Opposition reaffirms, before the party, its unswerving devotion to the October Revolution and the Soviet republic and its indissoluble bond with the basic core of the party. The Opposition has made analogous statements at every critical stage during the last few years. This is a valid and indispensable form by which to reach out to party opinion. It has nothing in common with capitulation.
ON SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY AND IDEOLOGICAL PROSTRATION

November 1929

"The epoch of wars and revolutions" is a harsh epoch. Piti­lessly it uses up people—some physically, some morally. I.N. Smirnov has been used up. No one considered him a theoretician. He was never an independent politician. But he is a serious revolutionist of high moral tempering. Nonetheless, he has sur­rendered. The words of Lenin involuntarily come to mind, that revolutionists who have passed the age of fifty should be "shot." In jocular form is concealed a serious content.

In another note in this issue of the Biulleten it is shown that the first draft of Smirnov's statement was still trying to assert that the theory of socialism in one country is anti-Leninist. The final draft asserts that the criticism of this theory is anti­Leninist. Thus basic problems of Marxism are revised according to how party membership is registered.

When revolutionists become indifferent in the sphere of prin­ciples they debase themselves morally too. Isn't it all the same, in fact, to say something is or something is not? Isn't it all the same to quote accurately or inaccurately? Since the creation of the world there have hardly been so many liars as our centrists. Why? Because centrism is the epitome of the lack of principle.

Alas, Smirnov and Boguslavsky, having come to grey hairs, have joined the school of Yaroslavsky. They accompany their adherence to national socialism with falsification. There is no need to say that they defend the theory of socialism in one country by the same quotation from a posthumous Lenin article on cooperation. In the first chapter of my critique of the program of the Comintern [The Third International After Lenin] this argument is subjected (I make bold to think) to exhaustive analy­
sis. I proved—and till now no one has refuted or tried to refute—that the article on cooperation stems entirely from an elementary postulate of Marxism that the modern development of productive forces excludes the possibility of building national socialism. But the essential proof of this idea I preface with the following completely incontrovertible consideration:

“If the article dictated by Lenin during his illness and published after his death really did say that the Soviet state possesses all the necessary and material, that is, first of all, productive prerequisites for an independent construction of complete socialism, one would only have to surmise that either Lenin slipped in his dictation or that the stenographer made a mistake in transcribing her notes. Either conjecture is at any rate more probable than that Lenin abandoned Marxism and his life-long teaching in two hasty strokes.”

What do Smirnov and Boguslavsky say about this?

“We consider the opinion of Leon Davidovich Trotsky that this formulation is the result of ‘a slip’ in dictation or ‘a mistake’ by the stenographer erroneous and anti-Leninist.”

I should like to compare what was said by me with Smirnov’s reply. This is clearly the height of dishonor! Yet Smirnov is an honorable man. But, alas, he has fallen into a dishonorable position.

Yes, I said that if in an unfinished posthumous article by Lenin there is a phrase which is contradictory to a basic position of Marxism, then I, of course, would suspect it was a slip or a mistake. But further on I say:

“Fortunately, however, there is not the slightest need for such an explanation. The remarkable, though unfinished article ‘On Cooperation’ . . . does not at all speak of those things which the revisionists of Leninism so light-mindedly ascribe to it.”

It would seem that all is clear? It is scarcely worthwhile dwelling any further on it. Let us note one more document of ideological ruin and prostration.

It will be remembered that one of Korolenko’s sketches finishes like this: “Hey, it’s your turn. The old bell-ringer has stopped ringing.”
According to the new party statutes, which have extended the time between party congresses to two years in the interests of the usurping apparatus, the Sixteenth Congress should take place at the end of this year. But as yet nothing is heard about a congress. The precongress discussion should already have been opened. But who dares breathe a word of that? As before, it is Pravda alone which discusses; it speaks both for itself and for the Opposition, and it pronounces the final word. The present arbiters of fate choose for congresses moments when there is in essence nothing to decide, i.e., when one crisis of the leadership is over and the next has not yet begun. But it is proving ever more difficult to find such a gap between two crises of the “monolithic” leadership. More than that, even the plenums of the Central Committee are now more and more frequently not held on time, since they cramp the organizational mechanics of the “general secretariat.” The July plenum was omitted completely. We do not yet know whether the November one has taken place. The fact is that plenums are convoked only when it is possible to present them with a fait accompli. The next plenum will be presented only with the liquidation of rights by the apparatus. And probably only after that will the date for the Sixteenth Congress be named.

At a time when industry and the bureaucratic apparatus are announcing the uninterrupted workweek, the party, on the contrary, can schedule the purely formal activity indisputably guaranteed to it even by the mutilated statutes only at longer and longer intervals. Why? Because the apparatus not only feels the party to be a burden, but more and more fears it. And not without reason; the million and a half party members and the two million Young Communist Leaguers, repressed by the apparatus, have
really become an enigma—that is without doubt the most terrible feature of the present situation.

They are trying to hypnotize, or rather stun, the party with the five-year plan. We do not deny its significance. But the question is posed as if it were a matter of an abstract economic problem, of finding a dynamic proportionality between the various aspects of the economy. The political side of the matter is reduced to administrative pressure on the kulak and the struggle by the apparatus purely against the right deviation. We do not, we repeat, deny the significance of the kulak problem, and we do not underestimate the danger of the right deviation. But there is a broader question: What is the real grouping of forces and tendencies in the country, what forces are consciously behind the five-year plan, what does that great silent force, the party, think?

Any bureaucratic dullard will reply emphatically that the whole proletariat, all the poor peasants and all the middle peasants are for the five-year plan; against the five-year plan are the kulaks, the private producers, and the right-wing renegades. This "sociological" answer may be given at any time of day or night. It is for such expositions that the Molotovs and Kaganoviches of this world exist. The unfortunate thing is only that the secretarial theory abolishes the very question of the real mood of various layers of the peasantry, of groupings within the proletariat, formed on the basis of their real life experience, and of the mood of the party itself. Or rather, the bureaucratic "sociology," following the practice of the apparatus, abolishes the party itself as a living force which from day to day orients itself in a situation, criticizes, thinks about the processes which have taken place politically in the country, warns the leadership of danger, renews the leadership, introduces necessary changes into a set course, ensures timely political maneuvers, is conscious of itself as the pivot of the country, and is always ready to take up the struggle for the positions of October. Is this first, necessary, basic condition present? No. Otherwise why would the Central Committee fear the party, and the general secretariat fear the Central Committee?

The Central Committee does not know the party, since the party does not know itself, since watching the party through secret informers in no way replaces the free expression of ideas within the party, and, finally and above all, since the Central Committee's fear of the party is supplemented by the party's fear of the Central Committee.
Nor is correct leadership thinkable without honest political information, just as the construction of railroads is unthinkable without knowledge of the contours of the land. Formal democracy has wide sources and possibilities of information from the point of view of the rule of the bourgeoisie and in the interests of the preservation of that rule. This is one of those strong points of bourgeois democracy which has enabled it to dispense with a regime of police absolutism. Proletarian democracy is faced with much more gigantic tasks than bourgeois democracy. The first condition for correct leadership of the Soviet republic, surrounded by very powerful and experienced foes, is the constant, daily, active information of the leadership, above all, of course, through a fully alive party. The absence of party democracy kills Soviet democracy. This is precisely the state of affairs now. Politics is being carried on with the lights out.

The Central Committee lives on the reports of informers. The party lives on rumors. The main feature of the moods of the party, as is testified by all the letters which get through to us, is an obscure and deeply troubled anticipation of coming events. Of what kind is not clear. The apparatus has broken the party from thinking of itself as a leading force. The party is waiting for the unexpected, both directly from the apparatus and from behind its back.

The objective contradictions and dangers are sufficiently great in themselves. But we do not doubt for a minute that the resources and internal forces of the revolution are incomparably stronger than these contradictions and dangers. The first open attack by the enemy would prove this with absolute certainty. But the twilight from which the party cannot emerge changes and distorts the outline of facts and phenomena. Danger seems greater when it is formless and nameless. The party is now standing face to face not with real dangers, but with their distorted and formless shadows, which are obscuring the real difficulties.

The party must know what is going on around it, and above all within its own ranks. The present anti-Bukharin Pravda answers the question of what is just as little as the Pravda that was controlled by the ill-fated Bukharin. One of the tasks of our publication must be to inform the party. We are not forgetting for a minute that class enemies are listening to us. Unfortunately, Bessedovskys of various degrees of corruption and dishonor (they all, of course, were in the front ranks of the struggle against
"Trotskyism") are now furnishing the class enemy with no little information. The White press is now seething with disclosures, in which through the crust of lies and inventions genuine facts sometimes emerge. Things are incomparably worse for our own party. They are leading it with eyes bound. Breaking the bureaucratic bonds is now a question of life and death for the party and the revolution. This is the goal which our publication must serve. In launching it, we contemptuously step over the slanders of the Yaroslavskys. We do not identify the party with the general secretariat, the dictatorship of the proletariat with Stalin's zigzags, or the Comintern with the feeble, insolent clique of Molotovs, Manuilskys, Kuusinens, Martinovs, and other wreckers of international revolution. We have more serious criteria. Our policy remains a long-term one.

The Biulleten is far from being what it ought to be and what it will certainly become: the fighting organ of the left wing and at the same time the organ of correct and broad party information. The forced location of this publication abroad in no way contradicts the general goals of the Left Opposition, which we have more than once formulated as goals of reform. Of course, the task of reviving party democracy can be solved only by the genuinely revolutionary core of the party itself. But it is precisely that core which now needs an organ not subject to the Stalinist apparatus, which needs an ideological battering ram against the centrist bureaucracy. This is the role which our Biulleten must fill. Nine-tenths of the solution of the problem depends on our friends, both in the USSR and temporarily abroad. They must find the way to us. Together with us they must find the way for the Biulleten inside the Soviet Union. We need correspondence, letters, articles which describe what is. Only in this way will we be able to predict what will be or what may come. And only the ability to predict can protect the party from fatal confusion at the first big crisis, which will break, as always, unexpectedly for the Stalinist leadership.

We expect from our friends serious, reliable, and systematic efforts in the service of the Biulleten. The obstacles are great, but they can be overcome.

We require cooperation, we need help.
We need full and factual reports.
We need help in getting the Biulleten into the Soviet republic.
We need financial help.
We are confident of the response!
A year has passed since this pamphlet, devoted to the character of the Comintern leadership, was first written. During this relatively short period of time there have been considerable changes in the Comintern's ruling apparatus. Nevertheless, this work is not outdated. There has been a sharp turn to the left in the political line. The faces have changed. But the system remains. Moreover, the most pernicious aspects of the system have now been manifested with even greater clarity than they were one year ago.

Bukharin was the formal leader of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. On behalf of the Politburo of the CPSU a declaration that there were no disagreements within the Russian Central Committee was issued to all the delegates at the congress. At the same time, under cover of the official congress, a second congress took place—an unofficial, or what is called a "corridor," congress—at which the preparatory work was completed for the overthrow of Bukharin and of the whole right wing in general. Even as the congress took place the apparatus majority needed for this operation had been fully secured. This in no way prevented accounts in the press noting the thunderous ovation that Bukharin received from the delegates after each of his innumerable speeches. The duplicity of the bureaucratic leadership was thus given its highest expression. The ideological struggle serves as merely the musical accompaniment for the organizational pantomime. At the congress they talk, but it is in the corridors that the business is transacted. Bukharin was eliminated shortly after the very congress where it was announced that Stalin and Bukharin were in full agreement. After Bukharin's organizational liquidation, his "theoretical" funeral was begun. It was
suddenly revealed that Bukharin, who for five years led the theoretical struggle against Trotskyism, had in reality done nothing but make mistakes throughout his whole life. Right now in Moscow the young “red professors,” who are not much better than white, black, or yellow professors, are writing hundreds of articles on this theme.

The new political coup in the Comintern produced a regroupment in the leadership of a number of Communist parties, and above all in the apparatus of the Comintern itself. Pepper, who only days ago decided the fate of several parties, today has been expelled from the Comintern, as have the American Lovestone and yesterday’s leaders in Czechoslovakia, Sweden, and a number of other countries. Who has emerged to replace them? Those who were Zinovievists when Zinoviev was in favor, Bukharinists when Bukharin was in favor, and who at an opportune time have become Molotovists.

Yes, the current leader of the Comintern is none other than Molotov. He delivered the programmatic speech at the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI. For those who know Molotov, the fact of his appointment alone (it is hard to describe it as anything but nightmarish) gives a full picture of the current leadership. And those who do not know Molotov have but to read his speech.

Molotov is unquestionably the most complete embodiment of the bureaucracy that rose on the wave of reaction in 1924-29 and is deeply convinced that all problems are to be resolved by financial or administrative measures. These gentlemen are blind to the fundamental questions of world development. However, they are masters of corridor skills. With the help of blind administrative might, they have already beheaded several parties and several revolutions.

After Bukharin’s dismissal, there remained in the Comintern not one person who had anything whatever to do with leadership of the International in the epoch of its creation and its first four congresses. The same applies to all the Comintern sections without exception. There has been a one hundred percent turnover in the leadership.

The official philosophy for replacing revolutionaries with functionaries is that, because the Soviet Union has entered into a period of construction, practical, businesslike people are needed—not those who live in the realm of “permanent” revolution but those who stand firmly on the ground of national socialism. This is the typical ideology of reaction following a turbulent movement
forward. In their national narrow-mindedness the authors of this bureaucratic constructionist philosophy, without desiring to or even noticing it, are revealing their deep contempt for the Communist International. In fact, even if one admits that in the USSR the transition from the struggle for power to the practical work of construction calls for a new set of leaders, how can the same be true in the Comintern where not socialist construction but precisely the struggle for power is on the agenda? Moreover, in all countries without exception the leadership was selected during these years on the model of Stalin and even of Molotov. And this selection process was so successful that the delegates at the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI not only failed to dismiss Molotov with contempt after his smug, ignorant speech but, on the contrary, rewarded him with applause that the newspaper report only out of prudence did not call an ovation.

Individual characteristics do not, of course, eliminate the question of ideological orientation. On the contrary, it is only in light of ideological orientation that characteristics of individuals take on their full significance. Bureaucratic centrism, in order to protect its policy of abrupt zigzags from internal conflicts and opposition, must select its cadre from the obedient, accommodating, spineless, and unprincipled functionaries or cynical administrators. People who in a deferential and cowardly manner endure every shift of the leadership, occurring without their participation and without their knowledge—it is beyond such people, and this must be clearly understood, to ever find within themselves the capacity for leading the working masses in an assault on bourgeois society.

The problem of leadership is not an independent problem. It is closely linked with politics and with the regime. Nevertheless, it is extremely important. The argument that the working class must manage "without leaders" originates from an unconscious idealization of capitalism, since it presupposes that in a society based on wage slavery the most oppressed class of the population is capable of rising to such heights of political independence that it will not need leadership on the part of the most clear-sighted, experienced, courageous, and hardened elements. If bourgeois society were able to ensure such a level of political development of the proletarian masses, we would not be its mortal enemies. Besides, if the proletariat were on the whole capable of reaching such a conscious height under capitalism, it could carry out the transformation of society by totally peaceful means.
Reality is as far from these daydreams as the earth is from heaven. It is precisely to wrest the popular masses from backwardness and ignorance that the revolution is necessary. And for the revolution to be victorious the oppressed masses must link their hopes and their struggle with a party they have more than once tested in action and with a leadership that in the eyes of the masses has become the personification of their own struggle. Neither the party nor its leadership improvises to meet the needs of the revolution. Such people as the priest Gapon and the lawyers Khrustalev and Kerensky appear and disappear like foam on the waves. Real revolutionary leadership is turned out by means of a long process of selection and education. This is a problem of tremendous importance. Without its correct solution, the proletariat cannot win.

Thus the question of leadership cadre is inseparably linked with the question of the Comintern’s general political orientation and its ability to evaluate circumstances, foresee what tomorrow will bring, and extract from every situation the maximum possible for the cause of the liberation of the working class.

In order to reconstitute the leadership, the politics must be changed. Centrism must be replaced by Marxism. In this lies the task of the international Communist Left Opposition.
The Austrian crisis is a particular manifestation of the crisis of democracy as the main form of bourgeois rule. The excessively high tension of the international struggle and the class struggle results in the short circuit of the dictatorship, blowing out the fuses of democracy one after the other. The process began on the periphery of Europe, in the most backward countries, the weakest links in the capitalist chain. But it is advancing steadily. What is called the crisis of parliamentarism is the political expression of the crisis in the entire system of bourgeois society. Democracy stands or falls with capitalism. By defending a democracy which has outlived itself, social democracy drives social development into the blind alley of fascism.

The great weakness of the Austrian bourgeoisie after the war and the revolution, and the related economic and political dependence of Austria, have been the most important source of strength for the Austrian social democracy. In carrying out its function of savior and consolidator of the bourgeois regime, the Austrian social democracy had the opportunity to dissociate itself, in its propaganda, either from the native bourgeoisie or from the foreign (English and American) bourgeoisie. In the first period of the stabilization of the bourgeois regime after the revolution, the social democracy was the direct agent of foreign capital. This allowed it not only to heap the responsibility for all calamities onto the national bourgeoisie but also to take a position in relation to the bourgeoisie that was—at least in appearance—more independent and more critical than was feasible for the social democracy of any other country, not even excluding Germany. The further the consolidation of the bourgeois regime
progressed, the more frequently did the Social Democrats de-
nounce the national bourgeoisie for merely carrying out the or-
ders of Anglo-Saxon capital. Meanwhile, for the workers they had
one ready-made argument for the inviolability of private prop-
erty: “Naturally, we could finish off our own bourgeoisie; how-
ever, it isn’t a question of them, but of the American and English
bourgeoisie.”

The bourgeois parties of Austria more readily lost any features
distinguishing one from the other because all were obliged to
hang on to the Anglo-Saxon master’s every word. Social democ-
raty in essence plays the same role but, because it bases itself on
the workers, it is forced to take a stand in opposition to the bloc of
bourgeois parties. And it is only this “opposition” that allows it
actually to save the bourgeoisie. We have seen similar processes
and phenomena in Germany too. They have contributed greatly
to the self-preservation of the German social democracy. But
because the German bourgeoisie is far stronger and far more
independent, the Geman social democracy was forced to be far
more open and obvious in adapting to it and blocking with it, and
to take direct responsibility for it before the masses of workers.
This situation opened up great possibilities for the development
of the German Communist Party.

Austria is a small body with a big head. The capital city is in
the hands of the social democracy, which, however, has less than
half the seats in the national parliament (43 percent). This un-
stable equilibrium, which is maintained thanks only to the
conservative-conciliatory policy of the social democracy, greatly
facilitates the position of Austro-Marxism. What it does in the
Vienna city council is enough to distinguish it from the bourgeois
parties in the eyes of the workers. And what it does not do—that
is, the most important things—it can always put to the respon-
sibility of the bourgeois parties. While Austro-Marxism exposes
the bourgeoisie in articles and speeches, it very skillfully utilizes, as
we have already said, the international dependence of Austria in
order to prevent the workers from rising against the class enemy.
“In Vienna we are strong, but in the country we are still weak.
Besides, we have a master over us. We must retain our positions
within the democracy and—wait.” That is the central idea of
Austro-Marxist politics. All this has made it possible so far for
Austro-Marxism to play the role of the “left” wing in the Second
International and to retain all its positions against the Commu-
nist Party, which continues to heap mistake upon mistake.
Austrian social democracy helped the Entente\textsuperscript{262} to deal with the Hungarian revolution, helped its own bourgeoisie emerge from the postwar crisis, and created a democratic asylum for private property when it was staggering and close to collapse. Thus, through the entire postwar period, it has been the chief instrument for the domination of the bourgeoisie over the working class.

But this instrument is an independent organization, with an independent large bureaucracy and a labor aristocracy which has its own interests and its own claims. This bureaucracy, flesh of the flesh of the petty bourgeoisie in its ideas, manners, and way of life, nevertheless bases itself upon an actual, real working class and lives in constant fear of its dissatisfaction. This circumstance is the main source of friction and conflicts between the bourgeoisie and the social democracy, that is, between the master and the local agent, or steward.

No matter how tightly the Austrian social democracy has enmeshed the working class in its net of political, trade-union, municipal, cultural, and sport institutions, it is nevertheless plain—and the July 1927 days\textsuperscript{263} showed this especially clearly—that these reformist-pacifist methods alone do not give the bourgeoisie the necessary guarantees.

What has been said explains the social functions of Austrian fascism. It is the bourgeoisie's second steward, quite distinct from the first and opposed to it. The lower ranks of the social democracy are impelled forward by a proletarian instinct, even if an adulterated one. The lower ranks of fascism feed upon the hopelessness of the petty bourgeoisie and declassed elements that Austria is so rich in. The leaders of the social democracy keep the class instinct of the proletariat in check through the slogans and institutions of democracy. The leaders of fascism give vent to the despair of the petty bourgeoisie in its state of decay, offering the perspective of salvation through a coup d'état, after which the "Marxists" will no longer be able to hinder the good headway of agriculture, commerce, and the professions.

We thus have in Austria the classic refutation of the philistine theory that fascism is born out of revolutionary Bolshevism. Fascism begins to play a bigger role in a country as the contradiction between the policy of the social democracy as a mass party and the urgent needs of historical development becomes more glaringly obvious and unbearable. In Austria, as everywhere else, fascism appears as the necessary supplement to social
democracy, is nourished by it, and comes to power through its aid.

Fascism is the legitimate son of formal democracy in the epoch of decline. In Austria, the principles of democracy have been carried to the point of absurdity in an especially graphic way. The social democracy is a few percentage points short of having a majority. It could be said, however—and it would not be paradoxical, but simply the naked truth—that the political immobility of Austrian social democracy is based not on the 43 percent of the vote which it has but on the 7 percent that it lacks for a majority. The foundations of capitalism would remain inviolable even if the Austrian Social Democrats won the majority. But such a victory is in no way guaranteed. It is idiocy to think that all questions can be settled through propaganda.

If you proceed from the premise that life in Austria will continue within the framework of democracy on into the future, there is absolutely no evidence to make you conclude that sometime in the next twenty-five to fifty years the Austrian social democracy will inevitably obtain a majority. The economic life of all of capitalist Europe faces an enormous threat from the United States and other countries across the seas. The economic decomposition of Austria, which is absolutely inevitable within this very perspective of peaceful development, is more likely to lead to a loss of votes for the social democracy than a gain. Consequently, according to the logic of democracy, in spite of the fact that continued bourgeois rule dooms the nation to decay and cultural decline, in spite of the complete readiness of the overwhelming majority of the proletariat, the backbone of the nation, to make the transition to socialism, the transition is unacceptable, since a few percent of the electorate, the most backward, the most unenlightened, the most depraved, stand aside from the struggle, vegetate in mindless darkness, and are ready at the crucial moment to give their votes and fists to fascism.

Democracy has reached the point of total absurdity. In the epoch of capitalism's steady and organic growth, which was accompanied by and tied in with the systematic class differentiation of the nation, democracy played a major historical role, including that of the education of the proletariat. Its greatest role was in Europe. But in the age of imperialism, which in Europe is above all the age of decaying capitalism, democracy has reached a dead end. That is why we see in Austria, where the constitution was framed by the Social Democrats, where the social democracy
holds a position of exceptionally great importance, controlling the capital city, and where, consequently, we ought to see democratic forms of transition from capitalism to socialism in their most finished expression, we find instead that politics is governed, on the one hand, by attacking bands of fascists, and, on the other, by retreating detachments of half-armed social democratic workers, while the role of grand symphonic conductor of this democracy is taken by an old police official of the Hapsburg school.\textsuperscript{264}

Fascism is the second authorized agent of the bourgeoisie. Like the social democracy, and to an even greater extent, fascism has its own army, its own interests, and its own logic of operation. We know that in order to save and consolidate bourgeois society, fascism in Italy was forced to come into violent conflict not only with the social democracy but also with the traditional parties of the bourgeoisie. The same can be observed in Poland. It should not be imagined that all the agencies of bourgeois rule function in complete harmony. Fortunately it is not so. Economic anarchy is supplemented by political anarchy. Fascism, fed by the social democracy, is forced to crack the latter's skull in order to come to power. Austrian social democracy is doing everything it can to facilitate this surgical operation for the fascists.

It is hard to imagine more concentrated nonsense than Otto Bauer's arguments on the impermissibility of violence except for the defense of the existing democracy. Translated into the language of classes, this argument means: violence is permissible to guarantee the interests of the bourgeoisie, organized as the state, but it is impermissible for the establishment of a proletarian state.

A juridical formula is appended to this theory. Bauer chews over again the old formulations of Lassalle on law and revolution.\textsuperscript{265} But Lassalle was speaking while on trial. There his arguments were pertinent. But the attempt to turn a juridical duel with the prosecutor into a philosophy of historical development is nothing but a subterfuge of cowardice. As Bauer would have it, the use of violence is permissible only in response to an already accomplished coup d'état, when "law" no longer has any foundation, but it is impermissible twenty-four hours before the coup, in order to prevent it. Along this line, Bauer draws the demarcation between Austro-Marxism and Bolshevism as if it were a question of two schools of criminal law. In reality the difference lies in the
fact that Bolshevism seeks to overthrow bourgeois rule while social democracy seeks to eternalize it. There can be no doubt that if a coup were made, Bauer would declare: "We did not call upon the workers to take arms against the fascists when we had powerful organizations, a legal press, 43 percent of the deputies, and the Vienna municipality; when the fascists were anticonstitutional bands attacking law and order. How could we do so now, when the fascists control the state apparatus and base themselves on the new laws they have created; when we have been deprived of everything, have been outlawed, and have no legal communication with the masses (who are, moreover, obviously disillusioned and discouraged, and have gone over to fascism in large numbers)? A call for armed uprising now could only be the work of criminal adventurists or Bolsheviks." In making such a 180-degree turn in their philosophy, the Austro-Marxists would simply remain one hundred percent true to themselves.

In its reactionary baseness the slogan domestic disarmament surpasses everything that we have heard up to now from the social democracy. These gentlemen beg the workers to disarm in the face of the armed bourgeois state. The fascist bands are after all only auxiliary detachments of the bourgeoisie; dissolved today, they can be called to life again at any moment and armed twice as strongly as at present. In the case of the workers, though, no one will rearm them if the social democracy uses the hands of the bourgeois state to disarm them. The social democracy naturally fears the weapons of the fascists. But it is hardly any less afraid of weapons in the hands of the workers. Today the bourgeoisie is still afraid of civil war, first, because it is not sure of the outcome, and, second, because it does not want economic disturbances. Disarming the workers insures the bourgeoisie against civil war—and thereby increases to the maximum the chances of a fascist coup.

The demand for the domestic disarmament of Austria is a demand of the Entente countries, first of all France and secondly England. The semiofficial French newspaper Le Temps explains severely to Schober that domestic disarmament is necessary both in the interests of international peace and of private property. In his speech in the House of Commons, Henderson developed the same theme. In defending Austrian democracy, Henderson defended the Versailles treaty. Here, as in all important questions, the Austrian social democracy simply serves as a transmitting mechanism for the bourgeoisie of the victorious countries.
The social democracy is incapable of taking power and does not want to take it. The bourgeoisie finds, however, that the disciplining of the workers through the social democratic agency entails too great an overhead expense. The bourgeoisie as a whole needs fascism to keep the social democracy in check and, in case of need, to cast it aside altogether. Fascism wants to take power and is capable of wielding it. Once it had power, it would not hesitate to place it completely at the disposal of finance capital. But that is the road of social convulsions and also entails great overhead expense. That is what explains the hesitations of the bourgeoisie and the infighting among its various layers, and that is what determines the policy it is most likely to pursue in the coming period: that of using the fascists to force the Social Democrats to help the bourgeoisie revise the constitution in such a way as to combine the advantages of democracy and fascism—fascism for its essence and democracy for its form—and thus to free itself from the exorbitant overhead expenses of democratic reforms while avoiding, if possible, the new overhead expense of a fascist coup.

Will the bourgeoisie succeed along this path? It cannot succeed completely, nor for a prolonged period. In other words, the bourgeoisie cannot establish a regime that would allow it to rest peacefully both upon the workers and upon the ruined petty bourgeoisie, without incurring either the expense of social reforms or the convulsions of civil war. The contradictions are too great. They are bound to break through and force events in one direction or another.

Either way, Austrian "democracy" is doomed. After its present apoplectic stroke, it can of course recover and live on for a while, dragging one foot and barely able to use its tongue. It is possible that a second stroke would have to come before it falls. But its future is foreordained.

Austro-Marxism has entered a period of history when it must pay for its past sins. The social democracy, having saved the bourgeoisie from Bolshevism, is now making it easier for the bourgeoisie to be saved from the social democracy itself. It would be totally absurd to close one's eyes to the fact that the victory of fascism would involve not only the physical extermination of the handful of Communists but also the pitiless crushing of all the organizations and bases of support of the social democracy. In this regard, as in many others, social democracy only repeats the history of liberalism, whose belated child it is. More than once in
history, the liberals helped feudal reaction triumph over the popular masses only to be liquidated by the reaction in turn.

It is as though history had undertaken the special task of finding the most vivid forms for refuting the prognoses and directives of the Comintern since 1923. That is how things stand with its analysis of the revolutionary situation in Germany in 1923; its estimate of the world role of America and the Anglo-American antagonism; the course it set for a revolutionary upsurge in 1924-25; its view of the motive forces and perspectives of the Chinese revolution (1925-27); its evaluation of British trade unionism (1925-27); its line on industrialization and the kulak in the USSR; and so on without end. Today the assessment of the "third period" and of social fascism is suffering the same fate. Molotov discovered that "France is in the front ranks of the revolutionary upsurge." But in reality, of all the countries in Europe, it is Austria where we find the most revolutionary situation, and there—this is the most significant fact of all—the starting point for possible revolutionary developments is not the struggle between communism and "social fascism," but the clash between social democracy and fascism. Confronted by this fact, the luckless Austrian Communist Party finds itself at a total impasse.

For indeed the clash between social democracy and fascism is the main fact of Austrian politics today. The social democracy is retreating and conceding all along the line, crawling on its belly, pleading, and surrendering one position after another. But the conflict is no less real in nature because of that, for the social democracy's neck is at stake. A further advance by the fascists can—and should—push the social democratic workers, and even a section of the social democratic apparatus, well beyond the limits set for themselves by the Seitzes, Otto Bauers, and others. Just as revolutionary situations more than once developed out of the conflict between liberalism and the monarchy, subsequently outgrowing both opponents, so too, out of the collision between the social democracy and fascism—these two antagonistic agents of the bourgeoisie—a revolutionary situation may develop that will outgrow them both in days to come.

A proletarian revolutionist in the epoch of bourgeois revolutions who was unable to analyze and understand the conflict between the liberals and the monarchy and who lumped these opponents together instead of utilizing the conflict between them
in a revolutionary way—such a revolutionist would have been worthless. A communist today who stands face to face with the conflict between fascism and social democracy and tries simply to paper it over with the barren formula of social fascism, lacking in any content whatsoever, such a communist is equally good for nothing.

This kind of position—a policy of shrill and empty leftism—blocks the Communist Party's road to the social democratic workers in advance and gives rich nourishment to the right wing in the communist camp. One of the reasons for the strengthening of the right wing is that, in its criticisms, it touches the obvious and unquestionable wounds of official communism. The more incapable the party is of making its way to the social democratic workers, the easier it is for the Right Opposition to find a path to the social democratic apparatus.

The refusal to recognize or inability to understand the nature of revolutionary crises, political minimalism, and the perspective of eternally preparing—these are the principal features of the policy of the right wing. They are bound to be felt most strongly at times when the Comintern leadership tries to create a revolutionary situation artificially, by administrative means. At such times, the criticism of the right wing seems convincing on the surface. But it has nothing in common with a revolutionary strategy. The right wing supported the opportunist policies in the most revolutionary periods (in Germany, China, and England). They improve their reputation by their criticism of bureaucratic adventurism so that, later on, they can once again serve as a brake at the decisive moment.

The policy of the centrists, who have taken the bit in their teeth and are running wild, not only nourishes the right wing but brings grist to the mill of Austro-Marxism. Nothing can save Austrian social democracy in the coming period—except the wrong policies of official communism.

What exactly does "social fascism" mean? No matter how shrewdly these ill-starred "theoreticians" improvise, they cannot reply to this question with anything but the statement that the social democracy is ready to defend the foundations of bourgeois rule and its own positions within the bourgeois regime by the use of armed force against the workers. But isn't that the common feature of all "democratic" parties without exception? Have we ever thought or said that democracy is the reign of social peace? Didn't Kerensky and Tseretelli smash the peasants and work-
ers in the honeymoon days of the democratic revolution? Didn’t the French Radicals use armed force against strikers both before and after the war? Is not the history of Republican and Democratic party rule in the United States the history of bloody repressions against strikers? If all this is fascism, then the history of class society is the history of fascism. In that case, there are as many kinds of fascism as there are bourgeois parties: liberal fascists, radical fascists, national fascists, etc. But then what meaning does this definition of fascism have? None whatsoever. It is only a shrill-sounding synonym for class violence.

In August 1914 we gave the name social imperialism to the social democracy. By this we meant that social democracy is a special form of imperialism adapted to the working class. Its imperialism unites the social democracy with all the parties of the bourgeoisie without exception. Its “socialism” distinguishes it from these parties. Social imperialism defines it as a whole.

But fascism, unless one wishes to play a senseless game with words, is by no means a feature characteristic of all bourgeois parties. Rather, it constitutes a specific bourgeois party, fitted for special tasks and circumstances, opposed to the other bourgeois parties, and most sharply of all precisely to the social democracy.

One may attempt to counter this assertion with the argument that the hostility between bourgeois parties is highly relative. That is not only true; it is a truism which does not bring us one step forward. The fact that all the bourgeois parties, from fascism to social democracy, put the defense of bourgeois rule ahead of their programmatic differences does not eliminate the differences between these parties, or their struggle against one another, or our duty to utilize this struggle.

The Austrian social democracy, more than any other party in the Second International, is intertwined with the working class. For this reason alone the development of the revolutionary crisis in this country presupposes a series of deep-going internal crises in the Social Democratic Party. In Austria, where the differentiation is belated, it is not out of the question that, in particular, an “independent” party might split off from the official party and immediately, as in Germany, create a possible mass base for the Communist Party. This variant is not inevitable, but it is quite possible under the circumstances. The perspective of a possible split in the social democracy under the direct impact of a revolutionary crisis cannot in any way imply a more moderate attitude toward the future “independents” or potential “independents” on
the part of the Communists. The need for implacable exposure of “lefts” of the Max Adler type, or of more recent models, requires no demonstration. But it would be disastrous not to foresee that in the course of the struggle against fascism a rapprochement is inevitable between the Communist Party and the masses of social democratic workers at large, who still feel themselves to be and regard themselves as Social Democrats. It is the direct duty of the Communist Party to criticize the bourgeois character of the social democracy before this audience, to show these workers that social democratic politics is the politics of capitulation to fascism. The more severe the crisis becomes, the more thoroughly this Communist criticism will be confirmed by the experience of the masses. But to equate the social democracy with fascism when the social democratic workers have a mortal hatred of fascism and the leaders fear it just as mortally means to act in contradiction to the real political relations, to impart distrust of communism to these masses, and to strengthen the bond between these masses and their leaders.

It is not hard to foresee that the lumping together of social democracy and fascism creates a new danger, of idealizing the left social democracy, at such time as the latter comes around to a more serious confrontation with fascism. This has already been demonstrated by historical experience. It must be remembered that the equating of social democracy with fascism, first proclaimed at the unfortunate Fifth Congress of the Comintern, found its necessary antithesis in the capitulation to Purcell, to Pilsudski, to Chiang Kai-shek, to Radich, and to La Follette. All this was quite in conformity with the laws of politics. Whoever equates the extreme left wing of bourgeois society with its extreme right wing, i.e., Austro-Marxism with fascism, inevitably lays the groundwork for the Communist Party’s capitulation to the left social democracy at the most critical moment.

This question is very closely connected with the long-range slogans of the Austrian working class: soviets of workers’ deputies and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Generally speaking, these two slogans are closely interconnected. The formation of soviets is conceivable only under the conditions of a revolution-

*I cannot dwell at length on this question here, especially since it is discussed in sufficient detail in my “Criticism of the Draft Program of the Communist International” [The Third International After Lenin].
ary situation, a turbulent mass movement with a large and growing role being played by the Communist Party, that is, the conditions that precede or accompany the conquest of power by the proletariat.

But in Austria more than in any other country the possibility remains not only that the slogan of soviets might not coincide with the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but that the two might even be counterposed, that is, that the soviets might be transformed into a stronghold opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is all the more important to understand and foresee this because the epigones (Zinoviev, Stalin, and others) made a vulgar fetish out of the slogan of soviets, substituting an organizational form for the class content.

It is by no means out of the question that, if not at the present stage of the struggle, then at the next, the Austrian social democracy will be forced to take the leadership of a general strike (as the British General Council of the Trades Union Congress did in 1926) and even to sanction the formation of soviets, in order to keep the leadership all the more securely in its own hands. Naturally this would be bound up with a crisis in the party of greater or lesser extent. Friedrich Adler272 and the others would have to be dragged out of retirement. Max Adler or someone even more to the "left" would once again argue that soviets plus democracy could produce a combined type of state and thus spare us the necessity of seizing power and establishing the dictatorship. Not only the social democratic workers but even the communist workers, having grown accustomed to hearing day in and day out that the social democracy and fascism are twins, would be caught by surprise by such a stage of development in the struggle between the social democracy and fascism. And yet this stage would only signify a more complex, a more combined system of betrayal of the proletariat's interests by the social democracy. For under the leadership of the Austro-Marxists, the soviets would not be organs of the proletarian struggle for power but an instrument for holding back the proletariat from any attempt to take over the state.

In Germany such an attempt, at least on any extended basis, is no longer possible, because the Communist Party there represents too great a force. But in Austria things are different. If events unfold rapidly, the culminating point might be reached long before the Communist Party could emerge from its isolation and weakness. Soviets in the hands of the Austro-Marxists could
serve as a mechanism enabling them to cheat the proletariat out of a revolutionary situation for the second time, and thereby once again to save bourgeois society, with the inevitable enthronement of open fascism as a result. Needless to say, in such a case the ribs of the social democracy itself would be crushed under the boot of fascism. Politics knows no gratitude.

The slogans of soviets and the dictatorship of the proletariat have only a propaganda significance in Austria at this time. Not because Austria is so far removed from a revolutionary situation but because the bourgeois regime in Austria is equipped with what is still a vast system of safety valves and vents—in the form of the social democracy. Contrary to the blowhards and phrasemongers, the task of the Austrian Communist Party at the present time is not to "arm" (with what?) the masses (which?) and to lead them into "the final conflict" but rather to "patiently explain" (as Lenin said in April 1917!). The success of such propaganda work can prove to be all the more rapid and powerful, the better the Communist Party itself understands what is going on before its eyes.

The first thing, then, is to throw out the senseless formula, so full of bravado and empty of content, equating the social democracy with fascism.

The experience of 1918-19 and the role of the Social Democrats in the system of workers' councils must be recalled to the Austrian Communists.

"Domestic disarmament" must be countered with the call for arming the workers. This slogan is now much more immediate and important than the call for soviets and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The statement that Bauer is a fascist will not be understood by the workers. But to say that Bauer wants to disarm the workers once and for all and thus deliver them to the fascists—this can be understood quite well, for it corresponds to the workers' political experience.

No one should think that lack of strength can be made up for by a lot of shouting and yelling of radical phrases. It is necessary to stop trying to fit the real course of development into the cheap schematic formulas of Stalin and Molotov. It must be made clear that neither of them understands anything. The first step toward reviving the party should be the readmission of the Left Opposition. But in Austria, as elsewhere, it is clear that a few supplementary lessons of history are needed before communism finds the right road. It is the task of the Opposition to prepare the way
for this change. No matter how weak the Left Opposition may be numerically by comparison with the Communist Party, its functions are still the same: to do propaganda work, and to patiently explain. There remains only the hope that the Austrian Communist Opposition will succeed in the coming period in establishing a regular publication—a weekly paper, if possible—that can carry on propaganda work keeping pace with events.

The founding of such a publication requires great efforts. But it is a task that cannot be postponed. That is why it must be done.²⁷³
I received a short letter from a comrade who, it appears, is in a precapitulationist frame of mind. He, of course, projects these sentiments onto the majority in exile. His philosophy is “to go to the aid of centrism.” Beneath this abstract, indistinct, liberal sounding formula there hides, in fact, a rejection of Marxism. There are two ways of helping centrism in a period when it moves to the left: one may either dissolve oneself into it or make a bloc with it—formally or informally, explicitly or in an unobtrusive way within the framework of a unified party governed by discipline, party statutes, etc. Only the second course is permissible for a Marxist. Rakovsky’s declaration is an expression of the second course. It went a long way to meet the centrists, with formulations dealing with virtually nothing else but those things which unite or can unite the Opposition with them at the present moment. Is a bloc permissible on such a basis? In certain periods it is. In the name of immediate tactical goals, the Opposition can temporarily put aside questions of strategy, reserving the right and the duty to advance them with full force when the circumstances demand, even at the price of breaking the bloc with the centrists. There is no opportunism in such conduct. It is quite legitimate. And this is precisely why the centrists have not accepted the declaration. They have demanded that the Opposition renounce its theoretical principles. The centrists do not need the tactical assistance of the Opposition so much as its strategic self-disarmament. In this they remain totally true to their own strategic line. Only traitors can buy a bloc with them at the price of renouncing and condemning their own platform. Although such a betrayal is in general being committed under the slogan of “help-
ing centrism," in fact it is helping centrism not against the Right but against the Left—and only the Left. Of what use to the Stalinists are Pyatakov, Radek, and the others in the struggle against the Bukharinists? None. However, they can be of considerable use in the struggle against the Left Opposition. By contrast, an ideologically irreconcilable Opposition remains the best aid to centrists in the struggle against the Right. We have explained this in principled terms more than once. There can be no doubt that every week “the master” threatens his Klims [Voroshilovs] with the words: “We can’t deviate to the right just now—that is just what the Trotskyists are waiting for.” If the Opposition were to disappear, the Voroshilovs and their cronies would tomorrow climb into the saddle on the backs of the left centrists. But this, of course, is not the main criterion for us; there are other things a little more important. But that argument is decisive against the deserters who are betraying Marxism, renouncing it, and abusing it in order to help the master against Baloven or Klim. We have nothing to discuss with such weathervanes.

Let there remain in exile not three hundred and fifty who are true to our banner, but thirty-five or even three; the banner will remain, the strategic line will remain, and the future will remain.

Greetings to those who are steadfast and only to them.

Yours,
L.T.
A RETURN TO THE PARTY? 276

Autumn 1929

Dear Friends,

I have received your postcard of October 3. The complaints against me are not fully justified. That I should write—I do write; but, alas, not everything gets through. You must take into account that far from everything reaches me as well.

The lofty sounding verbiage going around about how we need to return to the party is either hypocrisy or the height of naivete. “What an opening!” you think. A profound argument is being cited: The right-wing forces are getting stronger. In the centrist apparatus there are many right-wing forces. We must help the struggle against the right wing. Can we really do otherwise?

By our very existence as an irreconcilable opposition we are helping the struggle against the right wing a thousand times more than do all the capitulators, past and future.

Those who have capitulated halfway and the candidates for capitulation argue as follows: While the centrists with the right-wing forces conducted a right-wing policy, we could not be in the party. But when it happens that, largely due to our irreconcilability, the centrists have opened up a struggle against the right wing, we must quickly join the party and, moreover, on some sort of favorable terms.

This is nonsense, self-deception, or cowardly duplicity. We must take part in the struggle for the October Revolution; that is true. But the fact of our ideological irreconcilability is itself participation in the struggle against the right wing that is a thousand times more effective than the “help” of Radek, Preobrazhensky, or Smilga, whom no one believes now and whom no one needs. What do they express? Whom can they help with their spines broken? Whom can they convince?
It is absolutely true that tendencies of resistance to a left turn are maturing in the centrist apparatus. How will the upper echelon, made up of the Kalinins, the Voroshilovs, and others react to them? Most likely, it will desert to them as soon as they become stronger. Is Stalin heading toward a new fight with the broader circles of his apparatus or toward conciliation? Who can predict? And what can be built on guesses? What other line can revolutionaries have than to preserve their honor, not betray themselves, not lie to the party, and steadfastly remember all the while that tactical accord with the centrists, even the most complete (which by all appearances does not exist here), even when long-term, does not guarantee unity on strategy. And it is precisely strategy that is of paramount importance.

Rakovsky's declaration, to which I lent my signature, already represents a bygone stage. I viewed this declaration as an application of the "united front" as regards the different opposition groupings. I explained this in the press. The policy of a united front, however, demands clear recognition of the moment when it is necessary to make an abrupt break with temporary allies. (Remember the experience of the Anglo-Russian Committee!) For some of the signers of the statement it was a bridge to the next half-capitulatory or fully capitulatory document. For us the declaration was a maximum concession to the pacifists.

Yaroslavsky has already uttered his prophetic opinion. The declaration is from a bygone day. All who take a step to the right of this declaration should be helped on their way with a kick.

My warm greetings. I wish you courage and strength.

Yours,

L.T.
December 20, 1929

It comes out most strikingly that the deadly dangers—I repeat: the deadly dangers—which the party regime is running with regard to the economy are not understood. They described our position as superindustrializationist. But in this matter we were only struggling against economic Menshevism, pointing out that the real possibilities of industrialization were immeasurably greater than they seemed to the rightists and the centrists; but we never considered these possibilities unlimited. In my 1925 pamphlet Toward Capitalism or Socialism? I expressed confidence that we had the possibility, after the period of reconstruction had been completed, of reaching an annual increase in industrial production of 15 to 20 percent. Molotov and the other philistines scoffed at our “optimism.” But this is not the point. The approximate calculation of the coefficient of development was based on the (very approximate, of course) economic estimates of available and possible resources. That means we always had in view real industrialization and not superindustrialization.

Let us recall that in 1925 our industry went through a stormy flowering. When I returned from the Caucasus in May, I found a picture typical of stockjobbing. All the trusts were chasing after investment capital; dealings of the Industrial Bank were rising madly. In June I wrote to Dzerzhinsky and Pyatakov, warning that this hurry-scurry was leading in a fatal way to a financial and industrial crisis. Neither Dzerzhinsky nor Pyatakov understood, and they even accused me (Pyatakov, particularly) of speaking up “against” industrialization. I pointed out to them that the overall material base of industrialization, given a correct policy, could be considerably increased; but on the given material

FROM THE OPPOSITION’S CIRCULAR-LETTERS

December 20 and 28, 1929
base, industrialization should not be pushed ahead with the help of unreal credits. Probably everyone remembers that in September 1925 a deep crisis did break out, accompanied with the layoff of workers, etc.

I have given this example in order to show that our industrialization program was never an abstract "general line" of bureaucrats but flowed from an appraisal of the living and active equilibrium between economic factors and class relations, including the international ones.

Are these conditions required for industry being observed today? By what I can judge from here, not in the slightest. Instead of economic leadership and management, we are presented with industrialization races.

All theoretical considerations and specific economic symptoms show that the economy is faced with a repetition of the well-known miscalculation of 1925, only this time on a gigantic scale. At that time industry overcame the barrier of material resources which the right-centrist policy had allowed it. It was possible to correct that conjunctural "miscalculation" at the time, in either of two ways: by quickly and sharply restricting industry, or by increasing its general share of the national economy. To begin with, the leadership tried the first way, then it tried the second, and that is how it got out of its difficulties.

Now the frantic stockjobbing of 1925 has become the general line. One asks: In general, are there objective material limits to the rate of industrialization? One wonders if there are. Is account taken of these limits in the present "races"? To speak more precisely: Are they taken into account in systematic fashion? I don't see it. It is possible that I don't know the whole story; but in my opinion we are heading for a disturbance of the total economic equilibrium and consequently of the social equilibrium.

At this point we come to the connection between the economy and the regime. We said, following our teachers, that the real victory of the socialist economy would be linked not with the liquidation of discussion and struggles but, on the contrary, with their immense flowering on a new basis; that factions would be created of "electrifiers," of "petroleumists," of "peat-fuelists," of "tractorists," of "collectivists," etc., and the struggle in this industrial democracy would be one of the most important factors for regulating industrial development, to some extent as in the Middle Ages when the struggle of the guilds controlled contemporary production.
What do we see instead? A regime which completely excludes any kind of ideological grouping, any kind of struggle over economic proposals, and any kind of control of the economic process on the basis of the living experience of all its participants. The relation between agriculture and industry, the relation between the different branches of industry, the relation between quantity and quality in production, the relation between consumption and accumulation—all these elements of industrialization cannot be predetermined a priori by a “general line” nor prescribed by races. This is a more dangerous method than the capitalist for, so to speak, it socializes stockjobbing, and not only does it not remove all difficulties from its path but it also multiplies them through the compulsion and encouragement of the state.

Thanks to the gigantic advantages of a centralized state economy, partial periodic conjunctural crises can be anticipated or overcome for a long period of time. At the same time, these conditions, in the absence of internal, living, and vital control of the economic processes—given the monstrously bureaucratic character of the all-powerful leadership—may lead to such an accumulation of crises and contradictions that any capitalist crisis would be child’s play in comparison with them.

Theoretically all this is absolutely clear and incontestable. It is possible in fact to establish the depths of the danger, the degree of its proximity, etc., only with a radical change in the regime of the Soviet and the party.

Does that mean the danger now lies in “superindustrialization”? Does that mean that the Right Opposition is correct? The “Right” is as correct in the industrialization question as, let us say, the French social democratic Right is correct when, despite Molotov, they think there is no revolutionary situation in France today. The “Right” adopts the standpoint of economic minimalism. Had the general line led to an irreparable crisis, the Russian Right would naturally have been able to rejoice, just as the international Right rejoiced at the failure of the August 1 demonstrations. Naturally, we have nothing in common with the Right on this question, the more so since, as conclusion to their misadventures, these defenders of the snail’s pace have decided to capitulate to the racetrack tempos just at the very time when its dangers are becoming still more evident.

The regime of the party has now become the nub of all the economic questions, a regime which after the latest capitulations has become not better but worse and which tends to grow worse
as a result of the economic contradictions revived and accumulated by the "general line."

These thoughts need to be elaborated profoundly and thoroughly, and we should get down to it now with all the necessary energy. It is perfectly clear, however, that the direction of this elaboration leads directly contrary not only to capitulation but also to vulgar conciliationism and timeserving.

Yours,
L.T.

Dear Friend,

I don't see clearly from your letters what changes of attitude you say I propose, nor what change in tactics you reject. Isn't there some misunderstanding?

The last declaration of the Opposition had as its aim to inform the party and the country that the Opposition is not closing its eyes to the change produced in the official line, and it is fully prepared to base itself on this change for the purpose of carrying out work in common with the majority of the party and for a peaceful, "nonfactional" struggle—to the extent that, in general, that can be realized—for its point of view inside the party. In this declaration there was not a shadow of diplomacy, if one considers its content and not this or that formulation. But as you know, there was a reply to this declaration. Do you think it is possible to ignore this reply? Naturally not. Otherwise that would simply mean that you don't take your own declaration seriously. The reply did not come from the party, but from the summit of the apparatus. Do you think that it is your duty to inform the party what you are going to do next? One can't evade this question with a diplomatic answer. The reply must be calm and explanatory in tone; but you must tell the party whether you intend to continue the struggle for your ideas. If these ideas aren't worth the struggle, then you have to behave in the manner of Radek and Smirnov. Your relation to the problem cannot be like that. Therefore we are obliged to point out before the party and the International that the reply to our declaration from the summit of the apparatus obliges us to defend our ideas which we are not prepared to renounce (the left turn of the Central Committee is confirmation of their correctness) in the only possible ways left to us, i.e., factional ways, like those of our previous struggle which
had its repercussion in the change of the party’s official line. In the same way, we hope that our struggle in the future, inspired with genuine party spirit, will help the party to get out of its contradictions and to liquidate its mistakes, with the least possible disturbance.

It is possible to make a declaration of this kind in a dry and formal way, in the style written about above. It is possible to transform it into a political declaration which, under the present conditions, would be more difficult. In any case, a political declaration is inevitable, even though it might be some time after the formal declaration.

You write that, under the present conditions, there can be a shift from the left-centrist regime only to the right, not to the left. We can accept that conditionally, i.e., if we abstract the international factor. But are we preparing ourselves to overthrow the centrist apparatus? How could we do it, being a small minority? Are there adventurist ideas of this kind among us? I hear about them for the first time. We fought and we continue to fight to influence the vanguard of the workers. One of the results of our merciless struggle was the left turn of the centrists. Naturally, “objective” conditions were decisive here. But the force of our platform lies in a correct analysis of the objective conditions.

The task of the Opposition is not to overthrow the centrist apparatus by the adventurist act of a minority, but to change the relation of forces to the advantage of the Left. In this struggle against the Right dangers the Left will naturally be in the front line.
You ask me what “value” the abundant “revelations” of Bessedovsky have. I confess that I have not read them, because the first article that came to hand seemed to me vacuous. After your request, I perused a number of the articles. Of course I have no way of verifying all his information, since a series of facts he recounts are entirely unknown to me, even by hearsay. Nevertheless I have run across at least a dozen facts with which I am personally acquainted. The others I can judge only according to knowledge of the circumstances, the persons, etc. Within these rather broad limits, Bessedovsky's memoirs are impressive for their fantasy, a fantasy of that particular character known among us as “Khlestakov.” It is a combined lie, where the element of personal interest joins with an unrestrained imagination lacking any direction. In many instances, Bessedovsky's inventions have quite defined and despicable aims. He is trying to serve those who would like to muddle the relations between Germany and the USSR and provoke a rupture between Moscow and Paris. At the same time he wants to furnish arguments for the most belligerent elements in Poland and other neighboring countries. Since despite his rather representative official position he played only a second- or third-rate role, he employs for his concoctions the petty crumbs that reached him from tables where he had no place. But often his fantasy has no aim and rather indicates an imbalanced mind.

Incidentally, I am told that Bessedovsky until recently not only took part in the bureau of the Communist cell at the embassy [in Paris], but that he played one of the leading roles in the commission which purged the cell of—Oppositionists. As you see, he is a man quite qualified for that! This fact at the same time makes clear the political “evolution” that Bessedovsky has made—not in twenty-four hours but in a much shorter time.

Communist greetings,

L. Trotsky
A REPLY TO THE
CHINESE OPPOSITIONISTS

Dear Comrades:

On December 20 I received your letter of November 15; it took thirty-five days from Shanghai to Constantinople. For my reply to reach you, at least as many days must be allowed. Nothing can be done about it. Neither airmail nor radio are as yet at the service of the Opposition.

The most important thing in your letter is the announcement that you have published a platform of the Chinese Opposition. You should immediately translate it into at least one European language. The whole international Opposition must have the possibility of knowing this highly important document. I await your platform with the greatest impatience.

In your letter you pose two questions connected with the platform: the Constituent Assembly and the United States of Asia. The second question is entirely new; I must put off my reply until I can devote a special article to it. On the question of the Constituent Assembly I will reply briefly:

The political task of the Chinese Communist Party, weakened and driven into illegality, is to mobilize not only the workers but also the broad social layers of the city and the countryside against the bourgeois-military dictatorship. It is this end that the simplest and most natural slogan under present conditions, the Constituent Assembly, must serve. Tireless agitation must be carried on under this slogan in correlation with other slogans of the democratic revolution: the transfer of the land to the poor peasants, the eight-hour day, the independence of China, the right of self-determination for the people who constitute it.

Agitation must be supplemented by propaganda that will make at least the most advanced sections of the proletariat understand that the road leading to the Constituent Assembly can only pass
through the insurrection against the military usurpers and the seizure of power by the popular masses.

The government that will emerge from the victorious revolution of the workers and peasants can only be a government of the _dictatorship of the proletariat_, leading the majority of the exploited and oppressed people. But the difference must be clearly understood between the general _revolutionary perspective_ which we must tirelessly develop in articles and in theoretical and propaganda speeches and the _current political slogan_ under which we can, beginning today, mobilize the masses by actually organizing them in opposition to the regime of the military dictatorship. Such a _central political slogan_ is the slogan of the _Constituent Assembly_.

This slogan is dealt with briefly in the draft of the platform of the Chinese Opposition, drawn up in Constantinople by some Chinese and foreign comrades. My young friend, N.,\(^{281}\) I know, has transmitted this draft to you. With all the greater impatience do I await your platform so as to be able to judge, documents in hand, if there are differences between you and Comrade N. and if the separate existence of two groups is justified. Until I can become acquainted with the facts and the documents, I am obliged to refrain from formulating any judgment on this important question.

You report that Chinese Stalinists fired at an Oppositionist in the streets of Canton. Outrageous as this act may be, I do not consider it impossible. In his "testament," Lenin accused Stalin personally of a tendency to abuse power, that is, of violence. Since then this trait has developed monstrously in the apparatus of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and has been extended to the Communist International. Naturally, the dictatorship of the proletariat is inconceivable without the use of force, even against certain sectors of the proletariat itself. The workers' state, however, also requires that workers' democracy exercise the most vigilant control in order to know why, how, and in whose name violence is employed. This question presents itself in an entirely different manner in the bourgeois countries, where the revolutionary party constitutes only a small minority of the working class and where it has to struggle in order to win the majority. Under such conditions, the use of violence against ideological opponents—not strikebreakers, or provocateurs, or fascists attacking treacherously, but ideological opponents, honest social democratic workers included—is an enormous crime and madness.
that must inevitably turn upon the revolutionary party itself. In
the bitter struggle that the Bolsheviks conducted against the
Narodniks and the Mensheviks during the fifteen years that
preceded the October Revolution, there was never a question of
employing methods of physical violence. As for individual terror,
we Marxists rejected it even with regard to the czarist satraps.
Nevertheless, in recent times the Communist parties, or rather
their apparatus people, have resorted more and more frequently
to the disruption of meetings and to other methods for the me­
chanical suppression of adversaries, notably the Left Opposition.
Many bureaucrats are sincerely convinced that this is what real
Bolshevism consists of. They avenge themselves on other prole­
tarian groups for their impotence against the capitalist state,
and thereby transform the bourgeois police into an arbiter
between us.

It is difficult to imagine the depravity engendered by this
combination of impotence and violence. The youth become more
and more accustomed to thinking that the fist is a surer weapon
than argument. In other words, political cynicism is cultivated,
which more than anything else prepares individuals for passing
over into the fascist camp. An implacable struggle must be waged
against the brutal and disloyal methods of Stalinism, by de­nouncing
them in the press and in meetings, by cultivating
among the workers a hatred and contempt for all these pseudo-
revolutionists who, instead of appealing to the brain, take a crack
at the skull.

Concerning the Chen Tu-hsiu group,282 I am pretty well ac­quainted with the policy it followed in the years of the revolution:
it was the Stalin-Bukharin-Martinov policy, that is, a policy in
essence of right-wing Menshevism. Comrade N. wrote me, how­ever, that Chen Tu-hsiu, basing himself on the experience of the
revolution, has come considerably closer to our position. It goes
without saying that this can only be welcomed. In your letter,
however, you categorically dispute Comrade N.'s information.
You even contend that Chen Tu-hsiu has not broken from Stalin's
policy, which presents a mixture of opportunism and adventur­ism. But up to now I have read only one declaration of program
by Chen Tu-hsiu and therefore am in no position to express
myself on this question.

In other respects, I conceive a solidarity in principle on the
Chinese question only on the basis of clear replies to the follow­ing questions:
As far as the first period of the revolution is concerned:
1. Did the anti-imperialist character of the Chinese revolution give the "national" Chinese bourgeoisie the leading role in the revolution (Stalin-Bukharin)?
2. Was the slogan of the "bloc of four classes"—the big bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry, and the proletariat (Stalin-Bukharin)—correct, even for an instant?
3. Were the entry of the Chinese Communist Party into the Kuomintang and the admission of the latter into the Comintern (resolution of the Politburo of the Soviet Communist Party) permissible?
4. Was it permissible, in the interests of the Northern Expedition, to curb the agrarian revolution (telegraphic directives in the name of the Politburo of the Soviet Communist Party)?
5. Was it permissible to renounce the slogan of soviets at the time the broad movement of workers and peasants developed, that is, in 1925-27 (Stalin-Bukharin)?
6. Was the Stalinist slogan of a "workers' and peasants'" party, that is, the old slogan of the Russian Narodniks, acceptable for China, even for an instant?

As far as the second period is concerned:
7. Was the resolution of the Communist International which said that the crushing of the workers' and peasants' movement by the Kuomintang of the right and the left signified a "transition of the revolution to a higher stage" (Stalin-Bukharin) correct?
8. Under these conditions, was the slogan of insurrection, issued by the Communist International, correct?
9. Was the tactic of guerrilla warfare, reinstituted by Ho Lung and Yeh-T'ing and approved by the Comintern at the moment of the political ebb tide of the workers and peasants, correct?
10. Was the organization of the Canton uprising by the agents of the Comintern correct?

As far as the past in general is concerned:
11. Was the 1924-27 struggle in the Communist International against the Opposition on the Chinese question a struggle of Leninism against Trotskyism or, on the contrary, a struggle of Menshevism against Bolshevism?
12. Was the 1927-28 struggle in the Communist International against the Opposition a struggle of Bolshevism against "liquidationism" or, on the contrary, a struggle of adventurism against Bolshevism?

As far as the future is concerned:
13. Under the present conditions of victorious counterrevolution, is the mobilization of the Chinese masses under democratic slogans, particularly that of the Constituent Assembly, necessary, as the Opposition believes, or is there any ground for limitation to the abstract propaganda of the slogan of soviets, as the Comintern has decided?

14. Has the slogan of the "workers' and peasants' democratic dictatorship" still a revolutionary content, as the Comintern thinks, or is it necessary, on the contrary, to sweep away this masked formula of the Kuomintang and to explain that the victory of the alliance of the workers and peasants in China can lead only to the dictatorship of the proletariat?

15. Is the theory of socialism in one country applicable to China or, on the contrary, can the Chinese revolution triumph and accomplish its task to the very end only as a link in the chain of the world revolution?

These are, in my opinion, the principal questions that the platform of the Chinese Opposition must necessarily answer. These questions have great importance for the whole International. The epoch of reaction that China is now passing through must become, as has always happened in history, an epoch of theoretical preoccupation. What characterizes the young Chinese revolutionists at the present time is the passion to understand, to study, to embrace the question in its entirety. The bureaucracy, lacking an ideological basis, stifles Marxist thinking. But I do not doubt that in the struggle with the bureaucracy the Chinese vanguard of the proletariat will produce from its ranks a nucleus of notable Marxists who will render service to the whole International.

With Opposition greetings,
L.D. Trotsky
THE MURDER OF JAKOB BLUMKIN

December 1929

Although the above letter from Moscow still does not give a full picture of the arrest and shooting of Blumkin, it does, nevertheless, throw enough light on the most important aspects of the tragedy. The immediate reason for the death of this revolutionist—so exceptional for his devotion and courage—lies in two circumstances: his own idealistic confidence in people and the complete degeneration of the man to whom he turned. It is also possible that Radek himself did not sufficiently appreciate the consequences of his own actions because he, in his turn, idealized—Stalin.

In Radek's personal fate is uncovered with maximum clarity the wretched fate of capitulators. The first stage of capitulation: “After all, centrism is not as bad as we had thought.” The second stage: “We must draw closer to the centrists to help them in their struggle against the Right.” The third stage: “We must pay for the right to struggle against the Right by recognizing the correctness of centrism.” Then the last stage: the capitulator delivers a Bolshevik Oppositionist into the hands of the GPU, dooming him to extermination.

And I.N. Smirnov? And Preobrazhensky? Their personal roles in the Blumkin tragedy are unknown to us. Is it possible that Radek did not act in concert with them on the attitude to take in this delicate matter? But in the last resort that is of no importance. They have taken responsibility on themselves before the party and the international proletariat for all the rottenness of the Stalinist bureaucracy. As a result, they cannot be free of responsibility in this case.
Now, on the other side of the question: the shooting of Blumkin took place a significant interval of time after the declaration of Rakovsky, Okudzhava, and Kosior was sent out. The bourgeois and social democratic press has tried, as we know, to present the declaration as a capitulation, i.e., as our refusal to defend our ideas, with the aim of earning the goodwill of the apparatus. The despicable sheet of the Russian Mensheviks too, naturally, wrote in the same spirit. Through *Le Populaire* an insignificant hireling from the same camp, a certain Rosenfeld, announced to the French petty bourgeoisie that the former red ambassador, Rakovsky, had given up his views in order to win back for himself some important post. All these human vermin judge revolutionists by themselves and measure them by their own yardstick.

But it is truly shameful to recall that in the ranks of the Opposition there were to be found, or at least there counted themselves, elements who found nothing better to do than to evaluate the declaration of the Russian Opposition in the same spirit, i.e., as a step toward ideological capitulation. Naturally, Urbahns, who lets slip no chance for compromising the Lenin-bund, was the first to raise an accusing voice against the genuine revolutionists, after having reprinted for months, without comment, the shameful articles of the capitulators (Radek, Smilga, Preobrazhensky).

So that nothing be missing from the picture, here comes an old warrior covered with wounds—Maurice Paz, in the role of a Cato of the revolution with his lofty “platform” (where is this platform?). There exists a species of communist dilettante who prowls around the bonfire of revolution but who is primarily concerned with not getting his fingers burned. A portion of these kinds of “communists” had in the past belonged to the Opposition in the hope that this would free them from party discipline and would bestow on them great renown without imposing on them at the same time any sacrifice. And such armchair “revolutionists” would give lessons in firmness to Rakovsky, Sosnovsky, Muralov, Kote Tsintsadze, Okudzhava, V. Kasparova, Budu Mdivani, and many others who have behind them decades of revolutionary struggle, prison, clandestine work, deportation, and who show their fidelity to the proletariat today, too, in the Altai Mountains, in the prisons of Chelyabinsk and Tobolsk, and not in the rooms of the Palais de Justice of Paris.

Blumkin was shot because he was attached to the cause of the Russian Opposition, the same who signed the declaration of
Rakovsky and the others. And these harsh denouncers—this must be said out loud!—did not even lift a finger to help the Russian Oppositionists who are imprisoned and in exile. On the contrary, in the person of Urbahns, they did everything to make this help impossible.

The Bolshevik-Leninist revolutionary detachment does not need false friends, still less traitors. Before us are still many difficulties and trials. "Better less, but better." From a tiny grouping we have twice in the past (1905 and 1917) become the decisive historic force. We are not tired. We know our road. Forward!
NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1. "C'est la Marche des Evenements!" From the pamphlet Chto i Kak Proizoshlo? (What Happened and How?), published in Russian, Paris, 1929. Translated for this volume by George Saunders; a contemporary translation appeared in the New York Times, February 26, 1929 ("Trotsky Recounts the Inside Story of His Persecution"), and other major papers throughout the world. This pamphlet was the first thing Trotsky wrote after arriving in Turkey from the Soviet Union. Because it was the first time he was able to speak publicly and freely about the post-Lenin struggle inside the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, there was considerable interest in his account. Rights to translate and distribute the pamphlet as a series of newspaper or magazine articles were bought by an American firm, Current News Features, Inc. Like Lenin, most of what Trotsky wrote was intended for members of revolutionary organizations and readers of the radical press; the articles in this pamphlet, however, were aimed at a broader and more general audience.

2. Bolshevism was a Marxist tendency organized and led by V.I. Lenin. It began in 1903 as a faction (in opposition to the Mensheviks) inside the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, section of the Second International; became eventually an independent organization, the Bolshevik Party, under which name it led the October Revolution in 1917; changed its name to the Communist Party (Bolshevik) in 1918; helped to found the Communist International in 1919, and became its Russian section. Trotsky became a member of the Bolshevik Party in 1917 and regarded the Left Opposition as the continuator, after Lenin's death, of authentic Bolshevism. "Old Bolsheviks" were those who joined before 1917, that is, members of the party's "old guard." Although it was an honorific designation, Lenin sometimes used it disparagingly for party veterans who hadn't learned or relearned anything for a long time.

3. GPU was one of the abbreviated names for the Soviet political-police department; other names were Cheka, NKVD, MVD, KGB, etc., but GPU is often used in their place.

4. Kemal Ataturk (1880-1938), known before 1934 as Kemal Pasha, had been the president of Turkey since 1923 and kept the office for four
terms, until his death. Called the founder of modern Turkey, he carried out a program of Westernization.

5. Count Alvaro Romanones (1863-1950), a Spanish industrialist and large landholder, was a monarchist statesman who favored reform of the monarchy. Trotsky was expelled from Spain at the end of 1916; after less than two months there, arrived in New York in January, left there in March, and, after detention in Canada, was back in Petrograd in May 1917.

6. Louis Malvy (1875-1949), a Radical Socialist, was minister of the interior from 1914-17, when he was charged with negligence and exiled for five years, to Spain. In 1924 he was reelected to the Chamber of Deputies. Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929), a socialist radical in his youth, became one of France's leading capitalist politicians, serving as premier 1917-20, when he was a chief architect of the Versailles treaty and a promoter of imperialist intervention against the new Soviet Union.

7. Trotsky was in error on the date of the Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU. It was held in December 1927, not January 1928; deportations of Left Oppositionists began on an extensive scale in January. Joseph Stalin (1879-1953), an Old Bolshevik, was elected commissar of nationalities in the first Soviet government and general secretary of the CP in 1922. Lenin called in 1923 for his removal from the latter post because Stalin was using it to bureaucratize the party and state apparatuses. After Lenin's death in 1924, Stalin gradually eliminated his major opponents, starting with Trotsky, until he became virtual dictator of the Soviet Union in the 1930s. The chief concepts associated with his name are "socialism in one country," "social fascism," and "peaceful coexistence." The Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists) was formed in 1923 as a faction of the CPSU; the Stalinists, and others, called its members "Trotskyites" or "Trotskyists," a term that Trotsky disliked and usually put in quotation marks when he had to use it. After Trotsky's exile to Turkey and his closer contact with Oppositional groups in other countries, the International Left Opposition was organized in 1930 as a faction of the Communist International. Until 1933 the ILO worked to reform the Comintern and its parties; thereafter, considering the Comintern beyond regeneration, it worked to create a new International. The founding conference of the Fourth International was held in 1938. Resolutions, theses, and reports adopted by the early international conferences of the ILO and the Fourth International have been collected in Documents of the Fourth International: The Formative Years (1933-40), (Pathfinder Press, 1973).

8. Virtually all of these Left Opposition leaders, after being expelled and exiled, were to submit to the pressures of the Stalinist apparatus, renounce their views, and seek readmission to the CPSU. Karl Radek (1885-1939), Ivan T. Smilga (1892-1937), and Eugene Preobrazhensky (1886-1937) capitulated in July 1929; Ivan N. Smirnov (1881-1936) in October 1929, followed by Mikhail Boguslavsky (1886-1937), Sergei Mrachkovsky (1883-1936), and Alexander Beloborodov (1891-1938); and Christian Rakovsky (1873-1941) and Lev S. Sosnovsky (1886-
1937) not until 1934; Nikolai L. Muralov (1877-1937) left the Opposition without formal capitulation earlier. Despite their capitulations, they were framed up, convicted, and executed or imprisoned after the Moscow trials of 1936-38, or, like Kasparova and Smilga, disappeared without trial.

9. The revolution of 1905, when soviets (councils) first appeared, was an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow czarism. The first of the two revolutions in 1917, called February after the month in the old Russian calendar, led to the abolition of czarism and the creation of a capitalist Provisional Government that had the support of the newly re-created soviets. The second, called October, ousted the Provisional Government and created a new type of government based on the soviets, which by this time were led by the Bolsheviks.

10. Trotsky's wife and son were Natalia Sedova (1882-1962) and Leon Sedov (1906-38), who had voluntarily accompanied Trotsky when he was deported to Alma-Ata in 1928 and exiled to Turkey in 1929. Natalia Sedova, who joined the revolutionary movement as a student, served as director of Soviet Russia's museums and of the Arts Department in the Commissariat of Education. Sedov was an important political figure in his own right, coediting the Bulletin Oppozitsii with Trotsky, and serving for several years as a member of the International Secretariat. He died in a Paris hospital shortly before the founding of the Fourth International under circumstances indicating he was the victim of a GPU assassination. Trotsky's memoir, "Leon Sedov—Son, Friend, Fighter," will be found in Writings 37-38 (second edition).

11. The Kellogg Pact of 1928 was an agreement engineered by the U.S. secretary of state, Frank Kellogg (1856-1937), renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. Originally signed by fifteen countries, it was ratified by a total of sixty-three, including the Soviet Union. Trotsky's sarcasm expresses his negative opinion about both the treaty and the Soviet Union's adherence to it.

12. The Comintern (Communist International or Third International) was organized under Lenin's leadership as the revolutionary successor to the Second International. In Lenin's time its world congresses were held annually—the first four from 1919-1922—despite the civil war and the insecurity of the Soviet Union. Trotsky regarded the theses of the Comintern's first four congresses as the programmatic cornerstone of the ILO and the Fourth International. The Fifth Congress, where the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev machine was in control, was held in 1924, the Sixth not until 1928, and the Seventh not until 1935. Trotsky called the latter the "liquidation congress" (see Writings 35-36), and it was in fact the last before Stalin announced its dissolution in 1943 as a gesture to his imperialist allies.

13. Karl Marx (1818-83) was, with Frederick Engels, the founder of scientific socialism and a leader of the First International. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924) restored Marxism as the theory and practice of revolution in the imperialist epoch after it had been debased by the opportunists, revisionists, and fatalists of the Second International. The Bolshevik tendency he led was the first to indicate the kind of party
needed to lead a working-class revolution. He was the first Marxist to fully understand and explain the central importance of colonial and national struggles. He led the first victorious workers’ revolution in 1917, and served as head of the first Soviet government. He founded the Communist International and helped to elaborate its principles, strategy, and tactics. He prepared a fight against the bureaucratization of the Russian CP and the Soviet state, but died before he could carry it out.

14. **Thermidor** (July 27) 1794 was the date, according to the new calendar initiated by the French Revolution, when the radical Jacobins headed by Robespierre were overthrown by a right wing within the revolutionary camp; although the Thermidoreans opened up a period of political reaction that culminated in the seizure of power by Napoleon Bonaparte on 18 Brumaire (November 19) 1799, they did not go so far as to restore the feudal system. Trotsky called the conservative Stalinist bureaucracy Thermidorean because he believed that its policies were preparing the way for a capitalist counterrevolution. In 1929, and for the next six years, Trotsky used the analogy of Thermidor to denote an actual shift of power from one class to another, that is, the triumph of bourgeois counterrevolution in the USSR. In 1935 he modified his theory, using the Thermidor analogy thereafter to designate a reactionary development which occurred “on the social foundation of the revolution” and which therefore did not alter the class character of the state (see “The Workers’ State, Thermidor and Bonapartism” in *Writings* 34-35).

15. **Article 58** of the Soviet penal code provided for punishment of those engaged in counterrevolutionary activity against the Soviet state. Under Stalin it was converted into a factional instrument for imprisoning, exiling, banishing, or executing CP opponents of the bureaucratic apparatus.

16. **Leon Trotsky** (1879-1940) became a revolutionary in 1896 and a collaborator of Lenin on *Iskra* in 1902. He broke with Lenin the next year over the nature of the revolutionary party and aligned himself with the Menshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. He broke with the Mensheviks in 1904 and tried during the next decade to reunite the factions of the RSDLP. In the 1905 revolution, he was the leader of the St. Petersburg Soviet and developed the theory of permanent revolution. In 1915 he wrote the Zimmerwald manifesto against the war. He joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917, was elected to its central committee, and organized the insurrection that made the Soviet state possible. His first government post was as commissar of foreign affairs. Then as commissar of war he organized the Red Army and led it to victory through three years of civil war and imperialist intervention. He formed the Left Opposition in 1923 and fought for the next ten years to return the Soviet Union and the Comintern to Leninist internationalism and proletarian democracy. Defeated by the Stalin faction, he was expelled from the CP and the Comintern, and exiled to Turkey in 1929. In 1933 he gave up his efforts to reform the Comintern and called for the creation of a new International. He viewed his work on behalf of the Fourth International as the most important of his life.

18. The right wing referred to was a wing of the CPSU, also called the Right Opposition. Trotsky was an unwavering opponent of the right wing’s politics, which he believed was strengthening the procapitalist tendencies in the Soviet Union, but he regarded its leaders as communists and did not advocate their expulsion from the party or its leadership. Since 1923 the right wing had been in an alliance with the Stalinists (whom Trotsky called centrists) against the Left Opposition. Shortly after the Left Opposition’s expulsion at the end of 1927, differences sharpened between the Stalinists and the leaders of the Right Opposition (Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky). The Stalinists conducted a noisy campaign against right-wing deviations and deviators throughout 1928, but they did not publicly associate Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky with the right wing until 1929.

19. Austen Chamberlain (1863-1937) was a Conservative politician who held many British cabinet posts, including that of foreign secretary in the Baldwin government, 1924-29.

20. The two members of the Trotsky family living in Moscow were his younger son, Sergei Sedov (1908-1937) and the wife of Leon Sedov. Sergei, a science teacher who was uninterested in politics, was arrested in 1934 or 1935 as a measure of reprisal against Trotsky, and reportedly died in a concentration camp after refusing to denounce his father.

21. The first three of these Left Oppositionists disappeared in the GPU’s jails and concentration camps; the fourth capitulated in 1929 and was given an industrial post in Siberia, but was tried in the second Moscow trial and executed in 1937.


23. Gregory Zinoviev (1883-1936) and Leon Kamenev (1883-1936) were both Old Bolsheviks who held high posts in Lenin’s time, Zinoviev as president of the Comintern (1919-1926) and Kamenev as Lenin’s deputy, among others. With Stalin they launched the crusade against “Trotskyism” in 1923, and then formed a bloc with Trotsky against Stalin (the United Opposition), 1926-27. Expelled from the CP in 1927, they capitulated to Stalin and were readmitted. Expelled again in 1932, they recanted again, but were sentenced to ten years’ imprisonment in 1935, were tried again at the first Moscow trial in 1936 and were executed.

24. Alexei Rykov (1881-1938), Nikolai Bukharin (1888-1938), and Mikhail Tomsky (1886-1936) were also Old Bolsheviks noted for decades of revolutionary activity, who were in a bloc with Stalin against the Left Opposition from 1923 to 1928. Rykov was elected commissar of the interior in 1917 and, after Lenin’s death, president of the Council of People’s
Commissars, 1924-30. Bukharin was editor of Pravda, 1918-29, and president of the Comintern, 1926-29. Tomsky was best known as the leader of the Soviet trade unions. All three capitulated to Stalin in 1929, and thereafter were permitted to play subsidiary roles, but that did not save them. Tomsky committed suicide during the 1936 Moscow trial, and Rykov and Bukharin were executed after being convicted at the 1938 trial.

25. Lenin’s testament, written in December 1922 and January 1923, gave his final evaluation of the other Soviet leaders. Since it called for the removal of Stalin from his post of general secretary, it was suppressed in the Soviet Union until after Stalin’s death; it is included now in volume 36 of Lenin’s Collected Works. Trotsky’s essay on the suppressed testament, dated December 31, 1932, will be found in the collection Lenin’s Fight Against Stalinism (Pathfinder Press, 1975).

26. The year Trotsky gives consistently for Stalin’s appointment to the post of general secretary and for this comment by Lenin in connection with it is 1921. The editors have changed this date to 1922 here and elsewhere in the Writings series. Stalin was elected general secretary on April 3, 1922, immediately following the Eleventh Congress of the CPSU. In My Life, Trotsky says that Stalin’s candidacy for this post was introduced by Zinoviev at the Tenth Congress in 1921 and Stalin’s election followed the congress. In fact, Stalin did extend his organizational control of the party at the Tenth Congress. Although he was not a member of the Secretariat at that time, its three members were replaced by his supporters, Molotov, Yaroslavsky, and Mikhailov. When he joined the Secretariat in 1922, it was as its “general secretary.” According to Robert C. Tucker (Stalin as Revolutionary, W.W. Norton, 1973), the elections after the Eleventh Congress merely formalized the situation that began in 1921.

27. White Guards, White Russians, and Whites were names used for the Russian counterrevolutionary forces following the October Revolution. This speech, which Trotsky quotes from several times in this volume, is contained in The Stalin School of Falsification.

28. The Politburo (Political Bureau) was, in Lenin’s time, a subordinate body of the CP’s Central Committee. The first Politburo, elected in 1919, consisted of Kamenev, Krestinsky, Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky. The meeting Trotsky refers to was held on October 25, 1926. In that year it consisted of Bukharin, Kalinin, Molotov, Rykov, Stalin, Tomsky, Trotsky, Voroshilov, and Zinoviev. At the time Trotsky was deported in 1929, its members were Bukharin, Kalinin, Kuibyshev, Molotov, Rudzutak, Rykov, Stalin, Tomsky, and Voroshilov. Bukharin and Tomsky were removed in 1929, Rykov in 1930.


30. Valerian Kuibyshev (1888-1935), an Old Bolshevik in many important posts before becoming head of the country’s chief economic
body, was a dedicated Stalinist. The details of his mysterious death still remain to be disclosed.


32. Peter Stolypin (1862-1911), a reactionary czarist politician, served as prime minister after the defeat of the 1905 revolution. He introduced an agrarian reform designed to promote the development of a stratum of rich peasants.

33. Rakovsky’s letter to Valentinov, August 6, 1928, was translated under the title “Power and the Russian Workers” in The New International, November 1934.

34. The New Economic Policy (NEP) was initiated in 1921 to replace the policy of War Communism (see note 82), which had prevailed during the Russian civil war and led to drastic declines in agricultural and industrial production. To revive the economy after the civil war, the NEP was adopted as a temporary measure allowing a limited revival of free trade inside the Soviet Union and foreign concessions alongside the nationalized and state-controlled sectors of the economy. The Nepmen, who benefited from this policy, were viewed as a potential base for the restoration of capitalism. NEP was succeeded in 1928 by the first five-year plan and subsequent forced collectivization of the land, although the Stalin regime continued until 1930 to say that NEP was still in effect.

35. “Panamas” as a pejorative term denoting corruption began toward the end of the nineteenth century with a French company, the Society for the Building of the Panama Canal. Its financial dealings included the swindling of small investors and the bribing of cabinet ministers, deputies, and judges. After its bankruptcy, American speculators bought up most of the stock. In 1903 the United States, failing to reach an agreement with Colombia, promoted a “revolution” in Panama, and construction of the Panama Canal, started in 1904, was completed ten years later. The latest “Panama,” 1928-29, involved Louis Klotz, a former French minister of finance, who resigned as senator when he was accused of passing bad checks and carrying out fraudulent transactions with the Bank of France. Mme. Hanau, the owner of the Paris Gazette, and her associates were also accused of pushing fraudulent stock.

36. Permanent revolution was the theory most closely associated with Trotsky, beginning with the 1905 revolution when he first developed his ideas about the leading role of the working class in industrially backward and underdeveloped countries. Although Lenin and the Bolsheviks accepted the conclusions of this theory in leading the 1917 revolution, the Stalinists centered their fire on it in the 1920s after they adopted the theory of socialism in one country. Trotsky’s exposition, The Permanent Revolution, was written at Alma-Ata in 1928; its introduction and epilogue were written in Turkey in 1929.

37. Edouard Herriot (1872-1957) was the leader of the bourgeois Radical (or Radical Socialist) Party of France, an advocate of class collaboration with the workers’ parties, and premier, 1924-25, 1926 (for

38. **Bonapartism** is a Marxist term describing a dictatorship or a regime with certain features of a dictatorship during a period when class rule is not secure; it is based on the military, police, and state bureaucracy, rather than on parliamentary parties or a mass movement. Trotsky saw two types of Bonapartism in the 1930s—bourgeois and Soviet. His most extensive writings on bourgeois Bonapartism (which he distinguished from fascism, although both serve in the interests of maintaining the capitalist system) will be found in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (Pathfinder Press, 1971). His views on Soviet Bonapartism reached their final form in the already cited essay “The Workers’ State, Thermidor and Bonapartism.”

39. **Jacobins** was the popular name for the members of the Society of the Friends of the Constitution who provided the leadership of the French Revolution against feudalism. The left-wing Jacobins (the Mountain) were led by Robespierre and Marat; the right-wing Jacobins (the Girondists) by Brissot; and the centrists (the Plain) by Danton. The left-wing Jacobins took over the government and adopted its most radical measures in 1793 until overthrown the next year.


41. “On the Secret Ballot.” *Contre le Courant* (Against the Stream, a French Oppositional magazine), March 9, 1929. Translated for this volume by Brenda Zannis. In this excerpt from a letter to the Soviet Union, Trotsky was defending a position he had put forward before his deportation to Turkey in a letter from Alma-Ata dated October 21, 1928 (*The Militant*, February 1, 1929), to be reprinted in *The Challenge of the Left Opposition*. During the civil war the open ballot was instituted in the unions, the soviets, and the CP as a way of putting pressure on backward, wavering, or reactionary elements. In the changed conditions of the late 1920s, however, the open ballot served mainly as an instrument through which the Stalinist apparatus could exert pressure against oppositional or independent-minded elements.

42. The term **dictatorship** here is short for dictatorship of the proletariat, the Marxist name for the form of rule by the working class that will follow rule by the capitalist class (dictatorship of the bourgeoisie). Modern substitutes for dictatorship of the proletariat are workers’ state and workers’ democracy.

43. **SRism and Menshevism** here refers to the counterrevolutionary theories and activities of two Russian political parties which supported the Provisional Government before the October Revolution and opposed the Soviet government afterward. The Social Revolutionary Party (SRs),
founded in 1900, became the political expression of all the earlier Populist currents in Russia and had the largest share of influence among the peasantry before the revolution. The Mensheviks, led by Julius Martov, began as a faction in the RSDLP in 1903, later becoming, like its Bolshevik antagonist, an independent party.

44. “What Is the Immediate Aim of Exiling Trotsky?” Biulleten Oppozitsii (Bulletin of the Opposition), number 1-2, July 1929. Signed “X.” Translated for this volume by Iain Fraser. The Biulleten was a new Russian-language publication edited by Trotsky, which printed the most important public documents of the ILO and practically all of Trotsky’s important pamphlets and articles during his last exile. It began by being printed in Paris, 1929-31, and then was shifted to Berlin, where the Nazis banned it when they came to power in 1933. Thereafter it was published in Paris until 1934, in Zurich until 1935, in Paris until 1939, and in New York until 1941, when it ceased publication. A complete set in four volumes, with all of Trotsky’s articles identified, including those that were unsigned or signed with pen names, has been published by Monad Press, distributed by Pathfinder Press, 1973.

45. In 1927 the GPU tried to smear the Left Opposition by claiming that a “Wrangel officer” was seeking contact with its members. Piotr N. Wrangel (1878-1928) was a White Guard general who had fought to overthrow the Soviets in the civil war. This attempt to portray Oppositionists as collaborators of counterrevolutionaries backfired when the GPU was forced to admit that the alleged Wrangel officer was actually an agent provocateur of the GPU.

46. Amalgam was the term Trotsky frequently used to designate the Kremlin’s practice of lumping together different or opposing political opponents and accusing them of common crimes or sins.

47. “Protests to the GPU.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume by Marilyn Vogt. When Trotsky and his family arrived in Turkey in February, they were given temporary lodgings at the Soviet consulate in Constantinople. After Trotsky’s series of articles of his expulsion began to appear in the press, Moscow sent word to hasten his departure from the consulate. Shortly after these protests against the GPU’s broken promises, the Trotskys found a place where they lived for a short time before moving to the island of Prinkipo, in the sea of Marmara.

48. N. Sermuks and I. Poznansky were coworkers and secretaries of Trotsky from the days of the civil war. They had been arrested and deported for trying to accompany him to Alma-Ata in January 1928 and were never allowed to go to Turkey.

49. “Interview by the Daily Express.” Daily Express (London), March 18, 1929. This interview was held at a time when the British government was discussing the resumption of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union; those relations were not reopened until later in the year,
when an election replaced the Tories with the Labourites. There are obvious cuts in the interviewer's questions at points; the name of the interviewer was not given.

50. Soon after Trotsky reached Turkey he learned that on February 6, at a tenth anniversary celebration of the Weimar republic, Paul Loebe (1875-1967), Social Democratic president of the German Reichstag, 1924-32, had spoken of the possibility of granting Trotsky the right of asylum. Upon learning this, Trotsky applied for a visa from the German government headed by Social Democratic chancellor Hermann Mueller.


52. "Within the Right-Centrist Bloc." The Militant, July 1, 1929. Signed "G.G." and bearing the place line of "Moscow." Although this letter is in the Trotsky archives at Harvard, there are differences of opinion among scholars as to whether Trotsky wrote it. Robert V. Daniels (in The Conscience of the Revolution: Communist Opposition in Soviet Russia) thinks that Trotsky did; E.H. Carr (in Foundations of a Planned Economy, volume 2) thinks that he didn't. Unable to resolve the question definitively, the editors include it in the belief Trotsky rewrote it for security and/or editorial reasons from a letter or letters he received from Moscow. Later in the same month Trotsky began to use "G. Gourov" as one of his pen names. The alliance between the Stalinists and the right wing began to break up immediately after the Fifteenth Congress expulsion of the United Opposition bloc (December 1927). In July 1928, Bukharin, fearing that Stalin would seek a rapprochement with Zinoviev and Kamenev, secretly met with Kamenev at the latter's apartment. Kamenev wrote out a report of the conversations, in which Bukharin expressed his aversion and fear of Stalin and his policies. At this time neither the public nor the ranks of the CP knew anything about dissenion in the Politburo. Left Oppositionists came into possession of the Kamenev report and circulated it widely in January 1929, when the Stalinists were still publicly denying differences with the right wing, although by this time Stalin's campaign to crush it was in full operation. Centrist was Trotsky's label for the Stalin faction. He used this term generally for tendencies in the radical movement that stand or oscillate between reformism, which is the position of the labor bureaucracy and the labor aristocracy, and Marxism, which represents the historic interests of the working class. In his view centrist tendencies have no independent social base, and therefore they must be evaluated in terms of their origin, their internal dynamic, and the direction in which they were going or being pushed by events. Until around 1935 Trotsky saw Stalinism as a special variety of centrism: "bureaucratic centrism," or "cen-
trism" for short. After 1935 he felt that this term was inadequate to describe the continuing degeneration of Stalinism.

53. **Yuri Pyatakov** (1890-1937), an Old Bolshevik, played a leading role in the Russian Revolution and the civil war and held many key party and state posts. In his testament Lenin called him and Bukharin the "two ablest young men in the party." He became a Left Oppositionist in 1923, was expelled in 1927, and capitulated and was reinstated in 1928. As vice chairman of the commissariat of heavy industry, he helped to industrialize the USSR in the 1930s. He was convicted and executed in the second Moscow trial.

54. **Pravda** (Truth) was the official Bolshevik paper starting in 1912; it became a daily in 1917, and a mouthpiece of Stalinism after Lenin's death.

55. **N.A. Uglanov** was a Stalinist whose anti-Trotskyist zeal brought him high rank in the mid-twenties. He became a Right Oppositionist, for which he was dropped from the Central Committee in 1930. He capitulated, but remained under suspicion and in the end disappeared in the purges.

56. **Vyacheslav M. Molotov** (1890- ), an Old Bolshevik, was elected to the Russian CP's Central Committee in 1920 and soon became an ardent Stalinist. He was a member of the ECCI, 1928-34, president of the Council of People's Commissars, 1930-41, and foreign minister, 1939-49, 1953-56. He was eliminated from the leadership in 1957 for opposing Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization" program.

57. **Gregory Ordzhonikidze** (1886-1937), an Old Bolshevik and organizer of the Stalin faction, was later put in charge of heavy industry. Although he remained a faithful Stalinist, the circumstances surrounding his death are still not publicly known.

58. **Lazar Kaganovich** (1893- ) was a crony of Stalin and an undeviating Stalinist in various state and party posts. He was removed from all of them when Khrushchev took over the Soviet leadership in the 1950s.

59. **Kliment Voroshilov** (1881-1969), an Old Bolshevik, was commissar of war, 1925-40, and president of the USSR, 1953-60. He and Kalinin were believed to sympathize with some of the ideas of the Right Opposition but went along with Stalin, perhaps because he had information that would have embarrassed them if made public.

60. **Mikhail Kalinin** (1875-1946), an Old Bolshevik, was elected president of the Soviet Central Executive Committee in place of the deceased Yakov Sverdlov in 1919.

61. **Ivan Bakayev** (1887-1936), an Old Bolshevik, head of the GPU in Leningrad and a supporter of Zinoviev, was expelled from the party in 1927 and capitulated the same year. He was a defendant in the first Moscow trial and was executed.

62. **Nadezhda K. Krupskaya** (1869-1939), an early leader of the Bolshevik Party and the companion of Lenin, briefly aligned herself with the United Opposition in 1926, but then broke with and condemned it before its leaders were expelled.

63. **Ernst Thaelmann** (1886-1945) was at this time the principal
leader of the German CP; later he was its presidential candidate and uncritical supporter of the Comintern policies that led to Hitler's victory. He was arrested by the Nazis in 1933 and executed in 1945. Pierre Semard (1887-1942) was general secretary of the French CP, 1924-29. He too was executed by the Nazis.

64. “Open Letter to the Workers of the USSR.” The Militant, May 1 and 15, 1929. When Trotsky's articles about his exile appeared in papers throughout the capitalist world, the Soviet press opened a campaign charging that their publication in the capitalist papers was evidence that Trotsky had “sold himself to the world bourgeoisie and [was] conspiring against the Soviet Union.” Trotsky's reply in this open letter was smuggled into the USSR by various means.

65. Emelyan Yaroslavsky (1878-1943) was a top Stalinist specialist in the extirpation of “Trotskyism,” which, however, did not prevent him from falling from favor in 1931-32 when he failed to keep up with the tempo Stalin demanded in the rewriting of Soviet history.

66. The “sealed train” was one that carried Lenin and twenty-nine other Russian emigres from Switzerland through Germany back to Russia in March 1917. Germany was then at war with Russia, but the sealed train arrangement proved more convenient for the emigres than any other they could make. Later it became the basis for charges that the Bolsheviks were German agents and spies, who fomented revolution in Russia primarily to aid Germany. The Hohenzollerns became the ruling family of Germany in 1871; their dynasty lasted until November 1918, when the German revolution overthrew the monarchy and Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated.

67. Ustrialovist policy (after N. Ustrialov, a Russian professor and economist who opposed the October Revolution but later went to work for the Stalinist regime on the Chinese Eastern Railroad) was based on the belief that the Stalin regime would inevitably be compelled to restore capitalism. Ustrialov supported Stalin's measures against Trotsky as a step in this direction.

68. The 1927 Opposition platform of the Russian United Opposition was published in The Real Situation in Russia, 1928, and is being reprinted in The Challenge of the Left Opposition.


70. August Bebel (1840-1913) was a cofounder with Wilhelm Liebknecht of the German social democracy. The party became a powerful force under his leadership, which formally rejected the unprincipled revisionism advanced by Edouard Bernstein but bore responsibility for the growth of the opportunist tendencies that took over the party shortly after his death.

71. Heinrich Brandler (1881-1967) and August Thalheimer (1884-1948) helped to found the German CP and were its foremost leaders when it failed to take advantage of the revolutionary crisis of 1923. Brandler
was made a scapegoat and removed from the German leadership in 1924. For sympathizing with Bukharin’s Right Opposition in 1929, they were expelled from the German CP and the Comintern. Organized as the Communist Party Opposition (KPO) of Germany, they were, in Trotsky’s opinion, a tendency that oscillated between centrisrn and reformism.

72. Boris Souvarine (1893- ) was a founder of the French CP and one of the first biographers of Stalin. He was repelled by Stalinism in the 1920s and turned against Leninism in the 1930s. Trotsky held him to be a prototype of the cynicism and defeatism that marked the renegades from Bolshevism.

73. The Anglo-Russian Trade-Union Unity Committee was established in May 1925 by the “left” bureaucrats of the British Trades Union Congress and the Stalinist leaders of the Soviet unions. Trotsky demanded its dissolution in 1926 after its British members betrayed the general strike, but the Stalinists refused and continued to cling to the committee until the British bureaucrats, finding they no longer needed it as a left cover, walked out in September 1927. Trotsky’s writings on the committee have been collected in Leon Trotsky on Britain (Monad Press, distributed by Pathfinder Press, 1973). The course of the Chinese revolution, crushed in 1927 by Stalin’s erstwhile ally, Chiang Kai-shek, was a prime issue of contention in the factional struggle that year between the United Opposition of Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev and the faction of Stalin-Bukharin. Trotsky’s writings on this subject were printed in Problems of the Chinese Revolution, The Third International After Lenin, and The Chinese Revolution: Problems and Perspectives. These, and others translated into English for the first time, will all be found in the forthcoming Leon Trotsky on China (Pathfinder Press, 1976). Socialism in one country was Stalin’s theory, introduced into the communist movement for the first time in 1924, that a socialist society could be achieved inside the borders of a single country. Later, when it was incorporated into the program and tactics of the Comintern, it became the ideological cover for the abandonment of revolutionary internationalism and was used to justify the conversion of the Communist parties throughout the world into pawns of the Kremlin’s foreign policy. Trotsky’s comprehensive critique will be found in The Third International After Lenin, an analysis of the draft program of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International.

74. The Stalinist zigzag to the left on economic questions began early in 1928, after the Left Opposition had been expelled for advocating a leftward turn in economic planning and administration. Its full implications were not unveiled until the end of 1929, when the signal was given for immediate and all-out collectivization of the land.

75. “Tasks of the Opposition.” Fourth International, May 1946, where it was given the title “Against the Right Opposition.”

76. Trotsky’s hopes for an international magazine, which at one point even got the name The Opposition, were not to be realized. But in July he began to publish Biulleten Oppozitsii and in August his collaborators in France launched La Verite.
77. “What We Intend to Publish First.” Contre le Courant, May 6, 1929. Unsigned. Translated for this volume by Russell Block. This was a list of the articles and documents that Trotsky’s open letter to the USSR had promised would be published by the Left Oppositionists. The first and second selections were published in Opposition periodicals and then in Trotsky’s The Stalin School of Falsification. The fourth was published after Trotsky’s death as The Trotsky Papers, two volumes (edited by Jan Meijer, Mouton, 1964 and 1971). The fifth and sixth were eventually published by Moscow, some before Stalin died, some after.

78. The German revolution refers to the revolutionary situation that erupted in 1923 in which the German CP proved unequal to its task and the revolution was defeated. The problem was confounded by the contradictory advice given to the German CP by the Comintern leadership. Stalin’s position was essentially the same he had held in Russia in March 1917, when he favored a policy of conciliation toward the reformist-bourgeois Provisional Government, and he intervened in the Comintern to that effect. In August 1923 he wrote a letter to Zinoviev and Bukharin, saying: “Should the Communists at the present stage try to seize power without the Social Democrats? Are they sufficiently ripe for that? That, in my opinion, is the question. . . . Should the government in Germany topple over now, in a manner of speaking, and the Communists were to seize hold of it, they would end up in a crash. That is the ‘best’ case. While at the worst, they will be smashed to smithereens and thrown away back . . .” (Trotsky, Stalin, Harper & Brothers, 1941, p. 368).

79. “Communists and the Bourgeois Press.” From the pamphlet Chto i Kak Proizoshlo? where it appeared as an appendix. Unsigned. Translated for this volume by George Saunders. This statement was described in Chto i Kak Proizoshlo? as a resolution of the French Communist Opposition, although it was written by Trotsky to counteract the Stalinist agitation over the publication of his articles in the capitalist press.

80. Frederick Engels (1820-95) was the lifelong collaborator of Karl Marx and coauthor with him of The Communist Manifesto and many of the basic works of Marxism. In his last years he was the outstanding figure of the young Second International.

81. The Kuomintang (People’s Party) of China was a bourgeois nationalist organization, established in 1911 by Sun Yat-sen and led during the second Chinese revolution (1925-27) by the militarist Chiang Kai-shek. When Chiang turned against the revolution and began to massacre the Communists and militant unionists, Stalin and Bukharin proclaimed the left wing of the Kuomintang, established in Wuhan, a revolutionary leadership and subordinated the Chinese CP to it.

82. War Communism was the name given to the system of production that prevailed in the Soviet Union when it was fighting for its life during the civil war of 1918-20. The Bolsheviks had not planned to nationalize and centralize the economy so much and so soon after they came to power; their original economic plans were more gradual. But everything was subordinated to the military struggle for survival. One
result was growing conflict between the peasants, whose produce was requisitioned or confiscated, and the Soviet state; another was a continuing decline in production, both agricultural and industrial. The Kronstadt uprising of 1921 was a signal to the Bolsheviks that peasant discontent was reaching the point of explosion, and the event that led to the replacement of War Communism by the New Economic Policy (see note 34).

83. "Statement to the Press." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French for this volume by Russell Block.

84. The book that Trotsky was going to call Lenin and the Epigones was retitled La Revolution defiguree in French and, with some changes in content, The Stalin School of Falsification in English.

85. "A Lesson in Democracy I Did Not Receive." Biulleten Oppozitsii, number 1-2, July 1929. Translated for this volume by George Saunders, with extensive use of the 1930 English translation of My Life.

86. Nicholas II (1868-1918) reigned as czar of Russia from 1894 to 1917, when he was overthrown by the February revolution. Abdul Hamid II (1842-1918) reigned from 1876 to 1909, when he was deposed by the Young Turks.

87. Kurt Rosenfeld (1877-1943), a well-known civil liberties attorney, was a left-wing Reichstag deputy of the German social democracy. He was expelled in 1931 and helped found the centrist Socialist Workers Party (SAP) of Germany, of which he remained a leader for a short time.

88. Gustav Stresemann (1878-1929), founder of the German People's Party after World War I, served briefly as chancellor in 1923 and was foreign minister, 1923-29. The Stresemann policy was responsible for the 1925 Locarno Pact, Germany's entry into the League of Nations in 1926, and the German-Soviet nonaggression treaty of 1926.

89. Rudolf Hilferding (1877-1941) was a leader of the German social democracy before World War I and author of the book Finance Capital. A pacifist during the war, he became a leader of the centrist Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD), but later returned to the social democracy, serving as finance minister in the Stresemann cabinet, 1923, and the Mueller cabinet, 1928-30. He fled to France when the Nazis came to power, but the Petain regime turned him over to the Gestapo in 1940, and he died in a German prison. Karl Kautsky (1854-1938), a leader of the German social democracy, was regarded as the outstanding Marxist theoretician until World War I, when he abandoned internationalism and opposed the Russian Revolution. Trotsky's polemic against him is entitled Terrorism and Communism.

90. Hermann Mueller (1876-1931) was the Social Democratic chancellor of a German coalition government, 1928-30.

91. Lothar von Metternich (1773-1859), Austrian minister of foreign affairs, 1809-48, organized the Holy Alliance of Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Prussia in 1815, with the aim of maintaining control of Europe following the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. Francois Guizot (1787-1874), French monarchist statesman and historian, was
premier 1847-48, when he was turned out of office by the February revolu-
tion of 1848.

92. "Interview by the Osaka Mainichi." Biulleten Oppozitsii, num-
ber 1-2, July 1929. Translated for this volume by Iain Fraser. Both the
questions by the Japanese correspondent and Trotsky's answers were
made in written form.

93. In an excerpt from a letter of February 28, 1929, Trotsky said,
shortly after his arrival in Turkey: "The press portrays me as one who is
near death. That's an exaggeration! It is hardly my intention to come to
such a bad end so opportunely. The malaria attack has retrogressed since
our departure from Central Asia. As for my other ailments, they continue
to afflict me, but are not at a critical stage. I am now fully able to carry on
my work . . ." (Contre le Courant, March 9, 1929).

94. The League of Nations was set up in 1919 by the victors of World
War I. Its epoch ended ingloriously with World War II, when it was
succeeded by the United Nations.

95. The Social Democratic International refers to the Second In-
ternational (or Labor and Socialist International), organized in 1889 as
the successor to the First International. It was a loose association of
national social democratic and labor parties, uniting both revolutionary
and reformist elements. Its progressive role had ended by 1914, when its
major sections violated the most elementary socialist principles and
supported their own imperialist governments in World War I. It fell apart
during the war but was revived as a completely reformist organization in
1923. The Two-and-a-Half International (or International Association
of Socialist Parties) was formed in February 1921 by centrist parties that
had left the Second International under pressure from the revolutionary
masses. While criticizing the Second International, its leaders did not
have a basically different orientation; in May 1923 they reunited with it.

96. "Six Years of the Brandlerites." The Militant, August 15, 1929; a
revised translation from Fourth International, May 1946, is used here.
This letter was in reply to one from Boris Souvarine criticizing Trotsky's
appraisal of the Brandlerites in his March 31 letter "Groupings in the
Communist Opposition."

97. William Z. Foster (1881-1961) was a member of the American
Socialist Party, a union organizer, and a leader of the American CP. He
was the CP's candidate for president in 1924, 1928, and 1932, and its
chairman after World War II. Additional comments on Foster appear in
"Tasks of the American Opposition" later in this volume.

98. Dual power usually refers to the division of governmental power
between two contending forces in a prerevolutionary situation, resolved
by the definitive victory of one force over the other; for example, the
Provisional Government of Russia after the February revolution in 1917
and the nongovernmental Soviets shared the power and competed for it at
the same time, until the Soviets elected the Bolsheviks to leadership and
took full power in the October Revolution. In the present instance, when
Trotsky writes about elements of dual power, he is dealing not with a division of power in the final stages of capitalism but with tendencies toward a division of power after a proletarian revolution has taken power away from the capitalists, when the latter or their agents may be attempting a comeback. For a further discussion of the latter concept, see Trotsky's "Explanation in a Circle of Friends," September 2, 1931, in Writings 30-31.

99. The Black Hundreds were monarchist gangs formed by the czarist police to combat the revolutionary movement; they organized pogroms against Jews and workers.

100. "Preface to La Revolution Defiguree." From La Revolution defiguree. Translated for this volume by Russell Block.

101. The Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, which ended Germany's war against the new Soviet government in March 1918, exacted extremely punitive terms.

102. Alexander Kerensky (1882-1970), associated with the right wing of the Social Revolutionary Party, was prime minister of the Provisional Government when it was overthrown by the Bolsheviks.

103. Epigones, disciples who corrupt their teacher's doctrines, was Trotsky's derisive term for the Stalinists, who claimed to be Leninists.

104. Three of these speeches appear in The Stalin School of Falsification. The fourth speech, made on October 23, 1927, at the time of Trotsky's expulsion from the Central Committee, was printed in English in The Real Situation in Russia under the title "The Fear of Our Platform" and will be reprinted in The Challenge of the Left Opposition. The small pamphlet which Trotsky refers to later in the article was titled "Reply to a Friendly Critic," September 12, 1928, and will also be reprinted in The Challenge of the Left Opposition.


106. "Tasks of the American Opposition." The Militant, June 1, 1929. The American Opposition came into existence in November 1928 when James P. Cannon, Max Shachtman, and Martin Abern were expelled from the leadership of the American CP on the grounds of "Trotskyism." See Cannon's book The History of American Trotskyism (Pathfinder Press, 1972) for his account of how he learned what Trotsky stood for while he was attending the Sixth Congress of the Comintern.

107. Jay Lovestone (1898- ) and John Pepper, the American pseudonym of Josef Pogany (1886-1937), were leaders of the American CP who supervised the expulsion of Trotsky's supporters in 1928. They themselves were expelled on orders of Stalin in 1929 because of their sympathy for the Right Opposition. Lovestone organized an independent group that existed until World War II; he later became cold-war adviser on foreign
affairs for AFL-CIO president, George Meany. Pepper was a Hungarian who had played an undistinguished role in the Hungarian revolution of 1919; he came to the U.S. in 1922 in the company of a Comintern delegation and from this vantage point maneuvered himself into membership of the CP’s Central Committee. During the purges of the thirties, he was arrested and executed.

108. In a 1926 speech, Trotsky publicly excoriated Lovestone for grossly distorting what Trotsky had said on Anglo-American relations in a 1924 speech. Both speeches were published in 1926 by the State Soviet Publishers as a pamphlet, *Europe and America*. They have also been published in English under the same title (Pathfinder Press, 1971).

109. **Robert M. La Follette** (1855-1925) was the Republican U.S. senator from Wisconsin who ran for president in 1924 on the third-party Progressive ticket. The CP had captured a convention of the Farmer-Labor Party in 1923, changing its name to the Federated Farmer-Labor Party, but losing whatever labor support it had. The Ruthenberg-Pepper-Lovestone leadership of the CP then adopted the policy of linking the FFLP to La Follette’s third-party campaign for the presidency. There were enough misgivings about this policy in the CP leadership to get it submitted for review by the ECCI. The latter, after extensive discussion, declared the policy to be opportunist, and the CP pulled back from the La Follette candidacy, running its own ticket of Foster and Gitlow.

110. **Babbitt**, a petty-bourgeois real estate salesman in the American Midwest, was the protagonist of a novel with the same name by Sinclair Lewis, 1922. **Jimmie Higgins** was a rank-and-file socialist activist in the novel of the same name by Upton Sinclair, 1918.

111. **James P. Cannon** (1890-1974), a former activist in the Industrial Workers of the World and a leader of the Socialist Party’s left wing, was a founder of the American Communist Party, the Left Opposition, and the Socialist Workers Party. His letter to Trotsky about giving the American Opposition “a more organized form” referred to the coming first national conference of the Opposition in Chicago in May 1929. At that conference, where Trotsky’s letter was read to the delegates, the decision was made to establish the Communist League of America (Opposition). Elected as the CLA national committee were Cannon, Maurice Spector, Martin Abern, Max Shachtman, Arne Swabeck, Carl Skoglund, and Albert Glotzer.

112. “The Capitulators of the Third Wave.” *The Militant*, July 1, 1929; sections 6 and 7, which were omitted from that translation, have been supplied for this volume by Jim Burnett from *Biuiletten Oppozitii*, number 1-2, July 1929. Unsigned. The “first wave” of capitulators were the Zinovievists at the end of 1927. Those of the “second wave” were Pyatakov, Antonov-Ovseenko, and Krestinsky.

113. The policy of adventurism in *Berlin* refers to the events of May 1-3, 1929, after the Social Democratic authorities had prohibited the traditional May Day parades and demonstrations in the streets. The Social Democratic-dominated trade unions, which represented the great majority of the organized labor movement, decided to hold their May Day celebrations indoors. The German CP rejected the proposals, from Left Opposi-
tionists among others, that its supporters should attend these indoor meetings and try to persuade the union members to go out into the streets; instead, it called for a boycott of the union gatherings and action to achieve "conquest of the streets" through a CP demonstration. Its leaders motivated this by saying, "May first will be a general test of the coming civil war both for the proletariat and the police. If we do not succeed in getting hundreds of thousands into the streets, a fascist terror regime will shortly break out in Germany that will be much worse than in Bulgaria and Italy" (The Militant, July 1, 1929). The CP rhetoric about a "test of the coming civil war" was not matched by serious leadership of the ensuing street battles, where the workers following the CP line were clubbed and shot down without mercy. Twenty-seven were killed over three days, and hundreds were injured, seventy-five of them seriously. The complete command of the situation by the police was never in doubt. The CP, claiming to have the support of "the overwhelming majority" of the German workers, called a general strike against the police butchery, but no more than 50,000 responded throughout the country. When that collapsed the CP called for a one-day strike in Berlin to honor the martyrs; in the end there was no stoppage and only 2,000 attended the funeral. The Berlin events were hailed throughout the Comintern as a "glorious page" in the history of the international labor movement. In Canton an insurrection was organized by the Chinese CP at the instigation of Stalin in December 1927, when he wanted "evidence" on the eve of the CPSU's Fifteenth Congress that his policies had not ruined the Chinese revolution. Since the Chinese CP was isolated and the uprising unprepared, it was crushed in less than three days at a cost of several thousand lives.

114. "Radek and the Opposition." The Militant, August 1, 1929. That translation did not include the postscript added on July 7, which has been translated for this volume by Iain Fraser from Biulleten Oppozitsii, number 1-2, July 1929.

115. The democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry was Lenin's slogan before 1917 to designate the form of state that would follow the overthrow of Russian czarism. This was when he envisaged the Russian Revolution as bourgeois in character, led by a coalition of the workers and peasants which would take power and democratize the country without overstepping the limits of capitalist productive relations. He changed this position with the approach of the revolution, and on his return from exile in April 1917 he reoriented the Bolshevik Party to the struggle for a dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the peasants. In the 1920s the Stalinists revived the discarded formula to justify class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, especially in the colonial world. Alexander Martinov (1865-1935) was a right-wing Menshevik before 1917 and an opponent of the October Revolution. He joined the CP in 1923, and remained an opponent of Trotsky. He was a chief architect of the Stalinist theories used to justify subordinating the workers to the "progressive" bourgeoisie, including the "bloc of four classes."

116. "The Theses of Comrade Radek" by Trotsky was printed as an
appendix to his 1929 article in *The Militant*, August 1, 1929. It will be reprinted in *The Challenge of the Left Opposition*.

117. T.V. Sapronov and Vladimir M. Smirnov were leaders of an oppositional group inside the Russian CP in the early 1920s when Lenin was still active, the Group of Democratic Centralism, or Decemists, which held semisyndicalist and ultraleft views. They adhered to the United Opposition bloc in 1926, although their views remained ultraleft; the Left Opposition found it necessary to differentiate itself from the Decemist position in favor of organizing a new communist party, rather than fighting as a faction of the CP. The Decemist leaders were expelled and exiled at the same time as the Left Opposition’s.

118. “The Political Situation in China and the Tasks of the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition.” *Biulleten Oppozitsii*, number 1-2, July 1929. Unsigned. Translated for this volume by Iain Fraser. This article was introduced by a statement from the editors of the *Biulleten*: “The document printed below is the platform of the Chinese Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition). The working out of this document was preceded by numerous discussions among the Chinese Oppositionists. The initial draft was then submitted for the approval of comrades from the Russian, French, and Austrian Oppositions. Thus the present program of the Chinese Communist Left Opposition is at the same time an international document, not only in its political significance but in its origin. After a private discussion between representatives of the four national groups of Oppositionists named above (Chinese, Russian, French, and Austrian), the necessity was recognized of proceeding immediately to the setting up of an international faction of Bolshevik-Leninists, with the programmatic documents of the Russian Opposition as its basis. The first step on this road must be the setting up of a leading theoretical and political journal of the international Opposition.”

119. In the three stages of the Chinese revolution in 1927, Shanghai refers to Chiang Kai-shek’s slaughter of revolutionary forces in April, Wuhan to the Left Kuomintang’s bloc with Chiang Kai-shek and its suppression of the CP in June and July, and Canton to the putschist adventure that was crushed in December.

120. Wang Ching-wei (1884-1944) was a leader of the Left Kuomintang and the government in industrial Wuhan whom the Stalinists supported after their Chiang Kai-shek fiasco.

121. “The Bolshevik Oppositionists Need Help.” *Biulleten Oppozitsii*, number 1-2, July 1929. Translated for this volume by Iain Fraser.

122. “Why I Want to Come to London.” *Daily Express* (London), June 19, 1929. British parliamentary elections on May 30, 1929, had led to the ouster of the cabinet headed by Conservative Stanley Baldwin, and to the inception, on June 6, of the second Labourite cabinet, headed by Ramsay MacDonald.

123. Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937) was prime minister in the first two British Labour governments (1924, 1929-31); then he bolted the La-
bour Party to form a “national unity” government with the Conservatives (1931-35).

124. “Once More on Brandler and Thalheimer.” The Militant, October 1, 1929; a revised translation in Fourth International, August 1946, is used here. An erroneous date for this article was given in Biuletten Oppozitsii, number 1-2, July 1929. This letter represented a continuation of Trotsky’s remarks on the Brandlerites initiated in “Groupings in the Communist Opposition.”

125. The Vienna Arbeiter Zeitung was the central daily paper of the Austrian social democracy.

126. Arkady Maslow (1891-1941) was one of the top German CP leaders expelled in 1927 because of his support of the Russian United Opposition. He helped found the oppositional periodical Volkswille [People's Will] and the Leninbund, which for a short time was associated with the Left Opposition. He withdrew from the Leninbund leadership before it broke with the Left Opposition, and for a short time sympathized with the movement for the Fourth International in the mid-thirties.

127. The Amsterdam International (also sometimes called the “yellow” international) was the International Federation of Trade Unions, the major organization in its field, associated with and controlled by the reformists. Its chief rival between the two world wars was the Comintern-directed Red International of Labor Unions (RILU) or Profintern.

128. August 4, 1914, was the date when the Social Democratic deputies in the German Reichstag voted for the war budget to finance World War I, despite their party’s antimilitarist stand up to that time; on the same day the French and Belgian socialist parties issued manifestoes declaring support of their governments in the war.

129. Otto Wels (1873-1939) was a top leader of the German social democracy who crushed the Spartacist uprising as military commander of Berlin in 1919, and who headed his party’s delegation to the Reichstag until Hitler took over total power in 1933.

130. The First International (or International Workingmen's Association) was organized in 1864 by Karl Marx, among others, and was dissolved by its leaders in 1876 because they felt it no longer could continue its revolutionary mission.

131. “Tenacity, Tenacity, Tenacity!” Biuletten Oppozitsii, number 1-2, July 1929. Translated for this volume by Iain Fraser.

132. G.I. Safarov (1891-1941) was a member of Zinoviev’s Leningrad group and a leader of the Young Communist League. Expelled from the party in 1927, he refused to capitulate with the Zinovievists and was deported with the Trotskyists, but soon capitulated.

133. Nikolai Krestinsky (1883-1938), a member of the first Politburo (1919), was a supporter of the Left Opposition in 1923-24. Along with Pyatakov, he capitulated in 1928 while serving as Soviet ambassador in Berlin. A defendant in the 1938 Moscow trial, he was convicted and executed.

134. Sergei Gusev (1874-1933), an Old Bolshevik, and Dmitri
Manuilsky (1883-1952) had joined the Stalinist faction in the early 1920s. Like Trotsky, Manuilsky had belonged to the independent Marxist organization, the Mezhrayontsi (Inter-District Group), which became part of the Bolshevik Party in 1917. He served as secretary of the Comintern from 1931 to its dissolution in 1943.

135. Jules Guesde (1845-1922) was a founder of the French Marxist movement and an opponent of reformism most of his life. But with World War I, he abandoned his past and became a supporter of the French war and a member of the war cabinet. Victor Adler (1852-1918), founder and leader of the Austrian social democracy and a member of the International Socialist Bureau, also supported World War I. George Plekhanov (1856-1918) was the founder of the first Russian Marxist organization, the Emancipation of Labor, in 1883. After collaborating with Lenin on Iskra in emigration, he became a Menshevik supporter of the Russian side in World War I and an opponent of the October Revolution.

136. "What Will the First of August Bring?" The Militant, August 1, 1929. Signed "By the Editors of The Opposition," the international magazine Trotsky was trying to bring into existence. Shortly after the suppression of the 1929 May Day demonstration in Berlin, the West European Bureau of the Comintern decreed that August 1 should be an international "red day," designed among other things to combat imperialist war, avenge the victims of the Berlin repression, and demonstrate the working class's ability to achieve the "conquest of the streets."

137. The Red International of Labor Unions (Profintern) was organized in Moscow in July 1920 as the Communist-led rival to the reformist International Federation of Trade Unions (Amsterdam International). In 1945 they united as the World Federation of Trade Unions, but they split after the cold war began, the reformists withdrawing to create the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in 1949. The National Minority Movement was organized in 1924 as a left-wing caucus in the British Trades Union Congress. Although initiated by the British CP, it did not offer a real alternative to the "left" union bureaucrats being courted by Moscow through the Anglo-Russian Committee.

138. Albert A. Purcell (1872-1935) and Arthur J. Cook (1885-1931) were "leftist" leaders of the British union movement and the Anglo-Russian Committee.

139. James H. Thomas (1874-1949) was a leader of the British railroad union, colonial secretary in the first Labour government and lord privy seal in the second. He deserted the Labour Party in 1931 to help MacDonald set up a coalition government with the Tories.

140. The Unitary General Confederation of Labor (CGTU) split away in 1921 to form a more radical rival to the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), the major union federation of France, which was dominated by reformists. They were reunited in 1936 during the People's Front regime.

141. Gustav Monmousseau (1883-1960), a former revolutionary syndicalist, became a leader of the French CP and the CGTU, and a staunch Stalinist.
142. **Jean Jacquesmotte** (1883-1936) became the chief leader of the Belgian CP after a majority of its leading committee was expelled for “Trotskyism” in 1928.

143. **Bohumir Smeral** (1880-1941), a Czech Social Democrat who initially supported World War I, was a right-wing leader of the Czechoslovak CP. In 1926 he became a member of the ECCI and remained in Moscow for several years, a faithful deputy of Stalin. After the Munich Pact (1938), he returned to the Soviet Union.

144. **Karl Zoergiebel** (1878- ) was a Social Democrat and Berlin police commissioner in charge of the brutal assaults against CP demonstrators in May 1929.

145. When the German social democracy campaigned for election to the Reichstag in May 1928 its candidates solemnly swore that they would oppose the construction of an armored cruiser, Pocket Battleship A, which had been approved by the outgoing Reichstag. But when the Social Democrats not only got the highest vote in the election (over nine million) but also became the dominant element in the coalition government headed by Hermann Mueller; the leaders of the party found that they could not resist the pressure of their capitalist partners in the coalition and they announced that they would proceed with the construction of the cruiser. CP leaders then announced in the Reichstag that in response to popular demand they were going to collect signatures to a petition for the enactment of a “law forbidding the construction of armored cruisers and other warships.” Although many Social Democrats were opposed to their leaders’ betrayal of their campaign pledges, the CP petition campaign was an embarrassing failure, collecting only 1,200,000 names, which was two million less than the CP vote.

146. Trotsky’s contribution to this discussion, “Is It Possible to Fix a Definite Schedule for a Counter-Revolution or a Revolution?”, September 1923, will be found in *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, volume 2.

147. The French CP’s poor results with its 1929 May Day demonstration in Paris led it shortly after to engage in a campaign against a prowar demonstration in Vincennes, where the results were even poorer. While the party’s paper consoled itself with the assertion that the CP’s action had dealt a blow to the government, the party’s Political Bureau had to admit publicly that the results were mediocre and revealed a gap between “our party and the masses.”

148. “Combatting Lies and Slanders.” From *La Crise de la section francaise de la Ligue communiste internationaliste*, part two, published in 1939. Translated for this volume by Fred Buchman. This was an extract from a letter to Pierre Gourget, a member of the French Opposition circles then closest to Trotsky; in 1932 he capitulated to Stalinism and returned to the CP. On this occasion Gourget, in agreement with Alfred Rosmer, had written to Trotsky about slanders against Oppositionists being circulated by the Stalinists, in particular against Raymond Molinier, then still a member of the CP.

149. **R.M., Raymond Molinier** (1904- ) was another founder of
the Opposition group that began publishing *La Verite* in August 1929, although he was not expelled from the CP until November. He was for several years the target of rumors and innuendos by Oppositionist opponents about allegedly improper fund-raising methods. In order to concentrate the discussion on political differences, Trotsky sought to settle these rumors by having a control commission investigate them formally, very much like the proposal he made when the charges had emanated from the CP. Trotsky's collaboration with the Molinier group ended in 1935 when it violated discipline by publishing a periodical, *La Commune* (see *Writings* 35-36), although he expressed a willingness to explore a reconciliation shortly before his death in 1940 (see *Writings* 39-40).

150. Alfred Rosmer (1877-1964) was a revolutionary syndicalist with whom Trotsky collaborated in France during World War I. He was elected to the ECCI in 1920 and was a leader of the French CP until his expulsion as an Oppositionist in 1924. He was a leader of the ILO and a member of its International Secretariat until November 1930, when he withdrew over differences with Trotsky on how to build the movement. Their personal friendship was renewed in 1936. He wrote several books on labor history. His memoir of Trotsky in Paris, 1915-16, appears in the collection *Leon Trotsky, The Man and His Work* (Pathfinder Press, 1969). Pierre Monatte (1881-1960) was a well-known syndicalist who belonged briefly to the French CP before founding *La Revolution proletarianne* in 1924 and the Syndicalist League in 1926. Trotsky's criticism of his policies in 1929 will be found in *Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions* (Pathfinder Press, 1969).


152. Andres Nin (1892-1937), former secretary of the Red International of Labor Unions, had been deported from the USSR as a Left Oppositionist. He was soon to return to Spain and become the best-known leader of the Opposition group there. Deepening differences with Trotsky, described in *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)* (Pathfinder Press, 1973), led him to split from the Opposition and to help found the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM) in 1935. He was kidnapped and murdered by the Stalinists during the Spanish Civil War.

153. "From the Publisher." *Biulleten Oppozitsii,* number 1-2, July 1929. Translated for this volume by Iain Fraser. Unsigned. This appeared on the front page of the first issue of the *Biulleten.*

154. "Necessary Clarifications Concerning the First of August." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume by Pat Galligan. This was an addition to "What Will the First of August Bring?"

155. "Diplomacy or Revolutionary Politics?" *Biulleten Oppozitsii,*
number 1-2, July 1929. Translated for this volume by Iain Fraser.

156. **Alois Neurath** (1886-1933) was a leader of the Czechoslovak CP and a member of the ECCI before being expelled as a "Trotskyist." Actually he was closest to the Brandlerites. In 1932 he became critical of Brandler because of the latter's apologies for the Soviet bureaucracy's role in the USSR and his dishonest criticisms of Trotsky's proposals on how to fight the Nazis in Germany.

157. **Solomon Lozovsky** (1878-1952) was the Stalinist functionary in charge of the Red International of Labor Unions. He was arrested and shot on Stalin's orders during an anti-Semitic campaign. **D. Petrovsky** was a Bundist Menshevik who returned to Russia from the United States in 1917, became a Bolshevik, and then the Comintern representative to the British CP, where he functioned under the name of Bennet. He returned to the Soviet Union in 1929 and disappeared in the purges. **Otto Kuusinen** (1891-1964) was a Finnish Social Democrat who fled to the Soviet Union after the collapse of the Finnish revolution in April 1918. He became a Stalinist and served as a Comintern secretary, 1922-31. **V. Kolarov** (1877-1950), a Bulgarian exile, was a member of the ECCI, 1922-43, and president of the Krestintern (Peasant International), 1928-39; as a top leader of the Bulgarian government after World War II, he helped to arrange the Sofia equivalent of the Moscow trials.

158. "A Man Overboard." La Lutte de classes (The Class Struggle), January-February 1933. Translated for this volume by Jeff White. This was a final letter to Souvarine.

159. Souvarine's letter was 125 typewritten pages and takes up 69 printed pages in Contribution a l'histoire du Comintern, where it has the title "A Dispute with Trotsky."

160. "How Revolutionaries Are Formed." La Verite, number 4, 1939. Translated for this volume by Jeff White. This was a letter to Maurice Paz (1896- ), a French lawyer and Oppositionist, associated with Contre le Courant (Against the Stream). He was one of the first to visit Trotsky in Turkey, being of considerable personal service to him. Trotsky sought to convince Paz of the need to launch a weekly paper of the Opposition in France, and became impatient after some months of foot-dragging by Paz on this issue. The letter was written when Trotsky had already opened negotiations with other French Oppositionists to begin the weekly paper that was to be named La Verite.

161. Contre le Courant had received financial aid from the Russian Opposition through Pyatakov before its leaders were expelled from the CP at the end of 1927. The first issue of Contre le Courant was dated November 20, 1927. The German Leninbund also received such aid through Pyatakov.

162. **Albert Treint** (1889-1972), a supporter of Zinoviev as the central leader of the French CP in the mid-twenties, was expelled in 1927 for having backed the Russian United Opposition. Many Oppositionists in 1929 refused to have anything to do with him because of his role in expelling them earlier. Treint later belonged for a short period to the Left
Opposition before joining a syndicalist group.

163. Pierre Broué notes that among the French visitors to Prinkipo who discussed the weekly paper campaign were Alfred Rosmer, Pierre Naville, Pierre Frank, Raymond Molinier, and Jean van Heijenoort (Le Mouvement communiste en France).

164. The September 1911 congress of the German social democracy, held at Jena, elected Hugo Haase to be party cochairman with August Bebel. Haase (1863-1919) took leadership of a centrist minority against the war policy of the social democracy and was a founder of the USPD in 1917. He was assassinated on the steps of the Reichstag by a right-wing fanatic.

165. Max Eastman (1883-1969), editor of The Masses before World War I, was an early sympathizer of the Left Opposition and translator of several of Trotsky’s books. His rejection of dialectical materialism in the 1920s was succeeded by his rejection of socialism in the 1930s. He became an anticommunist and an editor of Reader’s Digest.

166. “A Letter to the Daily Herald.” Daily Herald (London), July 22, 1929. This paper of the British Labour Party noted that it was printing Trotsky's letter “in full as received,” that is, without any attempt to supply its readers with a better English translation from the Russian than Trotsky had been able to make on his own.

167. The false Zinoviev letter, purportedly giving the British CP “instructions” to take over the Labour Party, was forged by the Tories and circulated on the eve of the 1924 general elections as a way of defeating the incumbent MacDonald government. It was supposedly signed by Zinoviev as president of the Comintern, and undoubtedly contributed to the Labourite defeat at the polls.

168. “The Sino-Soviet Conflict: A Press Statement.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume by Marilyn Vogt. This statement was in reply to questions by an American press correspondent. In 1929 Chiang Kai-shek sought to abrogate the 1924 treaties with the Soviet Union concerning the Chinese Eastern Railroad in Manchuria. The CERR was a portion of the original route of the Trans-Siberian Railroad that went through Manchuria to Vladivostok; when the Soviet government came into its possession, it decided not to turn the CERR over to the reactionary warlords then controlling Manchuria but to hold onto it until it could be turned over to an independent Chinese government truly representative of the Chinese people. In July 1929 Chiang’s forces arrested 174 Soviet officials and employees of the CERR, leading to a break in diplomatic relations and a dispatch of both Chinese and Soviet troops to the Manchurian frontiers. Actual fighting took place before Chiang backed down.

169. Trotsky’s account of the work of this 1926 commission is printed later in this volume, in “The Sino-Soviet Conflict and the Tasks of the Opposition.”

170. Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) was the right-wing military leader
of the Kuomintang during the revolution of 1925-27. He ruled China until
overthrown by the Chinese CP in 1949.

171. The U.S. government intervened in the dispute through a note by
Secretary of State Stimson to the USSR and China on July 19, 1929,
invoking the Kellogg Pact and calling for submission to arbitration.

172. "A Wretched Document." Biuletten Oppozitsii, number 3-4,
September 1929. Translated for this volume by Fred Buchman. This was
written shortly after the publication of the capitulatory statement of
Radek, Preobrazhensky, and Smilga, which seems to have been timed to
coincide with the holding of the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI in July 1929.

173. The new five-year plan refers to what is now called the Soviet
Union's first five-year plan (October 1928-December 1932), even though it
was not adopted until April 1929. Previously, other and much more
modest five-year plans had been drafted and debated vigorously, espe­
cially by the Left Opposition, which considered them to be inadequate.
The new plan, which was prepared after the Left Opposition had been
expelled, seemed to some of the Oppositionists to be just what they had
been fighting for, and became a prime factor, or excuse, in their decision
to capitulate.

174. Trotsky later revised his view and decided that the workers'
and peasants' government slogan was correct and acceptable provided
it was filled with the proper revolutionary content, and not presented in
counterposition to the dictatorship of the proletariat. For his later views
see the chapter "Workers' and Farmers' Government" in "The Death
Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International" and
other articles in The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution
(Pathfinder Press, 1974).

175. The Tenth Congress of the Russian CP was held in March 1921 at
a time of great social tension, one example of which was the Kronstadt
uprising against the Soviet government. Oppositional tendencies had
arisen inside the CP itself, and Lenin was sufficiently worried about the
fate of the party to propose, for the first time, a temporary ban against
factions inside the CP. The passage of this ban did not prevent Stalin and
his collaborators from organizing a secret faction, nor did it prevent
Lenin himself from deciding to form a group to fight against Stalinism
inside the party.

176. The "third period," according to the schema proclaimed by the
Stalinists in 1928, was the final period of capitalism, with revolution just
around the corner. The Comintern's tactics during the next six years were
marked by ultraleftism, adventurism, sectarian "red" unionism, and op­
position to the united front. In 1934, the theory and practice of the third
period were officially discarded, to be replaced by those of the People's
Front (1935-39), but the latter period was not given a number. The "first
period" was 1917-24 (capitalist crisis and revolutionary upsurge); the
"second period" was 1925-28 (capitalist stabilization).

177. One of Preobrazhensky's letters to Trotsky, and three of Trotsky's
to Preobrazhensky early in 1928, were translated under the title "Letters

178. Vyacheslav Menzhinsky (1874-1934) succeeded Felix Dzerzhinsky as head of the Soviet secret police when the latter died in 1926.


180. Kurt Landau was a Left Oppositionist who had moved from Austria to Germany and was to become a leader of the German United Left Opposition when it was formed in 1930. He also served briefly as a member of the Provisional International Secretariat before splitting from the Left Opposition in 1931. Trotsky’s analysis of Landau as a type appears in Writings 32-33. He was assassinated by the Stalinists in Spain during the civil war. Die Fahne des Kommunismus (Communist Banner) was the publication of the Leninbund.

181. Chang Tso-lin (1873-1928) was the Chinese warlord who controlled Manchuria with Japanese backing in the 1920s. In 1928 he was assassinated by the Japanese military when they decided to dump their protege in order to prepare for direct military intervention in Manchuria.

182. Brest-Litovsk, a town on the Polish-German border, was the site of peace negotiations between the new Soviet republic and the imperial German government, November 1917-January 1918. The German delegation was headed by Richard von Kuehlmann (1873-1948), foreign secretary; the Soviet delegation by Trotsky, commissar of foreign affairs.

183. Felix Dzerzhinsky (1877-1926), a founder of the Polish Social Democratic Party, was active in the Polish and Russian revolutionary movements. After the Russian Revolution he headed the Cheka from its formation in December 1917, and the Supreme Council of National Economy from 1924. He was a supporter of Stalin. Georgi Chicherin (1872-1936), who had been a diplomat in the czarist ministry, supported the Social Revolutionaries in the 1905 revolution and was forced to emigrate. Returning to Russia in January 1918, he became a Bolshevik, succeeding Trotsky as commissar of foreign affairs in 1918 and serving in this post until 1930.

184. “An Open Letter to the Editorial Board of La Verite.” Fourth International, August 1946. This letter was intended to place Trotsky’s political authority behind the group that had decided to publish an Oppositional weekly in France, La Verite, whose first number was to appear August 15, 1929. The postscript refers to a rumor that Maurice Paz and his associates were about to publish another Opposition weekly, but it did not appear, and Contre Le Courant itself folded up before the end of the year.

185. “A Declaration of La Verite.” La Verite, September 13, 1929. Unsigned. Translated for this volume by Art Young. This statement of aims in the first issue of the new paper was written after discussions held with several of its French sponsors at Prinkipo.
186. **Sydney Webb** (1859-1947) was the chief British theoretician of gradualism and a founder of the reformist Fabian Society and the British Labour Party. He and his wife had visited Trotsky in Turkey shortly before the British parliamentary elections in May 1929. When Trotsky asked about the chances of a British visa, Webb told him that the chief difficulty would be with the Liberals. But when the Labourites took office in 1929, in a coalition with the Liberals, it was the former and not the latter who rejected Trotsky's application. The Labour government had Webb knighted and appointed to the House of Lords under the name Lord Passfield in 1929 and selected him as colonial secretary, 1930-31.

187. **Social fascism**, a theory made famous by Stalin from 1928 to 1934, held that the social democracy and fascism were not antipodes but twins. Since the social democrats were designated as only a variety of fascism, and since just about everyone but the Stalinists was some kind of fascist (a liberal-fascist or a labor-fascist or a Trotsky-fascist), then it was impermissible for the Stalinists to engage in united fronts with any other tendency against the fascists. No theory was or could have been more helpful to Hitler in the years before he won power in Germany. The Stalinists dropped the theory at some unpublicized date in 1934 without bothering to explain why, and soon were wooing not only the social democrats but also capitalist politicians like Roosevelt, whom they had still dubbed fascists early in 1934.

188. The **Versailles peace treaty**, signed in June 1919, reshaped national boundaries along the lines of the secret treaties of the Allies in World War I. It deprived Germany of territory in Europe and of her overseas colonies, limited her military strength and provided for payment of war reparations.

189. **Raymond Poincare** (1860-1934) was president of France, 1913-20, and prime minister, 1912, 1922-24, 1926-29. His name was given to the 1928 monetary reform which reduced the franc to one-fifth of its 1911 value, or approximately four cents. **Franklin-Bouillon** was the head of a governmental finance committee in 1929. **Aristide Briand** (1862-1932) was expelled from the French Socialist Party in 1906 for accepting office in a capitalist cabinet. He was premier several times, including a brief period following Poincare's resignation in July 1929 and then foreign minister in the Tardieu government which succeeded his. In September 1929 he called for the establishment of a United States of Europe, which Trotsky used as the occasion to write the essay appearing later in this volume, "Disarmament and the United States of Europe."

190. **Philip Snowden** (1864-1987), a British Labourite, served as chancellor of the exchequer in MacDonald's 1924 and 1929-31 cabinets. He bolted the Labour Party with MacDonald in 1931 to support the latter's coalition government with the Tories, for which he was appointed to the House of Lords. The **City** is the financial and commercial center of London.

191. This Comintern manifesto, written by Trotsky, will be found in his book *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, volume 1.
192. ARAC, Republican Association of War Veterans, was founded after World War I by Henri Barbusse, Raymond Lefebvre, and Paul Vaillant-Couturier.

193. The Paris Commune (March 18-May 28, 1871) was the first workers' government. It was crushed by the military forces of French capitalism aided by German capitalism. Appraisals of its achievements and mistakes will be found in Leon Trotsky on the Paris Commune (Pathfinder Press, 1970).

194. “A Letter to the Editorial Board of La Lutte de Classes.” Fourth International, September 1946. The group around La Lutte de classes was one of the several Oppositional tendencies in France with whom Trotsky came into touch after reaching Turkey. Its chief editors, Pierre Naville and Francis Gerard, visited Trotsky in the summer of 1929. Naville wrote a long letter seeking Trotsky's reply to important questions facing the Opposition and Trotsky chose in this response not only to answer specific questions but also to solicit the support of La Lutte de classes for the new Verite project. In his 1962 book Trotsky vivant, Naville cites, as an example of the care with which Trotsky read the Oppositional press of that period, an extract from a letter by Trotsky dated October 12, 1929: “The latest issue of La Lutte de classes is most interesting. The lead article and the statement on the Sino-Soviet conflict are good, solid articles. The polemic against Louzon is excellent. In the article on the British movement, there is a theoretical error. The author says: ‘The capitalists who sell their products to the wage workers take back with the left hand what they have given with the right. Under these conditions profit is impossible, and the capital for satisfying . . .’ From this it follows that profit is not created in the course of production, but through commerce. Even if society were composed solely of capitalists and workers, without foreign trade, profit would exist.’

195. Pierre Naville (1904- ) was expelled from the French CP as an Oppositionist in 1928. He helped to revive the magazine Clarite (Clarity), whose name was changed to La Lutte de classes. He was a co-founder of the Communist League of France and a member of the International Secretariat of the Left Opposition and its successors until World War II, when he withdrew from the Fourth International. Later he became associated with a number of centrist groups and wrote several books on science and sociology.

196. Francis Gerard was the pseudonym of Gerard Rosenthal, who later served as Trotsky's French attorney and wrote a book, Avocat de Trotsky, Opera Mundi, 1975.

197. The first part of Contre le Courant's “platform draft,” written in April 1929, was published in its July 10 issue; the second in its July 28 issue. A third installment, in its September 21 issue, said it was “to be continued,” but the continuation did not appear in its next, and final, issue, dated October 22. The editors of the magazine insisted that the platform draft had not been written by Maurice Paz alone.

198. Naville and Gerard did endorse La Verite and join in its work.
Treint later joined the Left Opposition for a brief period. Contre le Courant attacked La Verite bitterly in its own final issue, and most of its editors made their break with the Left Opposition at this time, although a few went over to La Verite and helped to found the Communist League of France the following year.

199. "To the Marx and Lenin Circle." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume by Ivan Licho.


201. Karl Korsch (1889-1961), a minister in the Communist-Social Democratic government of the German state of Thuringia, was expelled from the German CP in 1929 for alleged "Trotskyism." He formed a small ultraleft sect.

202. "From a Letter to an Oppositionist in the USSR." Biulleten Oppozitsii, number 3-4, September 1929. Translated for this volume by Fred Buchman.

203. Hugo Urbahns (1890-1946), a German CP leader expelled in 1927 as an Oppositionist, was one of the founders of the Leninbund. It severed connections with the Left Opposition early in 1930. The "worthless article" is H.P.'s, referred to in "The Sino-Soviet Conflict and the Opposition."

204. Alexander Kolchak (1874-1920) commanded one of the White Guard counterrevolutionary fronts during the Russian civil war.

205. General Hans von Seeckt (1866-1936), a German army officer, was chief of the Reichswehr, 1920-26. The Fifth Congress of the Comintern, June-July 1924, and Zinoviev as president of the Comintern did not assess correctly the defeat of the German revolution in 1923, and held that the high point of the revolutionary crisis was on hand.

206. Benito Mussolini (1883-1945), the founder of Italian fascism, was a member of the antiwar wing of the Socialist Party in 1914 before becoming an agent of the Allied imperialists. He organized the fascist movement in 1919 and became dictator in 1922. He remained in command of Italy until 1943, and was executed by partisans toward the end of World War II.


209. "From the Publisher." Biulleten Oppozitsii, number 3-4, September 1929. Unsigned. Translated for this volume by Fred Buchman.
210. “G.I. Myasnikov’s Escape and His Ordeal.” *Biulleten Oppositioni*, number 3-4, September 1929. Unsigned. Translated for this volume by Fred Buchman. G.I. *Myasnikov* (1889-1946) was expelled from the Soviet CP in 1922 for violating party discipline by his manner of leadership of the Workers’ Group, a splinter of the Workers’ Opposition group. He was arrested in May 1923, released after a few months, allowed to go to Germany, and arrested again on his return at the end of the year. He made some approaches to the Left Opposition in 1929 after Trotsky reached Turkey, but the differences were too great to permit political collaboration (see “Forgetful Myasnikov” in *Writings 30*).


212. “Defense of the Soviet Republic and the Opposition.” *The Militant*, December 21, 1929-January 25, 1930; a revised translation by John G. Wright is taken from *Fourth International*, October and December 1946, February and March 1947. This pamphlet was a continuation of the polemic against people in and around the Left Opposition that Trotsky had begun with “The Sino-Soviet Conflict and the Opposition.”

213. Robert *Louzon* (1882- ) was a syndicalist who belonged briefly to the French CP in the 1920s and left it with Pierre Monatte to found *La Revolution proletarienne* and the Syndicalist League.

214. Otto *Bauer* (1881-1938), leader of the powerful Austrian Social Democratic Party after World War I, was a founder of the short-lived Two-and-a-Half International before he returned to the Second International.


216. The Red Army invaded Georgia in February 1921 to come to the assistance of a Bolshevik uprising against the Menshevik government there, which, although willing to cooperate with other forces, was opposed to the Bolsheviks and affiliation to the Soviet government. The extent and popularity of the uprising, however, had been largely exaggerated and it took the Red Army ten days of heavy fighting to enter Tiflis, the Georgian capital. Trotsky, head of the Red Army, had not ordered or even been informed of the invasion of Georgia, which was mainly instigated and carried out by Stalin and Ordzhonikidze, chief commissar of the Revolutionary War Council of the Caucasus. Lenin, who had agreed to the invasion with some reluctance, urged as much caution and conciliation in its execution as possible. Trotsky disagreed with the invasion for tactical reasons, for he felt that Menshevik Georgia did not present a military danger to the Soviets and that in time a majority of the population could be won over. However, as head of the Red Army, he answered the hue and cry that the world bourgeoisie and Second International raised on this issue in his book *Between Red and White*.

217. The march on Warsaw by the Red Army in the summer of 1920
was supported by Lenin in the hope of effecting a juncture with the revolutionary workers of the capital and ensuring the establishment of a Polish Soviet Republic. With the aid of French imperialism, Pilsudski was able to drive back the Red Army after it had succeeded in coming within a short distance of Warsaw itself. Lenin later acknowledged that Trotsky had been correct in his views.

218. **David Lloyd George** (1863-1945) was the Liberal prime minister of Britain, 1916-22. **Andrew Bonar Law** (1858-1923), a Conservative, replaced the Lloyd George coalition government in 1922, but resigned as prime minister in May 1923 because of ill health; he was succeeded by Stanley Baldwin.

219. **Ruth Fischer** (1895-1961) was a leader in the German CP in the 1920s. Expelled in 1927, she helped found the Leninbund with Maslow and Urbahns.

220. **Maximilien Robespierre** (1758-94) was the leader of the left Jacobins and head of the French revolutionary government, 1793-94. The day on which he fell from power was 9 Thermidor (July 27, 1794) in the new revolutionary calendar.

221. **Josef Frey** (1882-1957), a founder of the Austrian CP who was expelled in 1927, was a leader of one of the Austrian Left Opposition groups.

222. **Maxim Litvinov** (1876-1951), an Old Bolshevik, was deputy commissar of foreign affairs, soon to become commissar, 1930-39. Stalin used him to personify "collective security" and "peaceful coexistence" when alliances with the democratic imperialists were sought. He was appointed ambassador to the U.S., 1941-43, and deputy commissar of foreign affairs, 1943-46, and then was shelved during the Stalin-Hitler pact and the cold war.

223. On October 16, 1926, the United Opposition, faced with the threat of expulsion which would cut them off prematurely from contact with the party membership, issued a statement to the party pledging that it would discontinue advocating its views in the intensely sharp factional form that the struggle had assumed by that time. The increasingly repressive measures taken by the Stalinist leadership and the decisive importance of the events that occurred in China soon after made it impossible to conduct the struggle in the form pledged by the statement. This tactical move by the Opposition inside the CPSU was criticized by some of its sympathizers abroad.

224. "Where Is the Leninbund Going?" By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume by Marilyn Vogt.

225. **Jan Frankel**, a Czech Oppositionist from 1927, became a member of Trotsky's secretariat and guard in 1929. He was the only other witness besides Trotsky at the April 1937 hearings on the Moscow trials conducted by the Dewey Commission (see *The Case of Leon Trotsky*, Merit Publishers, 1969).

227. Amadeo Bordiga (1889-1970), one of the top leaders of the Italian CP, was the best known figure of the Italian Left Faction, which was also known as the Prometeo group, after its journal Prometeo (Prometheus). He was arrested by the Mussolini regime in 1926, and was still unable to play a direct role in his group in 1929, when the Comintern expelled him on charges of "Trotskyism." The Bordigists were the first Italian group to adhere to the Left Opposition, but their inveterate sectarianism led to their separation at the end of 1932.

228. Fernand Loriot (1870-1932), a French socialist who helped found the CP, became an Oppositionist in 1925 and a member of the editorial board of Contre le Courant at the end of 1927. A year later he broke with communism and joined the Revolution proletarienne group.

229. A Soviet Hungary was proclaimed on March 21, 1919, when the capitalist government of Count Karolyi voluntarily turned the power over to the Soviets; it was overthrown on August 1, 1919, by counterrevolutionary armies directed by France and her allies.

230. Ercoli was the pseudonym of Palmiro Togliatti (1893-1964) who in 1922 was elected to the Central Committee of the new Italian CP and in 1924 to the ECCI. After his arrest and release in Italy in 1925, he went abroad and in 1926 was promoted to the Secretariat of the ECCI. He headed Comintern operations in Spain during the civil war and returned to Italy in 1944 to head the CP until his death.

231. "An Open Letter to the Bolshevik-Leninists Who Signed the August 22 Declaration." Biulleten Oppozitsii, number 6, October 1929. Translated for this volume by Jim Burnett. Oppositionists in the USSR, led by Christian Rakovsky, Vladimir Kosior, and Mikhail Okudzhava had drawn up a declaration, dated August 22, 1929, and addressed it to the Central Committee and Central Control Commission of the CPSU. While its form was that of an appeal for reinstatement of the Left Opposition, its main aim was to demonstrate that Stalin's left turn was no basis for conciliation with Stalinism, let alone capitulation of the Radek and Pyatakov varieties. Trotsky mailed copies of the August 22 declaration to the Soviet penal colonies and reprinted it in the Biulleten, along with his open letter that was designed to express both his solidarity with its overall purpose and his reservations about certain of its formulations.


234. Edouard Van Overstraeten, a founder of the Belgian CP, was expelled in 1928 and helped found the Left Opposition. In 1929 differences
deepened between him and Trotsky on the one hand and between him and the Charleroi Federation of the Opposition on the other, leading by the end of 1930 to a split by Overstraeten and his group. They existed for a short while under the name of League of Communist Internationalists, but Overstraeten withdrew from politics before it expired.

235. **Eugen Karl Duehring** (1833-1901), a German lawyer, economist, and philosopher of the positivist school, sought to win socialists to oppose the "abuses" of capitalism rather than capitalism itself. He is chiefly remembered because of Engels's criticism of his views in Anti-Duehring: Herr Eugen Duehring's Revolution in Science.

236. "On the Politics of the Left Opposition in Germany." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume by Marilyn Vogt.


238. "Rebuke to a Capitulator." Biulleten Oppozitsii, number 6, October 1929. Signed "The Editorial Board." Translated for this volume by Jim Burnett.


240. Prime Minister MacDonald visited the United States in October 1929 to discuss British-U.S. naval parity with Herbert Hoover (1874-1964), a conservative Republican, who had taken office as president of the United States in March 1929.

241. **Arthur Henderson** (1863-1935), secretary of the British Labour Party, 1911-34, was home secretary in MacDonald's first cabinet and foreign secretary in his second. He was also president of the Second International in the twenties.

242. **Charles M. Schwab** (1862-1939), an American steel magnate, headed Bethlehem Steel Co. when it became the leading manufacturer of war materials for the Allies in World War I.

243. The **Hague conference** of August 1929 met to discuss the Young Plan, which was ratified in the spring of 1930. The Young Plan, after U.S. big-business lawyer Owen D. Young (1874-1962), was the second of two arrangements for supervising Germany's war reparations payments by a commission set up under the Versailles treaty. The first had been the Dawes Plan, after U.S. banker and politician Charles G. Dawes (1865-1951). Young administered both plans, which had, like the Versailles treaty, the contradictory aims of subordinating the German economy and stifling the postwar revolutionary upsurge. The Young Plan was superseded in 1931, when a moratorium on payment of the German war debt proposed by Hoover was adopted.

244. **Narodnism** (Populism) refers to the movement of Russian intel-
lectuals who saw the liberation of the peasants as the key to the country's development and conducted their activities among them. The movement split into two groups in 1879, one of which eventually became the Marxist group led by Plekhanov while the other evolved into the Social Revolutionary Party.

245. The War and the International was published in the United States under the title The Bolsheviki and World Peace (Boni and Liveright, New York, 1918).

246. Otto von Bismarck (1815-98) was head of the Prussian government from 1862, and chancellor of the German empire, 1871-90. He unified Germany under Prussia and the Hohenzollerns, and was a vehement enemy of the labor and socialist movements.


248. The thesis of C.G. refers to a long article written by Rakovsky in collaboration with Kosior and Okudzhava and distributed along with their August 22 declaration. Extracts from its concluding section were published in The Militant, December 21, 1929.

249. Jan E. Rudzutak (1887-1938) replaced Zinoviev on the Politburo when the latter was expelled from that body in 1926. Rudzutak was tried in secrecy or shot without trial during the purges.

250. Gregory Bessedovsky was an official in the Soviet embassy in Paris who defected to the capitalist world on October 3, 1929. Claiming that he was prevented from leaving the embassy, he made his departure by climbing over a garden wall and calling the police.


252. Gregory Sokolnikov (1888-1939), an Old Bolshevik, held many military, diplomatic, industrial, and political posts in the Soviet government. He briefly supported the United Opposition, but soon made his peace with Stalin. He was retained on the Central Committee and became ambassador to Britain when diplomatic relations were resumed in 1929. A defendant in the 1937 Moscow trial, he drew a prison term.

253. "Greetings to the Weekly Militant." The Militant, November 30, 1929. In the following year, when he had more specific information, Trotsky revised his view about the Belgian and American Oppositions' ability to become independent parties (see Writings 30).


"L.T." Translated for this volume by Jim Burnett. The Smirnov-Boguslavsky capitulation took place at the end of October 1929.

256. Trotsky himself reached the age of fifty on November 7, 1929.

257. "We Need Help." Biulleten Oppozitsii, number 7, November-December 1929. Signed "The Editorial Board." Translated for this volume by Iain Fraser.

258. "The Faces Change, the System Remains." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume by Marilyn Vogt. This was written as the preface to a German edition of Trotsky's 1928 pamphlet, Who Is Leading the Comintern Today?, which was serialized in The Militant, August 15-November 30, 1929, and will be reprinted in The Challenge of the Left Opposition.

259. Georgi Gapon (1870-1906) and Khrustalev-Nosar were figures in early and spontaneous stages of the 1905 revolution in Russia. Gapon was at the head of the famous procession to the Winter Palace on January 9 when the czar's troops fired on the mass of demonstrators. Khrustalev-Nosar was Trotsky's predecessor as president of the St. Petersburg Soviet in 1905.

260. "The Austrian Crisis and Communism." The Militant, January 4 and 11, 1930. Revised from Biulleten Oppozitsii, number 7, November-December 1929, by George Saunders. The Austrian working class in 1929, one of the best organized in the world, had shown a much greater readiness than its social democratic leadership for decisive struggle against the growing Austrian fascist movement. As part of their drive for power, the fascists and other reactionaries began a campaign in the autumn to "reform" the Austrian constitution by curtailing important democratic rights of the industrial proletariat and by shifting power from the legislative to the executive branch of the government. Instead of mobilizing the workers for defense of their rights and conditions, the leaders of the powerful Social Democratic Party temporized and opened up negotiations with the advocates of the proposed constitutional "reform." This only emboldened the latter, who succeeded by December in pushing through restrictive constitutional changes. Trotsky's pamphlet was completed in the midst of this crisis, when the possibility of civil war seemed very real. In it he struck most of the themes that were to predominate in his many writings about fascism during the following decade (see The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany, The Spanish Revolution (1931-39), and Leon Trotsky on France).

261. Austro-Marxism was the special brand of reformism preached by the Austrian Social Democratic Party.

262. The Entente was the World War I alliance of Great Britain, France, Russia, and Serbia, later joined by Greece, Belgium, Italy, Romania, Portugal, the U.S., and Japan. It declared war against the Central Powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary, who were later joined by Turkey and Bulgaria.

263. On July 14, 1927, a jury acquitted three members of the Heim-
wehr, the fascist military arm, who were accused of murdering two socialists. This provoked a massive spontaneous protest demonstration of the Vienna working class. Thousands of workers were on strike and in the streets for a period of three days.

264. The police official of the Hapsburg school, who became chancellor in September 1929 in the midst of the Austrian crisis, was Johannes Schober (1874-1932), police chief of Vienna from 1918, in which post he ordered firing on Communist demonstrations in 1919 and 1927. He was chancellor and foreign minister, 1921-22, 1929-30.

265. Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-64) was one of the founders of the German workers' movement, whose followers helped to organize the Social Democratic Party after his death. His "old formulations" on law and revolution refers to testimony Lassalle gave in a courtroom where he was defending the workers' rights to organize and to change society.

266. The Saint-Germain treaty, imposed by the victorious Allies on Austria in 1919, was the counterpart of the Versailles treaty imposed on Germany; it prohibited unification of Germany and Austria.

267. Karl Seitz (1869-1950), a Social Democrat, was mayor of Vienna and governor of the province of Vienna until the Austrian social democracy was crushed by the Dollfuss regime in 1934.

268. Iraklii Tseretelli (1882-1959) was a Menshevik minister in the coalition Russian Provisional Government, March-August 1917.

269. "Independent" party, as in Germany, is a reference to the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD), which split away from the German Social Democratic Party in 1917 and then itself underwent a split in 1920 that helped to greatly strengthen the newer Communist Party.

270. Max Adler (1873-1937) was a leading theoretician and philosopher of Austro-Marxism who helped supply it with some of its radical formulations.

271. Josef Pilsudski (1867-1935) was exiled to Siberia as a student for an alleged attempt on the life of Alexander III. On his return in 1892, he helped found the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). He became chief of the newly created Polish republic in November 1918; in 1920 he led his army against the Soviet forces in the Ukraine. He retired in 1923, but led a coup in May 1926 that returned him to power and was dictator of Poland from various posts until his death. Stefan Radich (1871-1928), leader of the Croatian Peasants Party, suddenly was hailed by Moscow as a "real leader of the people" because he attended a congress of the Krestintern (Peasants International) in 1924.

272. Friedrich Adler (1879-1960) was the secretary of the Austrian Social Democratic Party from 1911 to 1916, when he assassinated the Austrian premier. Freed from prison by the 1918 revolution, he was a founder of the Two-and-a-Half International, which he led back into the Second International in 1923, becoming secretary of the amalgamated body.

273. The 1929 crisis subsided after the Austrian parliament adopted the new constitution on December 7, 1929. This represented a gain for the fascists, but since the powerful workers' movement was still intact the
Social Democrats were also able to boast that little had changed and that their tactics had prevented a real defeat for the workers. Trotsky was correct in predicting that such a policy and such an outcome would not be long-lasting. After a few years the Austrian bourgeoisie decided that democratic reforms were too expensive to be continued. The social democratic policy of compromise and postponement of struggle greased the way for the showdown that came in 1934, when the Social Democrats finally summoned the workers to arms, only to be crushed and subjected to a military-police dictatorship.

274. “How to Help the Centrists.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume by Marilyn Vogt. This was a letter to friends in the USSR.

275. Baloven, which means “pet” or “favorite,” was Lenin’s nickname for Bukharin, whom he called the “favorite of the party.”—(Translator)

276. “A Return to the Party?” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume by Marilyn Vogt. This was another letter to friends in the USSR.

277. “From the Opposition’s Circular-Letters.” Biuleten Oppozitsii, number 10, April 1930, where these “replies to letters from friends” were printed as the first two of three letters. Translated for this volume by Jim Burnett. The third of the three letters, February 7, 1930, will be found in Writings 30.


279. “Khlestakov” is a character in the play The Inspector General by Nikolai Gogol.

280. “A Reply to the Chinese Oppositionists.” The Militant, February 1, 1930. The Chinese Oppositionist letter which Trotsky answered here was printed in The Militant, January 25, 1930, signed “P.” From the contents of P.’s letter it can be determined that he was a representative of the group Wo-men-ti-hua (Our Words), but there is no other information as to who P. was. In 1931, Our Words, October Society, and two other Oppositional groups voted to unify as the “Left Opposition of the Chinese Communist Party.”

281. N. was the Chinese Oppositionist Liu Jen-ching (1899- ), a founding member of the Chinese CP, who wrote in the Oppositionist press under the name N. and Nei shih. On his return to China from his 1929 trip to see Trotsky, Liu organized the Shih-yueh-she (October Society). In 1937 he left the Opposition and joined the Kuomintang. After the Chinese CP’s victory in 1949, he made a statement recanting his previous political views.

282. Chen Tu-hsiu (1879-1942), a founder of the Chinese CP, followed Comintern policy in the 1925-27 revolution. In December 1929 he pub-
lished a letter explaining his part, as well as Stalin's and Bukharin's, in the defeat of the revolution and announcing his support for the Left Opposition, which he joined in the following year. He was imprisoned by the Chiang Kai-shek regime from 1932 to 1937. While in prison, he developed political differences with the world Trotskyist movement and left the Chinese section and the Fourth International in 1941.

283. **Ho Lung** (1896- ) and **Yeh T'ing** (1897-1946) were military leaders who joined the Chinese CP and were involved in the Canton uprising. Ho became a guerrilla commander. Elected to the Chinese CP Politburo in 1956, he was attacked as an anti-Maoist in the sixties. Yeh T'ing reportedly left the CP after the abortive Canton uprising and went abroad, returning to take part in the Sino-Japanese War. He was imprisoned by the Chiang regime in 1941 and died in an air crash immediately after his release.

284. “The Murder of Jakob Blumkin.” *Biulleten Oppozitsii*, number 9, February-March 1930. Translated for this volume by Jim Burnett. This was an editorial note following a letter from Moscow signed “N.” and dated December 25, 1929. The letter and another translation of the editorial note were printed in *The Militant*, February 22, 1930. According to the Moscow letter, Blumkin, after visiting Trotsky in Prinkipo, and getting from him a message addressed to the Soviet Oppositionists, had gone to Radek to ask him why he had capitulated and to tell him about his discussion with Trotsky. Radek, the letter continued, demanded that Blumkin go to the GPU at once and report on his visit to Prinkipo. This version of how Blumkin fell into the GPU's hands still remains to be substantiated, but there is no doubt that he was executed by the GPU for reasons never publicly explained, and there is no doubt that his execution served as a warning to all other officials and employees of the state and party apparatuses that contact of any kind with Trotsky would not be tolerated by the Kremlin. **Jakob Blumkin** (1899-1929) was a Left Social Revolutionary terrorist during an SR insurrection against the Soviet government in 1918; subsequently he became a Communist and a GPU official, working for a time in Trotsky's secretariat, where he helped edit Trotsky's *How the Revolution Armed Itself*, volume 1. He was the first Russian supporter of the Left Opposition to visit Trotsky in Turkey, during the summer of 1929. The message Trotsky drew up at his request did not contain anything that Trotsky was not saying publicly at the time.

285. **O. Rosenfeld** was a member of the editorial staff of the French social democratic daily.

286. **Kote Tsintsa**de, an Old Bolshevik, died while he was in exile as an Oppositionist. Trotsky's articles in tribute to him appear in *Writings* 1930-31.
INDEX

Abdul Hamid II, 103, 429n
Adler, F., 394, 452n
Adler, M., 393-94, 452n
Adler, V., 163, 436n
Amsterdam International (International Federation of Trade Unions), 157, 435n, 436
Anglo-Russian Trade-Union Unity Committee, 15, 81-82, 88, 90, 111-12, 115, 139, 166, 281, 320, 328, 400, 427n, 436
Arbeiter Politik, 112
Arbeiter Stimme, 284
Arbeiter Zeitung, 155, 435n
Austro-Marxism, 384-95, 451n, 452-53

Bakayev, I., 70, 425n
Bauer, O., 264, 293, 387-88, 390, 395, 446n
Bebel, A., 81, 163, 192, 426n, 428
Beloborodov, A., 23, 75, 199, 416-17n
Bessenovsky, G., 19, 359, 406, 450n
Bismarck, O. von, 356, 450n
Buljeten Oppozitsii, 15-16, 18, 177, 258, 259, 344, 345, 358, 373, 375, 378, 417, 423n, 427, 438
Black Hundreds (Russia), 114, 431n
Blumkin, J., 16, 19, 412-13, 454n
Boguslavsky, M., 23, 199, 373-74, 416n
Bonapartism, 50-51, 56-57, 113, 119, 422n
Bonar Law, A., 270, 447n
Bordiga, A., Prometeo group (Italy), 318, 324, 448n
Briand, A., 18, 228, 335, 346-47, 354, 356, 443n
Cannon, J., 134, 431, 432n
CGTU (Unitary General Confederation of Labor, France), 167, 230-31, 436n
Chamberlain, A., 29-30, 105-06, 154, 201, 419n
Chang Tso-lin, 216, 265-66, 334, 336, 442n
Chen Tu-hsiu, 409, 453-54n
Chicherin, G., 218, 442n

455
Churchill, W., 66, 424n
Clemenceau, G., 22, 24, 297, 356, 416n
Communiste, 332
Contre le Courant, 190-91, 215-16, 220, 224, 248, 332, 439n, 442, 444-45, 448
Cook, A., 167, 436n
Daily Herald, 195, 347
Democratic Centralism group (USSR), 142, 305-06, 434
Deutscher, I., 10
Dingelstedt, F., 345
Drobnis, Y., 31, 419n
Duehring, E., 333, 449n
Dzerzhinsky, F., 218, 401, 442n
Eastman, M., 193, 440n
Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn, 358
Engels, F., 93, 106, 322-23, 417, 428n, 449
Entente, 385, 451n

Writings of Leon Trotsky (1929)

Ercoli, see Togliatti, P.

First International, 159, 417, 430, 435n
Fischer, R., 279, 305, 312, 447n
Foster, W., 112, 131, 430n, 432
Frankel, J., 307, 447n
Franklin-Bouillon, 228, 443n
Frey, J., 284, 447n
Gapon, G., 382, 451n
Gazette, 48
Gerard, F., see Rosenthal, G.
Gourget, P., 190, 437n
GPU, 19, 22, 28-30, 60, 63, 74, 100-01, 105, 141, 203, 412, 415n, 423, 454
Guesde, J., 163, 436n
Guizot, F., 106, 429-30n
Gusev, S., 162, 204, 435-36n
Haase, H., 192-93, 440n
Henderson, A., 347, 388, 449n
Herriot, E., 49, 53, 421-22n
Hilferding, R., 105, 201, 429n
Hohenzollerns, 75, 356, 426n
Ho Lung, 410, 454n
Hoover, H., 18, 350, 449n
Humanite, 252, 336

ILO (International Left Opposition), see Left Opposition, international

Jacquemotte, J., 168, 437n

Kaganovich, L., 69, 72, 425n
Kalinin, M., 70, 359, 425n
Kamenev, L., 13, 17, 37, 41, 43, 67-72, 82, 90, 161-62, 277-78, 342, 419n 424
Kasparova, 23, 199, 329, 413, 417n
Mensheviks, 59, 81, 90, 112-14, 266, 290-91, 409, 413, 415, 418, 422-23n, 446
Menzhinsky, V., 208, 442n
Metternich, L. von, 106, 429n
Minority Movement, see National Minority Movement
Molinier, R., 174, 437-38n
Molotov, V., 68, 90, 161-62, 202-03, 205-06, 380-81, 390, 395, 401, 420, 425n
Monatte, P., 174, 319, 438n, 446
Monmousseau, G., 167, 171, 223, 436n
Mrachkovsky, S., 23, 75, 199, 416-17n
Mueller, H., 105-06, 157, 168, 201, 424, 429n, 437
Muralov, N., 23, 75, 199, 329, 413, 417n
Mussolini, B., 253, 445n
Myasnikov, G., 260, 446n
N., see Liu Jen-ching
Narodniki (Populists, Russia), 353, 409-10, 449-50n
Nation, 29,
National Minority Movement, 166, 436n
Naville, P., 236, 238, 241-45, 444n
NEP (New Economic Policy), 47, 78, 119-20, 122, 278, 358, 421n, 429
Neurath, A., 184, 439n
New York Times, 268, 352
Nicholas II, 103, 429n
Nin, A., 176, 438n
Okudzhava, M., 281, 329, 340, 413, 448, 450
Ordzhonikidze, G., 68, 70-72, 161, 425n, 446
Ouvrier Communiste, 321, 323
Overstraeten, E. Van, 332-36, 448-49n
Paz, M., 190-94, 243, 252, 271, 293, 295-96, 413, 439n, 442, 444
Pepper, J. (Pogany, J.), 130-32, 353, 380, 431-32n
Petrovsky, D., 185, 439n
Pilsudski, J., 393, 447, 452n
Plehanov, G., 163, 436n, 450
Poincare, R., 228, 443n
Politburo (CPSU), 17, 39, 40-41, 67-68, 72, 359, 379, 420n, 424
Populaire, 413
Poznansky, I., 63-64, 423n
Prauda, 67, 74, 142, 184, 250, 252, 375, 377, 425n
Preobrazhensky, E., 14, 18, 23, 115, 135, 198-211, 251, 254-56, 258, 278, 305, 310, 320, 399, 412-13, 416n, 441
Prometeo, 318, 321, 448
Purcell, A., 167, 229, 393, 436n
Radich, S., 393, 452n
Rakovsky, C., 14, 18-19, 23, 47, 75, 199, 329, 358, 372, 397, 400, 413-14, 416-17n, 421, 448, 450
Red International of Labor Unions (Profintern), 166, 435, 436n
Revolution proletarienne, 319, 446
Right Opposition (USSR), 14, 16, 17, 67-73, 82-84, 86, 109, 162, 183-85, 211, 232, 236-37, 251, 301, 342, 361, 403, 412, 419n, 424-25, 427, 431
R.M., see Molinier, R.
Robespierre, M., 283, 422, 447n
Romanones, A., 22, 416n
Rosenfeld, K., 103-04, 429n
Rosenfeld, O., 413, 454n
Rosenthal, G., 238, 245, 444n
Rosmer, A., 174, 190, 238, 243, 437, 438n
Writings of Leon Trotsky (1929)
Index

Rote Fahne, 316
Rudzutak, J., 359, 450n
Rykov, A., 14, 37, 67-69, 72, 83, 90, 95, 155, 162, 184, 204, 211, 278, 359, 367, 419-20n
Safarov, G., 161, 281, 435n
Sapronov, T., 142, 434n
Schober, J., 388, 452n
Schwab, C., 351, 449n
Second International, 108-09, 157, 185, 226, 264, 269, 293, 302, 384, 392, 417, 430n, 446, 452
Sedov, L., 15, 24, 417n, 419
Sedov, S., 31, 419n
Sedova, N., 10, 24, 417n
Seeckt, H. von, 253, 445n
Seitz, K., 390, 452n
Semard, P., 72, 167, 171, 174, 223, 426n
Sermuks, N., 63-64, 423n
Smeral, B., 168, 437n
Smilga, I., 14, 18, 23, 75, 115, 198-211, 254-55, 258, 276, 278, 281, 305, 310, 320, 399, 413, 416-17n, 441
Smirnov, I., 14, 19, 23, 75, 250, 329, 373-74, 404, 412, 416-17n, 448
Smirnov, V., 142, 434n
Snowden, P., 228, 352, 443n
Social democracy: Austria, see Austro-Marxism; Germany, 98, 102-06, 165, 168-70, 432, 435, 437, 452
Social Democratic International, see Second International
Social fascism, 227, 391-93, 416, 443n
Social Revolutionaries (SRs, Russia), 59, 76, 90, 114, 422-23n, 450
Socialist Party (U.S.), 132
Sokolnikov, G., 363, 450n
Sosnovsky, L., 23, 199, 257-58, 329, 413, 416-17n
Souvarine, B., 81, 83, 85, 86, 111, 128, 131, 188, 191, 237, 241, 246, 320, 427n, 430, 439
Stolypin, P., 46, 356, 421n
Stresemann, G., 104-05, 201, 347, 349, 429n
Syndicalist League (France), 319, 438

Temps, 96, 351-52, 388
Thaelmann, E., 72, 105-06, 158, 162, 168-69, 171, 184, 206, 299, 316, 360, 425-26n
Thälheimer, A., 14, 81, 83, 112-15, 131, 155-58, 184, 309-10, 426-27n
Third International, see Comintern
Thomas, J., 167, 201, 436n
Times, 96
Togliatti, P., 323-24, 448n
Tomsky, M., 14, 18, 37, 67, 69, 72, 162, 184, 205, 211, 321, 419-20n
Treint, A., 191, 243-44, 439-40n, 445
Tribune, 93
Tseretelli, I., 391, 452n
Uglanov, N., 68, 425n
Unitary General Confederation of Labor, see CGTU
United Opposition (USSR), 305, 419, 424-27, 447
Ustrialov, N., 79, 426n

Volkswille, 247-49, 251, 273, 277, 283, 306-09, 311, 315-17, 435
Voronsky, A., 31, 175, 419n
Voroshilov, K., 70-72, 161, 218, 359, 398, 425n
Wang Cheng-t’ing, 267, 446n
Wang Ching-wei, 145, 434n
War Communism, 95, 358, 421, 428-29n
Webb, S., 226, 443n

Writings of Leon Trotsky (1929)
Wels, O., 158, 435n
White Guards, 38, 63, 217, 219, 268, 271, 420n
Wrangel officer, 61, 74, 203, 256, 423n
Yaroslavsky, E., 74, 76-78, 135-36, 141, 184, 198, 201-08, 251, 261, 277, 341-44, 373, 400, 420, 426n
Yeh-T’ing, 410, 454n
Young Communist League (USSR), 252, 321, 375
Young Plan, 352, 449n
Zoergiebel, K., 168, 437n
OTHER WRITINGS OF 1929

In addition to the material in the present volume, the following writings by Trotsky during the period covered here have been published:

My Life. 1930.


The Stalin School of Falsification. 1937. Contains an editorial introduction to "The Lost Document," the suppressed minutes of a meeting of the Bolshevik Petrograd committee in November 1917 (published July 1929).

Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions. 1969. Contains "Communism and Syndicalism" (October 14, 1929) and "The Errors in Principle of Syndicalism (To Serve in the Discussion with Monatte and His Friends)" (October 21, 1929).


The Permanent Revolution. 1930. Contains "Introduction" and "Epilogue" (both November 30, 1929).