Inner-Party Questions of the VKP(b):
A Report to the 7th Enlarged Plenum of ECCI, Moscow — December 7, 1926.

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The 17th session of the Enlarged ECCI is opened on December 7th at 11:30 am by the Chairman, Comrade Remmele. Agenda: The Russian Question.

Comrade Stalin, who is received with prolonged and enthusiastic applause and the singing of "The Internationale," proceeds to deliver his report.

I. Preliminary Remarks.

Comrades, before taking up the question itself I want to make a few preliminary remarks.

Inherent Antagonisms of Party Development.†

First, this question — this is the question of the struggle inside our Party. The struggle did not commence yesterday, nor has it ended yet. If we examine the history of our Party from the time it arose in the form of a group of Bolsheviks in 1903 and trace its subsequent stages right up to our times, we may say without exaggeration that the history of our Party is a history of the conflict of antagonisms within the Party, the history of the efforts to overcome these antagonisms, and the gradual consolidation of our Party on the basis of overcoming these antagonisms. It may be said that the Russians are too quarrelsome, that they love polemics; that they create differences and for that reason the development of the Russian Party is a process of overcoming internal Party antagonisms. This would not be true, comrades. This is not a matter of quarrelsomeness; it is a matter of *differences over principles,* arising in the process of the development of the Party and the process of the struggle of the proletariat. Antagonisms may be overcome only by fighting for principles, for certain aims of the struggle, for certain methods of the struggle which lead to the ultimate goal. We may, and should, compromise with opponents in the Party on questions of current policy, on purely practical questions, but if these questions are connected with differences over principle then no compromise is possible; no "middle course" can save the situation. There is and there can be no "middle course" in questions of principle. Either one set of principles or another must lie at the basis of the work of the Party. A "middle course" on questions of principle is a "course" of confusion, a "course" of concealing differences, a "course" towards the intellectual death of the Party.

How do the Social Democratic Parties in the West live and develop? Are there any internal antagonisms and differences over principles in those parties? Of course there are. Do they expose these antagonisms and try to overcome them honestly and frankly before the eyes of the masses of the Party? No, of course they do not. It is the practice of the Social Democrats to conceal these antagonisms, it is the practice of the Social Democrats to convert their conferences and congresses into masquerades, into official parades intended to show that all is well within the Party; every effort is made to conceal and gloss over the differences within the Party. But nothing but confusion and the intellectual impoverishment of the Party can result from such practices. This is one of the causes of the decline of

†- The Russian word translated here as "antagonisms" was *"protivorechiia."* This was translated in volume 9 of Stalin's *Works* in 1954 as "contradictions," a far more common rendition of the word. The translation here is that of *Inprecorr* rather than the more precise but tendentiously edited version presented in Stalin *Works* v. 9. Lenin quotations have been converted to the latest English version.

Western European Social Democracy, which at one time was revolutionary, but is now reformist.

We, however, cannot live and develop in this way. The policy of finding a "middle course" on questions of principle is not our policy. The policy of finding a "middle course" on questions of principle is the policy of declining and degenerating parties. Such a policy cannot but result in the Party becoming a mere bureaucratic apparatus beating the air, and detached from the masses. This path is not our path.

The whole history of our Party confirms the postulate that the history of our Party is the history of overcoming internal Party differences and the steady consolidation of the ranks of our Party on the basis of overcoming these antagonisms.

Take the *first period* of the history of our party, the period of *Iskra,* the period of the 2nd Congress [of the RSDRP], when differences arose for the first time between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, and when the leading group of our Party split up into two sections, the *Bolshevik* section (Lenin) and the *Menshevik* section (Plekhanov, Axelrod, Martov, Zasulich, Potresov). Lenin at that time stood alone. If you would only know, comrades, what a howl was raised at that time about the "indispensables" leaving Lenin! However, the experience of the fight, the history of the Party has shown that these differences were at bottom differences of principle, that these differences were a necessary stage for the rise and development of a real revolutionary and a real Bolshevik Party. The experience of the struggle of that time showed that first, it is not a question of quantity but quality, and secondly, it is not formal unity that is important, but it is important that unity should be based on principle. History has shown that Lenin was right and that the "indispensables" were wrong. History has shown that if these antagonisms between Lenin and the "indispensables" had not been overcome, we could not have had a real revolutionary Party.

Take the *next period.* The eve of the 1905 revolution, when the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks stood against each other but were still within a single Party, as two opposite camps having entirely different platforms; when the Bolsheviks stood on the threshold of a formal split in the Party and when in order to maintain the line of our revolution they were obliged to convene their own congress (Third Congress) [April 25-May 10 n.s., 1905]. In what way did the Bolshevik section win out at that time? In what way did it win the sympathies of the majority in the Party? By refusing to conceal the differences of principle in the Party, and by fighting to overcome these differences, by isolating the Mensheviks.

I might also mention the *third stage* in the development of our Party, the period after the defeat of the 1905 Revolution, the period of 1907 when one section of the Bolsheviks, the so-called *Otzovisti* ("recallists") headed by Bogdanov departed from Bolshevism. This was a critical period in the life of our Party. This was a period when a number of Bolsheviks belonging to the old guard abandoned Lenin and his Party. The Mensheviks at that time loudly proclaimed that Bolshevism was doomed. But they were wrong. Bolshevism lived, and the experience of the struggle lasting about 18 months proved that Lenin and his Party were right in conducting the fight to overcome the antagonisms within the ranks of Bolshevism. These antagonisms were overcome, not by concealing them, but by exposing and fighting them out for the benefit and the advantage of our Party.

I could also refer to the *fourth period* in the history of our Party, the period 1911-12, when the Bolsheviks restored the Party which had been almost crushed by the Tsarist reaction and expelled the liquidators from the party. In this, as in previous periods, the Bolsheviks set to work to restore and consolidate the Party, not by concealing their differences on principle with the liquidators, but by exposing these differences and overcoming them.

I could also mention the *fifth stage* in the development of our Party, the period before the October Revolution of 1917, when a section of the Bolsheviks, led by certain leaders of the Bolshevik Party, wavered and refused to agree to insurrection, and regarded it as an adventure. It is well known that this antagonism was also overcome by the Bolsheviks not by concealing differences, but by a frank and open fight in favor of the October Revolution. The experience of the fight has shown that had we not overcome these differences, we might have placed the October Revolution into a critical position.

Finally, I could mention the *later periods* of the development of our international Party struggle, the period of the Brest Peace; also the period of 1921 (the

trade union discussion) and the other period which are already known to you and upon which I will not dwell in detail. It is well known that throughout all these periods, as in the past, our Party grew and became strong in the fight to overcome internal antagonisms.

What follows from all this?

It follows that the VKP(b) grew and became strong in *the fight to overcome internal Party antagonisms.*

If follows that the fight to overcome internal Party differences is the *law of development of our Party.*

It may be said that this is the law for the VKP(b) and not for other proletarian parties. This would not be true. This law is the *law of development of all Parties of any considerable size,* irrespective of whether it is the proletarian party of the USSR or parties of the West. While in small parties in small countries it may be possible to gloss over differences, to cover them up by the authority of one or several persons, it is impossible to do so in a large Party with diversified districts. In such parties development by overcoming antagonisms is an inevitable element of growth and consolidation of the Party. This is how development proceeded in the past, this is how it proceeds in the present day. I would like here to call in the authority of Engels, who in conjunction with Marx guided the proletarian parties in the West through several decades. I refer to the '80s of the last century, when the Anti-Socialist Laws were in operation in Germany, when Marx and Engels were in exile in London, and when the Social Democratic organ the *Sozialdemokrat* was published illegally abroad, and really guided the work of the German Social Democracy. Bernstein at that time was still a revolutionary Marxist (he had not yet gone over to reformism). Engels kept up a lively correspondence with Bernstein on current questions of Social Democratic policy. This is what he wrote to Bernstein in 1882:

> "It would seem that any workers' party in a large country can develop only through internal struggle, as indeed has been generally established in the dialectical laws of development. The German party has come to be what it is through the struggle between the Eisenachers and Lassalleans, in which, after all the actual scuffles played a leading role. Unification only became possible when the gang of scoundrels deliberately cultivated as a tool by Lassalle had lost its efficacy and even then we were in far too great a hurry to effect that unification. In France, those people who have admittedly relinquished Bakuninist theory but continue to make use of Bakuninist weapons and at the same time seek to sacrifice the class character of the movement to their own particular ends, will likewise have to lose their efficacy before unification again becomes feasible. Such being the case, it would be sheer folly to advocate unification. Moral homilies are of no avail against teething troubles which, circumstances being what they are today, are something that has got to be gone through."†

For, says Engels in another passage:

> "Contradictions are never suppressed for very long, but are constantly being fought out."‡

This is how the existence of antagonisms within out Party and the development of our Party through overcoming these antagonisms by fighting them out is to be explained.

The Sources of the Antagonisms Within the Party.

Where do these antagonisms originate from, what are their sources?

I think that the antagonisms within proletarian parties originate from two circumstances. What are these?

These are, *first:* the *pressure of the bourgeoisie and of bourgeois ideology upon the proletariat and its party* in the course of the class struggle, the pressure to which the more irresolute sections of the proletariat, and that means, the wavering sections in the Party, not infrequently succumb. We must not think that the proletariat is completely isolated from society, or that it stands apart from society. The proletariat is part of society and connected with it through its diversified strata by numerous threads. The Party is part of the proletariat, and for that reason the Party cannot escape the contacts and influence of the diversified strata of bourgeois society. The pressure of the bourgeoisie

†- Engels in London to Eduard Bernstein in Zurich, Oct. 20, 1882. In *Marx-Engels Collected Works.* (New York: International Publishers, 1992), v. 46, pp. 342-343.

‡- Engels in London to Eduard Bernstein in Zurich, Oct. 8, 1885. In *Marx-Engels Collected Works.* (New York: International Publishers, 1995), v. 47, pp. 330-331. Both of these pieces of Engels' correspondence were first published in the USSR in 1924.

and its ideology upon the proletariat and upon its Party results in bourgeois ideals, morals, habits, and moods, not infrequently penetrating into the proletariat and its Party through the medium of certain strata of the proletariat connected in one way or another with bourgeois society.

Secondly, it is the *diversified character of the working class,* the fact it is made up of *various strata.* I think that the proletariat as a class may be divided up into three strata. The first stratum: the principle mass of the proletariat, its main core, its constant part; this is the mass of the "thoroughbred" proletarians who have long ago cut off all contacts with the capitalist class. This stratum of the proletariat is the most reliable support of Marxism.

The second stratum: this stratum is composed of those proletarians who have recently emerged from *non-proletarian* classes — from the peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, and intelligentsia. This stratum, having just emerged from non-proletarian classes has brought into the proletarian class its old habits and customs, its wavering and vacillation. This stratum represents the most favorable soil for all sorts of anarchist, semi-anarchist, and "Ultra-Left" groupings.

Finally there is the *third stratum.* This is the *aristocracy of labor,* the upper stratum of the working class, the most secure in its conditions compared with the other sections of the proletariat. It strives to compromise with the bourgeoisie, its predominating mood is to adapt itself to the mighty of the earth and to be "respectable." This stratum represents the most favorable soil for avowed reformists and opportunists.

In spite of their apparent difference on the surface, the last two strata of the working class represent a more or less common milieu which fosters opportunism; frank and avowed opportunism when the mood of the aristocracy of labor prevails, and the concealed opportunism of "Left" phrases when the mood of that stratum of the working class prevails which has not completely cut itself off from petty bourgeois contacts. There is nothing surprising in the fact that avowed opportunism very frequently coincides with "Ultra-Left" moods. Lenin has said more than once that the "Ultra-Left" opposition is the reverse side of Right Wing, Menshevik, avowedly opportunist opposition, and this is absolutely correct. If the "Ultra-Left" stands for revolution because it expects the immediate victory of the revolution, then naturally it must fall into despair, it must become disappointed in revolution if a hitch takes place and the revolution is not immediately victorious.

Naturally, at every turn is the development of the class struggle, on every occasion that the struggle becomes more acute and difficult the differences of views, the differences in the habits and moods of the various strata of the proletariat must tell in the form of differences in the Party, and the pressure of the bourgeoisie and its ideology upon the Party must inevitably cause these differences to become more acute and to find an outlet in the form of a struggle within the proletarian Party.

These are the sources of the inherent antagonisms and differences within the Party.

Can we turn our backs on these antagonisms and differences? No, we cannot. To turn our backs on them would mean to deceive ourselves. Engels was right when he said that it is impossible to conceal differences within the Party for long, they can be settled only by fighting them out.

This does not mean that the Party should be converted into a debating society. On the contrary, the Party of the proletariat is, and must remain, a fighting organization of the proletariat. I merely wish to say that we must not shut our eyes to differences within the Party if these differences are over questions of principle. I want to say that only by fighting for principle can the proletarian Party withstand the pressure and influence of the bourgeoisie. Only by overcoming internal Party antagonisms can we guarantee the soundness and strength of the Party.

II. The Special Features of the Opposition of the VKP(b).

Having made these preliminary remarks, permit me now to take up the question of the Opposition in the VKP(b).

First of all I would like to indicate certain special features which the Opposition in our Party has. I have in mind the superficial features, which immediately catch the eye, and not for the time being the actual points of difference. I think that the special features can be reduced to *three main features.* Firstly: that

the Opposition in the VKP(b) is a combination of *oppositions,* and not simply an opposition. Second: that the Opposition strives to conceal its opportunism by "Left" phrases and by flaunting "revolutionary" slogans. Third: in view of its amorphous principles, the Opposition complains that it is not understood; the leaders of the Opposition in fact represent a faction of the "misunderstood." (*laughter.*)

I will start with the first feature. How is it to be explained that our Opposition comes before us as a combination of oppositions, as a bloc of all kinds of tendencies which have been previously condemned by the Party? How is it that it comes out not merely as a "single" opposition, but an opposition lead by Trotskyism?

This is explained by the following circumstances.

First: that all these tendencies which have combined into a bloc — the Trotskyists, the "New Opposition," the remnants of "Democratic Centralism," and the remnants of the "Workers' Opposition" — are all more or less opportunistic tendencies which have either fought against Leninism from the first moment of their existence, or have commenced to fight against Leninism recently. It goes without saying that this *common* feature helped them to combine in a bloc to fight the Party.

Second: the fact that the present period marks a turning point and brings up once again very acutely the fundamental questions of our revolution. As all these tendencies differed and still differ with our Party on various questions concerning the revolution, naturally, at the present time, when all our differences are being summarized and balanced, all these tendencies are drawn together into a single bloc directed against the fundamental policy of the Party. It goes without saying that this circumstance could not but help to combine the diversified opposition tendencies into a single camp.

Third: the circumstance that the mighty strength and compactness of our Party on the one hand, and the weakness and isolation from the masses of all the opposition tendencies without exception on the other hand, obviously made the fight of each of these tendencies separately absolutely hopeless, and for that reason the opposition tendencies were compelled to *combine* their forces in order in this way to compensate for their individual weakness and on the surface at least increase their chances of success.

How is it that *Trotskyism* comes forward as the leader of this Opposition bloc?

First: by the fact that Trotskyism is the most rounded and complete tendency of the opportunism in our Party as compared with the other tendencies (the 5th Congress [of the Comintern, June-July 1924] was right when it described Trotskyism as a petty bourgeois deviation).

Second: by the fact that not a single opposition tendency in our Party is able to camouflage its opportunism by means of "Left" and r-r-r-revolutionary phrases as cleverly as the Trotskyist tendency. (*laughter.*)†

This is not the first time in the history of our Party that Trotskyism has come out at the head of oppositionist tendencies directed against the Party. I would like to mention the well-known precedent in the history of the Party which occurred in the period of 1911-1914, when the so-called "August bloc" was formed of opposition anti-Party tendencies led by Trotsky. I would like to mention this precedent because it represents the prototype of the present Opposition bloc. At that time, comrades, Trotsky combined against the Party the Liquidators (Potresov, Martov, and others), the "Otzovists" (represented by the paper *Vperëd [Forward]*), and his own group. Now he has tried to combine into an Opposition bloc the "Workers' Opposition," the "New Opposition," and his own group. It is well known that Lenin fought against the "August bloc" for three years. This is what Lenin wrote concerning the August bloc on the eve of its establishment:

> "Therefore, we declare *in the name of the Party as a whole,* that Trotsky is pursuing an anti-Party policy; ...that he is *contravening* Party *legality* and is embarking on the path of *adventurism* and a *split*....
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> * * *
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> Trotsky maintains silence on this undeniable truth, because the truth is detrimental to the *real* aims of his policy. The real aims, however, are becoming clearer and more obvious even to the least farsighted Party members. They are: *an anti-Party bloc of the Potresovs with the* Vperëd *group* — a bloc which Trotsky supports and is organizing....
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> ...Naturally, this bloc will support Trotsky's "fund" and

†- The sarcastic buzzing of the "r" which elicits laughter is not indicated in the *Inprecorr* translation but follows the translation provided in Stalin *Works* vol. 9.

the anti-Party conference which he is convening, for here the Potresovs and the Vperëd group are getting what they want, namely, freedom for their factions, blessings of the conference for those factions, a cover for their activity, and an attorney to defend that activity before the workers.

Therefore, it is form the standpoint of "fundamental principles" that we must regard this bloc as *adventurism* in the most literal meaning of the term. Trotsky *does not dare* to say that he sees in Potresov and the Otzovists real Marxists, real champions of loyalty to the principles of Social Democracy. The essence of the position of an adventurer is that he must forever resort to evasions...

It is precisely from the standpoint of "fundamental principles" that Trotsky's bloc with Potresov and the *Vperëd* group is adventurism. And it is equally so from the standpoint of the *Party's political* tasks....

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The experience of the year since the Plenary Meeting has shown in practice that it precisely Potresov groups and the *Vperëd* faction that *are the embodiment* of this bourgeois influence upon the proletariat....

Thirdly and lastly, Trotsky's policy is adventurism in the *organizational* sense; for, as we have already pointed out, it violates Party legality; by organizing a conference in the name of one group abroad (or of a bloc of *two* anti-Party factions — the *Golos* and *Vperëd* factions), it is directly making for a split."†

This is what Lenin said regarding the first bloc of anti-Party tendencies led by Trotsky.

The same thing must be said, but with greater emphasis, concerning the present bloc of anti-Party tendencies also led by Trotsky.

These are the reasons why our opposition comes forward at the present time in the form of a combination of oppositions (and not as a simple opposition), and led by Trotskyism. This is the first special feature of the opposition.

I will now deal with the *second feature.* I have already said that the second special feature of the Opposition is in its tense striving to *conceal its opportunism by "Left" and "revolutionary" phrases.* I cannot deal here in detail with the facts which demonstrate the permanent divergence between "revolutionary" words and opportunist deeds in the activities of the Opposition. It is sufficient to examine the thesis on the Opposition passed by the 15th Conference of the VKP(b) [Oct. 26-Nov. 3, 1926] to understand how this camouflage is arranged. I would like, however, to quote a few examples from the history of our Party to illustrate the fact that all the opposition tendencies in our Party have tried to conceal their unrevolutionary action by "revolutionary" phrases and by constantly criticizing the Party and its policy from the "Left" ever since we captured power.

Take for example, the *"Left" Communists* who opposed the Party in the *period of the Brest Peace (1918).* It is well known that at that time they criticized the Party from the "Left," opposed the Brest Peace, and described the policy of the Party as being opportunistic, non-proletarian, and directed towards compromise with the imperialists. It turned out that in practice the Left Communists, by opposing the Brest Peace, opposed the possibility of our Party obtaining a respite in which to organize and consolidate the Soviet Government; it turned out that they aided the Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who were at that time opposed to the Brest Peace, and worked for the benefit of the imperialists, who were striving to crush the Soviet Government at its birth.

Take the *"Workers' Opposition"* of 1921. It is well known that this Opposition also criticized the Party from the "Left," strongly attacked the policy of NEP, and "shattered" Lenin's argument that the restoration of industry must be commenced from the development of agriculture which will provide the food and raw material basis for industry. They attacked this argument on the ground that it left out of account the interests of the proletariat and that it was a deviation towards the peasantry. In practice, it turned out that unless we adopted the policy of NEP, unless we developed agriculture, which provides the raw materials and food basis for industry, we would have had no industry whatever and the proletariat would have become declassed. Moreover, it is well known now in which direction the "Workers" Opposition began to develop, to the right or to the left.

Finally, let us take *Trotskyism,* which has been criticizing the Party from the "Left" for several years now, but which the 5th Congress of the Comintern has described as a petty bourgeois deviation. What can there be in common between petty bourgeois deviations and a real revolutionary? Is it not clear that "revo-

†- N. Lenin, "O polozhenii del v Partii," ["The State of Affairs in the Party"], written not later than Dec. 28 (n.s.), 1911, and published Jan. 5 or 6 (n.s.), 1911, in *Sotsial-Demokrat* no. 19. Reprinted in *V.I. Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniia*. Fifth Edition. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1968), v. 20, pp. 54-60. English translation used here from *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works.* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963), v. 17, pp. 31-37.

lutionary" phrases in this case serve merely as a screen to cover petty bourgeois deviations?

I will not mention the "New Opposition," the "Left" outcries of which are intended to conceal its captivity to Trotskyism.

Of what do all these facts speak?

They show that the "Left" camouflage of opportunist actions is one of the most characteristic features of all opposition tendencies in our Party since the time we took power.

How can these things be explained?

They are explained by *the revolutionary character of the proletariat of the USSR,* by the great revolutionary traditions with which our proletariat is imbued. They are to be explained by the positive hatred the workers of the USSR entertain towards anti-revolutionary and opportunist elements. They are to be explained by the fact that they positively refuse to listen to avowed opportunists and consequently, "revolutionary" camouflage serves merely as a decoy to attract the attention of the workers and to win their confidence for the Opposition.

Our workers cannon, for example, understand why it has never entered the heads of the British workers up till now to take such traitors as Thomas and throw them down a well and drown them. (*laughter.*) Everyone who understands our workers would realize that the lives of opportunists like Thomas would be positively intolerable among our workers, and yet the British workers not only do not drown traitors like Thomas, but even re-elect them to the General Council and not only simply re-elect, but elect them demonstratively. Clearly, such workers do not require to have opposition camouflaged in the form of revolution, they do not object to taking it ungilded. How is this to be explained? By the absence of the revolutionary traditions among the British workers. These revolutionary traditions are not only just beginning to arise and develop, and there is not the slightest doubt that the British workers will become hardened in the revolutionary struggle. But until that hardening has taken place, the difference between the British workers and the Soviet workers will remain. This explains why it is a risky thing for the opportunists in our Party to come before the workers of the USSR unless they are camouflaged as revolutionaries. Herein lies the cause of the "revolutionary" camouflage of the Opposition bloc.

Finally, I will deal with the *third special feature* of our Opposition. I have already said that this feature is the amorphous principles of the Opposition bloc, in fact the *absence of principles* in the Opposition, its amoeba-like form and the continual complaints of the Opposition that they are "misunderstood," that their arguments are "distorted," that things are ascribed to them which they "never said," etc. Surely, this is a faction of the "misunderstood." The history of proletarian parties teaches that this special feature (of being "misunderstood") is quite a usual and most widespread feature of opportunism in general. You ought to know, comrades, that exactly the same thing "happened" with the notorious opportunists Bernstein, Volmer, Auer, and other German Social Democrats in the '90s of the last century and the beginning of this century, when German Social Democracy was revolutionary and the out and out opportunists for many years complained that they were "misunderstood" and that their arguments were distorted. It is a well known fact that the German revolutionary Social Democrats described the Bernstein faction as the faction of the "misunderstood." It is not an accident that the present Opposition bloc must be placed in the category of the "misunderstood" factions.

These are the principal special features of the Opposition bloc.

III. The Differences in the VKP(b).

We now come to the differences themselves.

I think our differences can be reduced to several fundamental questions. I will not deal with these questions in detail because I have not sufficient time for that purpose, and my speech is already drawn out too long. Moreover, you have the material on the questions in the VKP(b), in which it is true there are defects in translation, but which in the main gives you a correct picture of the differences in our Party.

Questions of Socialist Construction.

First Question: The first question of the possibility of victory of Socialism in a single country, the question of the possibility of the victorious construction of Socialism. Of course we are not discussing Montene-

gro or even Bulgaria, but our country, the USSR. We are discussing a country in which imperialism existed and developed, in which there is a certain minimum of a proletariat, in which there is a Party which leads the proletariat. Hence, the question is: is the victory of Socialism possible in the USSR? Is it possible to construct Socialism in the USSR on the basis of the internal forces of our country, on the basis of the possibilities at the command of the proletariat of the USSR? But what is meant by constructing Socialism, if this term is to be formulated in class language? To construct Socialism in the USSR means to overcome our Soviet bourgeoisie, in the course of the struggle by our own forces. Consequently, the question amounts to this: Is the proletariat of the USSR capable of overcoming its own Soviet bourgeoisie? Hence, when we ask: "Is it possible to construct Socialism in the USSR?" we mean: "Is the proletariat of the USSR capable, by its own efforts, of overcoming the bourgeoisie of the USSR?" This is the only manner in which the question is presented in solving the problem of the construction of Socialism in our country.

The Party's reply to this question is in the affirmative, for it bases its reply on the fact that the proletariat of the USSR, the proletarian dictatorship in the USSR, commands the possibilities to overcome the bourgeoisie of the USSR by its own forces.

If this were incorrect, if the Party had no grounds for asserting that the proletariat of the USSR was capable of constructing socialist society in spite of the relative technical backwardness of our country, then our Party would have no justification for remaining in power; it should give up power in one way or another and become an opposition party. For we have to choose between one of two things, *either* we can build Socialism and finally complete it by overcoming our "national" bourgeoisie — in that case the Party must remain in power and guide the work of socialist construction in the country for the sake of the victory of Socialism all over the world; *or* we are unable by our own efforts to overcome our bourgeoisie — then, bearing in mind the absence of immediate aid from outside, from victorious revolutions in other countries, we must honestly and frankly give up power and set our course towards organizing another revolution in the USSR in the future. Would it be permissible for a party to deceive its own class, in this case the working class? No, it would not. A party that did that should be hanged, drawn and quartered. But precisely because our Party has no right to deceive the working class, it should say frankly that because it is not sure of the possibility of constructing Socialism in our country, it must abandon power, cease being the governing party and become an opposition party.

We established the dictatorship of the proletariat and by that we laid down the political basis for the advance towards Socialism. Can we by our own forces lay down the economic foundation necessary for the construction of Socialism by our own forces? What is the economic content and economic basis of Socialism? Is it to establish a paradise and universal happiness? No, it is not. This is a petty bourgeois idea of the economic content of Socialism. To lay down an economic basis of Socialism means to combine agriculture with socialist industry into one economic whole; to subordinate agriculture to the guidance of socialist industry; to establish relations between town and country on the basis of direct exchange of the products of agriculture with the products of industry; to close and abolish the channels through which classes arise and primarily capital, and in the last resort to create such conditions of production and distribution as will lead directly to the abolition of classes.

Lenin said the following in this connection when we introduced NEP and when the question of the construction of the socialist foundation of our national economy confronted us in all its scope:

> "The substitution of requisitions by a tax signifies in principle: the transition from "War Communism" to a *proper* socialist foundation. Not requisitions nor the tax, but the exchange of the products of large scale ("socialized") industry for the produce of peasant agriculture represents the economic *content* of Socialism, represents its basis."†

This is how Lenin understood the question of the establishment of the *economic* basis of Socialism.

But in order to weld together agriculture with the socialized industries it is necessary first of all to

†- I was unable to locate this passage in Lenin *PSS* or the 45 volume English language edition of Lenin's *Collected Works.* J. Stalin *Works* v. 9 lists this quote as from "Vol. 26, pp. 311-312," a reference to the 3rd or 4th Russian Edition of Lenin's *Sochineniia.*

have a broad network of organs of distribution, a broad network of organs of cooperation: consumers' cooperatives and producing cooperatives. This is precisely what Lenin had in mind when in his pamphlet *On Cooperation* he wrote:

> "...Cooperation under our conditions nearly always coincides fully with Socialism."†

Therefore, can the proletariat of the USSR, by its own efforts lay down the economic basis of Socialism at a time when our country is in a capitalist environment?

The Party replied to this question in the affirmative (cf. Resolution of the 15th Conference of the VKP(b)). Lenin replied to this question in the affirmative (cf. at least his pamphlet "On Cooperation"). The whole experience of our work of construction replies to this question in the affirmative. For the share of the socialist sector of our economy is increasing year by year, at the expense of the private capital sector, both in the sphere of production and in the sphere of circulation; the role of private capital in proportion to the role of the socialist elements of our economy is declining from year to year.

How does the Opposition reply to this question?

The Opposition replies to this question in the *negative*.

It follows then that the victory of Socialism in our country is possible; that the possibility of constructing the economic basis of Socialism may be regarded as guaranteed. Does this mean that such a victory may be regarded as a complete victory, as the final victory guaranteeing the country which is constructing Socialism against all external dangers, against the danger of imperialist intervention and the danger of restoration connected with it? No, it does not. While the question of constructing Socialism in the USSR is a question of overcoming our own *"national"* bourgeoisie, the question of the final victory of Socialism is a question of overcoming the *world* bourgeoisie. The Party says that the proletariat of a single country is incapable of overcoming the world bourgeoisie by its own efforts. The Party says that in order to achieve the final victory of Socialism in a single country it is necessary to overcome, or at least to neutralize the world bourgeoisie. The Party says that this is a task that can be fulfilled only by the proletariat of several countries. Therefore, final victory in one country or another means the victory of the proletarian revolution at least in several countries. This question does not give rise to any particular differences of opinion in our Party and for that reason I will not dwell upon it at length. I would refer those who are interested to the material which has been distributed to the members of the Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI.

The Factor of the "Respite."

Second Question: The second question concerns the problems of the present international situation of the USSR, of the conditions of the period of "respite" during which the work of constructing Socialism was commenced and began to develop in our country. We can and must construct Socialism in the USSR. But in order to construct Socialism, first of all we must exist, we must have a "respite" from war; there must be no attempts at intervention; it is necessary to win a certain minimum of international conditions in order to exist and construct Socialism. The question then arises, what maintains the present international position of the Soviet Republic; what determines the present "peaceful" period of development of our country in its relations with capitalist countries; upon what is this "respite" based? If it is proved that the danger of intervention exists and will continue to exist and that this danger can only be removed as a result of the victory of the proletarian revolution in a number of countries, then what maintains the present period of "respite" which we have gained and which prevents the capitalist world from making immediate attempts at serious intervention and which creates the necessary conditions for the construction of Socialism in our country?

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

†-N. Lenin, "O kooperatsii" ["On Cooperation"], Jan. 6, 1923. First published in *Pravda* no. 115 and 116 (May 26-27, 1923). Reprinted in *V.I. Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniia*. Fifth Edition. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1964), v. 45, pg. 375. English translation used here from *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works.* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), v. 33, pg. 473. Note that "On Cooperation" was not a pamphlet, but rather a *Pravda* article published after five months' delay, one of the last items written by Lenin in his life.

First: the *antagonisms in the camp of the imperialists,* which continue to remain acute and prevent them from coming to an understanding against the Soviet Republic.

Second: the *antagonisms between imperialism and the colonial countries;* the growth of the movement for liberation in the colonial and dependent countries.

Third: the *growth of the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries,* and the growing sympathy of the proletarians of all countries to the Soviet Republic. The proletariat in capitalist countries *as yet* is unable to support the proletariat in the USSR by direct revolution against the capitalists, but the capitalist imperialist states *already* are unable to move "their" workers against the proletariat of the USSR, for the sympathy of the proletarians of all countries towards the Soviet Republic is increasing and must inevitably increase from day to day. And nowadays, it is impossible to conduct war without the working class.

Fourth: the *strength and power of the proletariat of the USSR;* achievements in socialist construction; the strength and organization of its Red Army.

The combination of these and similar conditions create a period of "respite" which is the characteristic feature of the present international position of the Soviet Republic.

The "National" and International Tasks of the Revolution are One and Indivisible.

Third Question: The third question is that of the problem of the "national" and international tasks of the proletarian revolution in one country or another. The Party holds the view that the "national" and international tasks of the proletariat of the USSR merge into one general task of emancipating the proletariat of all countries from capitalism, that the interests of the construction of Socialism in our country wholly and completely merge with the interests of the revolutionary movement in all countries, into one common interest of the victory of the revolution in all countries. What would happen if the proletariat of all countries did not sympathize with and support the Soviet Republic? There would be intervention, and the Soviet Republic would be destroyed.

What would happen if the capitalists managed to destroy the Soviet Republic? A period of the blackest reaction would set in in all capitalist and colonial countries. The working class and the oppressed nations would be crushed. The positions of international Communism would be destroyed.

What will happen if the support and sympathy of the proletariat of all countries towards the Soviet Republic will increase and grow? This will considerably facilitate the construction of Socialism in the USSR. What will happen if the achievements of socialist construction will increase in the USSR? This will immeasurably improve the revolutionary positions of the proletariat of all countries in their fight against capital; it will undermine the positions of international capital in its fight against the proletariat and increase the chances of world Communism to the highest degree.

From this it follows that the interests and tasks of the proletariat of the USSR are interwoven and inseparably connected with the interests and the tasks of the revolutionary movement in all countries, and vice-versa, the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat of all countries are inseparably connected with the tasks and achievements of the proletariat of the USSR on the front of socialist construction.

Consequently, to contrast the "national" tasks of the proletariat of one country or another to its international tasks means to commit a profound error in policy.

Consequently, to describe the zeal and passion displayed by the proletariat in their struggle on the front of socialist construction as a symptom of "national insularity" and "narrow nationalism," as the Opposition sometimes does, is nothing but madness or decrepitude.

Consequently, the assertion that the interests and the tasks of the proletariat of one country and one and indivisible with the interests and tasks of the proletariat of all countries is the surest guide to the victory of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat of all countries.

It is precisely for this reason that the victory of the revolution in a *single* country is not an end in itself, but a means, a lever of the development and the victory of the revolution in all countries.

Therefore, to construct Socialism in the USSR means to serve the common cause of the proletariat of all countries. It means to forge the victory over capi-

talism, not only in the USSR, but in all capitalist countries as well; for the revolution in the USSR is part of the world revolution, it is the beginning and the base for its expansion.

The History of the Question of Constructing Socialism.

Fourth Question: The fourth question refers to the history of the question we are discussing. The Opposition asserts that the question of constructing Socialism in a single country came up for the first time in our Party in 1925. In any event, Comrade Trotsky openly stated at the 15th Congress: "Why do you demand the theoretical recognition of the construction of Socialism in a single country? Where did you obtain this perspective? Why did no one raise this question prior to 1925?"

It would appear, therefore, that prior to 1925 this question was not raised in our Party. It would appear from this that Bukharin and Stalin raised this question in our Party in 1925.

Is this true? *No, it is not.*

I assert that the question of constructing socialist economy in a single country was first brought up in the Party by Lenin as far back as 1915. I assert that since that time, i.e. since 1915, the question of constructing socialist economy in a single country has been dealt with in our press and in our Party more than once.

Let us examine the facts:

a) *1915.* An article by Lenin in the central organ of the Bolsheviks (in *Sotsial-Demokrat*) entitled "The Slogan of the United States of Europe." This is what Lenin wrote in that article:

> "As a separate slogan, however, the slogan of a United States of the World would hardly be a correct one, first, because it merges with Socialism; second, because it may be wrongly interpreted to mean that the victory of Socialism in a single country is impossible, and it may also create misconceptions as to the relations of such a country to the others.
>
> Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of Socialism is possible first of all in several or even in one capitalist country alone. After expropriating the capitalists and organizing their own socialist production, the victorious proletariat of that country will arise *against* the rest of the world — the capitalist world — attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, stirring uprisings in those countries against the capitalists, and in case of need using even armed force against the exploiting classes and their states.... A free union of nations in Socialism is impossible without a more or less prolonged and stubborn struggle of the socialist republics against the backward states."†

The following is Comrade Trotsky's reply made in the same year, 1915, in *Nash Golos* ["Our Voice"], the paper which Trotsky directed:

> "Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. From this, *Sotsial-Demokrat* (*the central organ of the Bolsheviks in 1915 in which Lenin's article to which reference was made was published. —I. Stalin*), draws the conclusion that the victory of Socialism in a single country is possible, and therefore, it is unnecessary to make the establishment of the United States of Europe a condition for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in each separate country... That no country need 'wait' for the others in its struggle is an elementary idea which it is useful and necessary to repeat in order that the idea of simultaneous international action shall not be substituted by the idea of a waiting policy of international inaction. Without waiting for the rest we commence and continue our struggle on a national scale with the complete conviction that our initiative will stimulate the struggle in other countries; but if the latter does not take place, *then it is hopeless to think* — as the experience of history and theoretical reasoning proves — that for example *revolutionary Russia* could *successfully stand up against conservative Europe, or that socialist Germany could stand isolatedly in a capitalist world.* To regard the perspectives of the social revolution from the national outlook is to fall a prey to narrow nationalism, which in fact is social-patriotism." (*Italics mine. —I. St.*) ‡

As you see, the question of "organizing socialist production" was raised by Lenin already in 1915, on

†- N. Lenin, "O lozunge Soedinennykh Shtatov Evropy" ["On the Slogan for a United States of Europe"], first published in *Sotsial-Demokrat* no. 44 (August 23, 1915). Reprinted in *V.I. Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniia*. Fifth Edition. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1961), v. 26, pp. 354-355. English translation used here from *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works.* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), v. 21, pp. 342-343.

‡- The title and publication date of this article is not given. Republished in a section entitled "Soedinennye Shtaty Evropy" ["The United States of Europe"] in the pamphlet L. Trotskii, *Programma mira: K" Stokgol'mskoi Konferentsii.* ["Peace Program: Towards the Stockholm Conference"] (Petrograd-Moscow: Kniga, 1917) — a collection of 1915-vintage journalism published at the time of the Third Zimmerwald Congress in Sept. 1917. Reprinted in L. Trotskii, *Sochineniia: Tom III: 1917: Chast' I: Ot fevralia do oktiabria.* (Moscow: Gosizdat, [1925]), pp. 89-90. No English translation of the article is known, the *Inprecorr* translation is used here.

the threshold of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia, in the period of the imperialist war, when the question of the bourgeois democratic revolution merging into social revolution was on the order of the day.

You see from this that none other than Comrade Trotsky replied to Comrade Lenin, and Comrade Trotsky must have know that Lenin's article dealt with the question of "the victory of Socialism" and of the possibility of "organizing socialist production in a single country."

We see that the charge of "narrow nationalism" was first made by Comrade Trotsky already in 1915, and this charge was made not against Bukharin or Stalin, but against Lenin.

Now, Comrade Zinoviev repeatedly puts forward this ridiculous charge of "narrow nationalism," but he apparently fails to understand that by this he is repeating and reviving Comrade Trotsky's phrase directed against Lenin and his Party.

b) *1919.* An article by Lenin entitled "Economics and Politics in the Epoch of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." This is what Lenin wrote in this article:

> "Therefore, in spite of the lies and slanders of the bourgeoisie of all countries and of their open or masked henchmen (the "socialists" of the Second International), one thing remains beyond dispute — *as far as the basic economic problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat is concerned, the victory of communism over capitalism in our country is assured.* Throughout the world the bourgeoisie is raging and fuming against Bolshevism and is organizing military expeditions, plots, etc., against the Bolsheviks, because it realizes full well *that our success in reconstructing the social economy is inevitable, provided we are not crushed by military force. And its attempts to crush us in this way are not succeeding."* (*Italics mine. —I. St.*) †

You see that Lenin here deals with the "economic problems of the dictatorship of the proletariat" with the "reconstruction of social economy," in the direction of the "victory of Communism." What are the "economic problems of the dictatorship of the proletariat" and the "reconstruction of social economy" under the dictatorship of the proletariat? They are nothing more or less than the construction of Socialism in a single country, in our country.

c) *1921.* Lenin's pamphlet on "The Agricultural Tax," the well known passage in which it is said that we can and must construct "a socialist foundation for our economy." (cf. N. Lenin, "The Agricultural Tax.")

d) *1922.* Comrade Lenin's speech at the Moscow Soviet where he said that we have "dragged Socialism into everyday life," that "NEP Russia will become socialist Russia."‡

Comrade Trotsky replied to this speech in his "Addendum" to the "Peace Program" written in 1922, without indicating that he was replying to Lenin. This is what Comrade Trotsky says in his "Addendum":

> "The assertion repeated several times in the *Peace Program* to the effect that the proletarian revolution cannot be victoriously completed within the boundaries of a single country, may seem to some readers to have been refuted by the almost five years experience of our Soviet Republic. Such a conclusion, however, would be groundless. The fact that the Workers' State has maintained itself against the world in a single country and a backward country at that, is evidence of the colossal power of the proletariat, which in other, more advanced, more civilized countries would be able literally to perform miracles. But, although we have maintained ourselves politically in a military sense, maintained ourselves as a state, we have not arrived or even approached to the task of constructing socialist society. The struggle for revolutionary political self-preservation during this period has resulted in the extreme diminution of productive forces. Socialism, however, is conceivable only on the basis of flourishing growth. The commercial negotiations with bourgeois states, concessions, the Genoa Conference, etc. is all too striking evidence of the *impossibility of isolated socialist construction within national state boundaries...* The genuine rise of socialist economy in Russia will become possible only after the victory of the most important countries in Europe." (*Italics mine. —I. St.*) §

†- N. Lenin, "Ekonomika i politika v epokhu diktatury proletariata" ["Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat"], Oct. 30, 1919. First published in *Pravda* no. 250 and *Izvestiia* no. 250 (Nov. 7, 1919 — i.e. Revolution Day). Reprinted in *V.I. Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniia*. Fifth Edition. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1963), v. 39, pp. 274-275. English translation used here from *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works.* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), v. 30, pg. 110.

‡- N. Lenin, "Rech' na plenume Moskovskogo soveta 20 noiabria 1922 g." ["Speech at a Plenary Session of the Moscow Soviet, November 20, 1922"], first published in *Pravda* no. 263 (Nov. 21, 1922). Reprinted in *V.I. Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniia*. Fifth Edition. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1964), v. 45, pp. 245-251. English translation in *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works.* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), v. 33, pp. 435-443. *Inprecorr* translation retained.

§- L. Trotskii, "Posledslovie (1922 g.)" ["Afterword (1922)"] to the pamphlet L. Trotskii, *Programma mira: K" Stokgol'mskoi Konferentsii* ["Peace Program: Towards the Stockholm Conference"] as published in L. Trotskii, *Sochineniia: Tom III: 1917: Chast' I: Ot fevralia do oktiabria.* (Moscow: Gosizdat, [1925]), pp. 92-93. No other English translation is known, the *Inprecorr* translation is used here.

To whom does Comrade Trotsky reply, when he talks about "the impossibility" of isolated socialist construction within national state boundaries? Surely, not to Bukharin or to Stalin! Comrade Trotsky replies to Lenin and on no other question than the fundamental question of the possibility of "socialist construction within national state boundaries."

e) *1923.* Lenin's pamphlet *On Cooperation,* which represents his political will and testament. This is what Comrade Lenin says in this pamphlet:

> "Indeed, the power of the state over all large-scale means of production, political power in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured proletarian leadership of the peasantry, etc. — is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society out of cooperatives, out of cooperatives alone, which we formerly ridiculed as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to treat as such now, under NEP? *Is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society?* It is still not the building of socialist society, but it is all that is *necessary and sufficient* for it." (*Italics mine. —I. St.*) †

It seems to me that it would be difficult to express the thing more clearly. According to Comrade Trotsky, "socialist construction within national state boundaries" is impossible. Lenin, however, asserts that we, i.e. the proletariat in the USSR, now, in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, possess "all that is necessary and sufficient to build a complete socialist society." These are completely opposite views.

These are the facts.

You will see, therefore, that the question of constructing Socialism in a single country was raised in our Party already in 1915 by Lenin personally and that none other than Comrade Trotsky argued with Comrade Lenin over this question and charged him with "narrow nationalism."

You will see that since then this question has never left the agenda of the work of our Party right up to the very death of Comrade Lenin.

You see that this question has been discussed on several occasions and in different forms by Comrade Trotsky, in a concealed but very definite controversy with Comrade Lenin, and each time Comrade Trotsky dealt with the question, not in the spirit of Lenin and Leninism, but against Lenin and Leninism.

You see that Comrade Trotsky utters a *deliberate untruth* when he says that the question of the construction of Socialism in a single country was neve brought up prior to 1925.

The Special Importance of the Question of the Construction of Socialism in the USSR at the Present Time.

Fifth Question: The fifth question has to deal with the urgency of the task of constructing Socialism at the present time. Why has the question of the construction of Socialism acquired such urgency precisely at the present time? Why is it that in 1915, 1918, 1919, 1921, 1922, 1923 the question of the construction of Socialism in the USSR was discussed only from time to time and in separate articles, whereas in 1924, 1925, and 1926 this question occupied an extremely prominent place in Party practice. How is this to be explained?

In my opinion it is to be explained by *three principal causes.*

First, by the fact that the rate of development of the revolution in other countries has slowed down, a so-called "partial stabilization of capitalism" has set in. This gives rise to the question: Is not this partial stabilization of capitalism leading to the diminution or even to the disappearance of the possibility of constructing Socialism in our country? This is the cause of the increasing interest that is being displayed in the fate of Socialism and of socialist construction in our country.

Second, by the fact that we introduced NEP, we permitted the existence of private capital and retreated to a certain extent in order to regroup our forces so that we might resume the offensive later on. This gives rise to the question: May not the introduction of NEP facilitate the diminution of the possibility of socialist construction in our country? This is another cause for the growing interest displayed in the question of the possibility of socialist construction in our country.

Third, by the fact that we have won the civil war, that we have driven off the interventionists and gained for ourselves a respite from war which created

†- N. Lenin, "O kooperatsii" ["On Cooperation"], Jan. 6, 1923. First published in *Pravda* nos. 115 & 116 (May 26-27, 1923). Reprinted in *V.I. Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniia*. Fifth Edition. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1964), v. 45, pp. 370. English translation used here from *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works.* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), v. 33, pg. 468.

favorable conditions in which to remove the state of economic ruin, restore the productive powers of the country, and start on the work of constructing a new economy in our country. This gives rise to the question: In what direction should the construction of economy be conducted? In the direction of Socialism or in some other direction? This gives rise to another question, viz.: If we are to direct this construction towards Socialism, then have we grounds for calculating that we have the possibility of constructing Socialism under the conditions of NEP, and in views of the stabilization of capitalism? This is another cause of the enormous interest that is displayed by the whole Party and the whole of the working class in the question of the fate of socialist construction in our country. This is the cause for the annual summing up of all sorts of statistics by the organs of the Party and of the Soviet Government from the point of view of increasing the specific gravity of the socialist forms of economy in the sphere of industry, in the sphere of trade, and in the sphere of agriculture.

These, then are the three principal causes which indicate that the question of the construction of Socialism has become an urgent question for our Party, for our proletariat, as well as for the Comintern.

The Opposition believes that the question of the construction of Socialism in the USSR has only *theoretical* interest. This is not correct. It is a *profound error.* The fact that the Opposition interprets the question in this manner may be explained only by its complete detachment from our Party work, from our economic construction, and from our cooperative construction. At the present time, when we have removed the economic ruin, restored industry, and have entered the zone of reconstructing the whole of our national economy on a new technical basis — the question of the construction of Socialism has acquired enormous practical significance. In what direction shall we conduct this economic construction? What shall we construct? Unless these questions are solved, honest and thoughtful business managers cannot proceed a single step forward, that is if they wish to take up the work of construction seriously and conscientiously. Are we building in order to prepare the ground for bourgeois democracy, or are we building in order to construct socialist society? This is now the root question of our work of construction. Have we the possibility of constructing socialist economy now, under the conditions of NEP, under the conditions of the partial stabilization of capitalism? This is one of the most important questions that confronts our Party and Soviet work.

Lenin replied to this question in the *affirmative* (see, at least, his pamphlet *On Cooperation*). The Party replied to the question in the *affirmative* (see resolution of the 14th Conference of the RKP(b) [April 27-29, 1925]).† But what about the Opposition? I have already said that the Opposition replied to this question in the *negative*. I stated in my report to the 15th Conference of the VKP(b) [Oct. 26-Nov. 3, 1926] and I am obliged to repeat it now, that Comrade Trotsky, the leader of the Opposition, only quite recently, in September 1926, declared in his notorious appeal to the members of the Opposition that he considered that the "theory of Socialism in a single country was the theoretical justification of narrow nationalism." (See Stalin's report to the 15th Conference of the VKP(b)).

Compare this quotation from a declaration made by Trotsky in 1926 with the article he wrote in 1915 in his controversy with Lenin on the question of the possibility of the victory of Socialism in a single country, in which he, for the first time, raised the question of the "narrow nationalism" of Comrade Lenin and the Leninists, and you will understand that Comrade Trotsky retains his old position of Social Democratic negation on the question of the construction of Socialism in a single country.

It is precisely for this reason that the Party asserts that Trotskyism is a Social Democratic deviation in our Party.

The Perspectives of Revolution.

Sixth Question: The sixth question concerns the problem of the perspectives of proletarian revolution. Speaking at the 15th Conference, Trotsky said: "Lenin considered that we can not construct Socialism in 20 years; in view of the backwardness of our peasant country, we shall not construct it in 30 years. Say 30-50 years at a minimum."

I must say, comrades, that this perspective, in-

†- The Russian Communist Party (bolsheviks) [RKP(b)] changed its name to the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) [VKP(b)] during the course of 1925.

vented by Comrade Trotsky, has nothing in common with the perspectives of the revolution in the USSR outlined by Comrade Lenin. Almost in the very next breath following the statement I have just quoted, Comrade Trotsky begins to contradict his own perspectives. But that is his business. I must say that neither Lenin nor the Party can accept responsibility for the perspectives which Comrade Trotsky has invented and the conclusions that logically emerge from them. The fact that Comrade Trotsky, the inventor of these perspectives, begins to contradict them in the same speech in which he outlined them merely indicates that Comrade Trotsky has got himself hopelessly mixed up and has placed himself in a ridiculous position.

Lenin did not say that "we cannot construct Socialism" in the course of 30 or in the course of 50 years. As a matter of fact, Lenin said the following:

> "Ten to twenty years of proper relations with the peasantry and victory is guaranteed on a world scale (even if proletarian revolutions, which are growing are delayed); otherwise we shall have 20 to 40 years of torture of White Guard terror."†

Can we draw the conclusion from the above postulate of Lenin that "we shall not construct Socialism in 20-30 or even in 50 years?" No, we cannot. From the above postulate we can draw only the following conclusions: (a) with proper relations with the peasantry, victory is assured (i.e., the victory of Socialism) in 10 or 20 years; (b) this will be a victory not only for the USSR, but a victory "on a world scale;" (c) if we do not secure victory in that time, it will be a symptom of the fact that we have been defeated and that the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat has been supplanted by the regime of White Guard terror, which may last from 20 to 40 years.

Of course, one may agree or not agree with Lenin's postulate and the conclusions that follow from it. But no one has the right to distort it as Trotsky does.

What does victory "on a world scale" mean? Does it mean that such a victory is tantamount to the victory of Socialism in a single country? No, it does not. Lenin, in his writings draws a sharp distinction between Socialism in a single country and victory "on a world scale." By victory "on a world scale," Lenin means that the success of Socialism in our country, the victory of socialist construction in our country, is of such enormous international significance that it (the victory) cannot be confined to our country, but must give rise to powerful movements toward Socialism in all capitalist countries. Moreover, if this victory does not synchronize with the victory of the proletarian revolution in other countries, it should at least serve as the beginning for a powerful movement of the proletariat of other countries towards the victory of world revolution.

These are the perspectives of the revolution according to Lenin, that is if we have in mind the perspectives of the victory of revolution, which indeed is the subject of our discussion in the Party.

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

How the Question Actually Stands.

Seventh Question: The Opposition says: "We will admit this for the sake of argument, but with whom is it better in the last resort to maintain an alliance — with the world proletariat or with the peasantry of our country? Who should be given preference, the world proletariat or the peasantry of the USSR?" They try to make it appear that the proletariat of the USSR has two allies before it — one the world proletariat, who is ready to overthrow their bourgeoisie without delay, but is waiting for us to give them our consent first — and the other, our peasantry, which is prepared to help the proletariat of the USSR but is not quite sure that the proletariat of the USSR will accept this aid. Comrades, this is a childish way of presenting the question. This method of presenting the question has nothing in common with the general progress of the revolution in our country or with the correlations of forces on the front of the fight between world capitalism and Socialism. Pardon the expression, but I think that only a boarding school girl would present the question in this way. Unfortunately, the situation is not as it is described by some of the Opposition. There is not the slightest doubt that we would gladly accept the aid from both sides if it merely depended upon us, but in real life the situation is not like that.

†- This quotation of Lenin has not been located. Stalin *Works* v. 9 cites a Russian edition of Lenin's *Sochineniia,* v. 26, pg. 313.

The question stands as follows: the rate of progress of the world revolution has slowed down, the victory of Socialism in the West has not yet been achieved; but the proletariat of the USSR is in power and is strengthening its power from year to year, rallying around itself the principal masses of the peasantry; it has already achieved important successes on the front of socialist construction and is successfully strengthening its ties of friendship with the proletariat and the oppressed nations of all countries — does this provide grounds for denying that the proletariat of the USSR can overcome its bourgeoisie and continue victoriously to construct Socialism in our country in spite of the capitalist environment?

This is how the question stands, that is, of course, if we start out not from the fantasies as does the Opposition bloc, but from the actual correlation of forces on the front of the struggle between Socialism and capitalism.

The Party's reply to this question is that the proletariat of the USSR is able under such conditions to overcome its "national" bourgeoisie and successfully construct socialist economy.

The Opposition, however, says:

> "Without the direct state aid of the European proletariat, the working class in Russia cannot maintain power and convert its temporary domination into a prolonged socialist dictatorship."†

What is the meaning of the above quotation from Comrade Trotsky's book? What does "the state aid of the European proletariat" mean? It means that unless the victory of the proletariat takes place in the West *beforehand,* unless the proletariat in the West seizes power *beforehand,* the proletariat in the USSR not only is unable to overcome its own bourgeoisie and construct Socialism, but is even unable to maintain power.

What is the difference between the position of Comrade Trotsky and the position of Otto Bauer?

Unfortunately, there is no difference.

The Chances of Victory.

Eighth Question: The opposition says: we will admit this for the sake of argument, but who has the most chances of victory — the proletariat of the USSR or the world proletariat?

"Is it possible to imagine," said Comrade Trotsky in the course of his speech at the 15th Conference of the VKP(b) [Nov. 1, 1926],

> "that European capitalism will continue a process of decay for 30 to 50 years, and the proletariat will meanwhile remain incapable of accomplishing revolution? I ask why I should accept this assumption, which can only be designated as the assumption of an unfounded and most profound pessimism with respect to the European proletariat...? I maintain that I see no theoretical or political reason for believing that we shall build up Socialism with the cooperation of the peasantry more easily than the proletariat of Europe will seize power."‡

First of all, we must *absolutely reject the perspective of stagnation in Europe "for a period of 30-50 years."* No one has compelled comrade Trotsky to start out from this perspective of the proletarian revolution in the capitalist countries in the West, a perspective which has nothing in common with the perspective of our Party. Comrade Trotsky tied himself up with this imaginary perspective and must himself be responsible for the consequence of such an operation. I think that this period must be reduced at least by half, that is, if we have in view the real perspective of the proletarian revolution in the West.

Secondly, Comrade Trotsky decides, without res-

†- L. Trotskii, *Nasha revoliutsiia ["Our Revolution"].* (St. Petersburg: Glagolev, 1906), pg. 278. While there is an English-language collection of Trotsky's writing called *Our Revolution: Essays on Working-Class and International Revolution, 1904-1917*, edited by M.J. Olgin and published in 1918, content is not the same as the aforementioned 286 page book. As with so many of Trotsky's pre-revolutionary writings, *Nasha revoliutsiia* has never appeared in English. Note also that while Trotsky book was written during the Revolution of 1905-1907, Stalin's implication is that it represents commentary about his perspective on the Revolution of 1917.

‡- Trotsky, "Speech to the 15th Party Conference." Verbatim transcript of the speech in English was first published in *International Press Correspondence,* v. 6, no. 79 (Nov. 25, 1926), pp. 1372-1381. The Trotsky quotation used here is as it appeared in that edition on page 1380; it differs slightly from the translation appearing in the Jan. 5, 1927 issue of *Inprecorr*. The speech was later republished in Leon Trotsky, *The Challenge of the Left Opposition (1926-1927).* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1980), pp. 130-164, with the quotation here appearing on pp. 161-162. A Russian language stenographic report of the 15th Conference (including the Trotsky speech) was produced in 1927, to which I have unfortunately not had access. Note that in contrast to the preceding quotation, this was not pulled by Stalin from the distant past, but rather was a public utterance of Trotsky from less than six weeks earlier.

ervation, that the proletariat of the West has more chances of overcoming the world bourgeoisie — which is now in power, than the proletariat of the USSR has of overcoming its "national" bourgeoisie — which is politically crushed and economically is compelled to retreat before the pressure of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialistic forms of our economy. I think that such a presentation of the question is *incorrect.* I think that in presenting the question in this manner, Comrade Trotsky exposes himself. Did not the Mensheviks tell us exactly the same thing in October 1917, when they shouted from the housetops that the proletariat of the West has more chances of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and seizing power than the proletariat of Russia, where technique is inadequately developed and where the proletariat is small in numbers? And is it not a fact that in spite of the lamentations of the Mensheviks it turned out that in October 1917 the Russian proletariat had more chances of seizing power and overthrowing the bourgeoisie than the proletariat of England, France, and Germany? And has not the practice of the revolutionary struggle in all the world shown and proved that it is impossible to present the question as Comrade Trotsky presents it?

The question as to who has most chances for a speedy victory is not answered by contrasting the proletariat of one country to the proletariat of other countries, or by contrasting the peasantry of our country to the proletariat of other countries. To make such contrasts is to engage in childish games. The question as to who has the most chance for a speedy victory is determined by the actual international situation, by the actual correlation of forces on the front of the struggle between capitalism and Socialism. It may happen that the proletariat of the West will conquer its bourgeoisie and seize power sooner than we manage to construct the socialist foundation of our economy. This is not excluded in the least. But it may happen also that the proletariat of the USSR will manage to construct the socialist foundation of our economy sooner than the proletariat in the West will overthrow its bourgeoisie. This, too, is not excluded.

The solution of the question of the chances for the speedy victory depends upon the actual situation on the front of the struggle between capitalism and Socialism, and upon nothing else.

Practical-Political Differences.

These then are the differences of principle between us.

From these principles differences arise of a practical-political character both in the sphere of home and foreign politics as well as in the purely Party sphere. These differences comprise the subject of the *ninth question.*

a) Starting out from the fact of the partial stabilization of capitalism, the Party considers that we are in an *interrevolutionary period,* that in capitalist countries we are proceeding towards revolution, and that the fundamental task of the Communist Parties is to lay down a road to the masses, to strengthen the ties with the masses, to capture the mass organizations of the proletariat and to prepare the broad masses of the workers for the forthcoming revolutionary battles.

The Opposition, however, having no faith in the internal forces of our revolution and being scared by the partial stabilization of capitalism as a fact which may seal the doom of our revolution, considers (or considered) it possible to deny the fact of the partial stabilization of capitalism, considers (or considered) the British strike [general strike of 1926] as a symptom of the end of the stabilization of capitalism. When after all it turns out that stabilization is a fact, the Opposition asserts that it is all the worse for the facts, and that therefore it is possible to leap over these facts and by clamorous slogans demonstrate the revision of the tactics of the United Front, the disruption of the trade union movement in the West, etc. But what does it mean to ignore facts, to ignore the objective progress of affairs? It means to abandon science and resort to witchcraft.

This gives rise to adventurism in the policy of the Opposition bloc.

b) Taking a stand on the position that industrialization is the principal road of socialist construction and that our home market is the principal market for our socialist industry, the Party considers that industrialization must develop on the basis of the steady improvement of the material conditions of the principal masses of the peasantry (and it goes without saying of the workers), that the *link between industry and peasant economy,* between the *proletariat* and the *peasantry* and the maintenance by the *proletariat* of *leader-*

ship of the peasantry is, as Lenin expressed it, the "alpha and omega" of Soviet rule and the victory of our construction, and consequently, that our policy generally and our taxation and prices policy in particular must be so constructed as to work in the interests of this link between the proletariat and the peasantry.

The Opposition, however, having no confidence in the possibility of attracting the peasantry to the tasks of socialist construction and apparently assuming that industrialization can be carried on to the damage of the principal masses of the peasantry, turns on to the road of capitalist methods of industrialization, to the road of regarding the peasantry as a "colony" to be "exploited" by the proletarian state and proposes such measures for industrialization (increasing the burden of taxation upon the peasantry, raising the wholesale prices of manufactured goods, etc.) which can result only in breaking the link between industry and peasant economy, disrupt the economic position of the poor and middle farmers, and destroy the very foundation of industrialization.

This gives rise to the scepticism of the Opposition towards the idea of a bloc between the proletariat and the peasantry and the hegemony of the proletariat in this bloc — an attitude which is characteristic of the Social Democrats.

c) We take our stand on the fact that the Party, the Communist Party, is the principal instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat; that the leadership of a *single party,* which does not and can not share its leadership with other parties, is the principal condition for anything like a durable and developed dictatorship of the proletariat. Unless this condition prevails, this dictatorship is impossible. In view of this, we consider that the existence of factions inside our Party cannot be tolerated because it is perfectly clear that the existence of organized factions in our Party will lead to splitting the single Party into parallel organizations, to the formation of the embryo and nuclei of a new Party, or new Parties in the country, and consequently, to the disintegration of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Opposition, however, while not openly objecting to these postulates, nevertheless in their practical work takes their stand on the necessity for weakening the unity of the Party, on the necessity for the freedom of factions within the Party, and consequently, on the necessity for forming the elements for a new Party.

This is the source of the schismatic policy in the practical work of the Opposition bloc.

Hence, the howls of the Opposition about the "regime" in the Party which as a matter of fact are the reflection of the protests of the non-proletarian elements in the country against the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This is the origin of the question of two Parties.

These, comrades, are the sum of our differences with our Opposition.

IV. The Opposition at Work.

We will now take up the question as to how these differences revealed themselves in our practical work.

What did our Opposition really look like in its practical work, in its fight against the Party?

It is known that the Opposition operated not only in our Party, but in other sections of the Comintern, for example, in Germany, France, etc. For that reason the question must be put this way: What did the practical work of the Opposition and its followers actually look like in the VKP(b) and in the other Sections of the Comintern?

The Practical Work of the Opposition and its Followers in the VKP(b).

The Opposition commenced its "work" by bringing forward a serious charge against the Party. The Opposition declared that the policy of the Party "was running counter to the class line of the revolution." The Opposition declared that the Party was degenerating and was proceeding towards Thermidor. The Opposition declared that our state was "far from being a proletarian state." These charges were made either in the open declarations and speeches of the representatives of the Opposition (the Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Committee, July 1926) or in secret documents distributed by the Opposition among its adherents.

But in bringing forward these weighty charges against the Party, the Opposition by that prepared the ground for the organization of new, parallel centers in

the Party, for the establishment of a new Party. One of the adherents of the Opposition, Mr. Ossovsky, stated openly in his articles that the existing Party defended the interests of the capitalists, and that in view of this it was necessary to organize a new Party, "a purely proletarian party," which would exist and operate side by side with the existing Party. The Opposition may say that they are not responsible for the position taken up by Ossovsky, but this would not be true. The Opposition is wholly and completely responsible for the "acts" of Mr. Ossovsky. It is known that Ossovsky openly counted himself among the adherents of the Opposition and never once has the Opposition ever objected to this. It is known also that Comrade Trotsky defended Ossovsky at the July Plenum of the Central Committee against Molotov, and finally, it is known that in spite of the unanimous opinion of the Party against Ossovsky, the Opposition on the Central Committee voted against Ossovsky's expulsion from the Party. All this goes to show that the Opposition accepted moral responsibility for the "acts" of Ossovsky.

Conclusion: The practical work of the Opposition inside the VKP(b) revealed itself in the position of Ossovsky, in his position that the establishment of a new party was permissible.

Nor could it be otherwise. One of two things: *either* the Opposition, in bringing forward these weighty charges against the Party did not itself believe that these charges were serious and that they brought them forward merely as a demonstration — in that case they mislead the working class, which is criminal, *or* the Opposition believed and continues to believe that these charges are serious — in that case it should set a course, and in fact did maintain a course towards the break up of the leading cadres of the Party and for the formation of a new Party.

This is the face presented by our Opposition in its practical work against the VKP(b) in October 1926.

The Practical Work of the Followers of the Opposition of the Communist Party of Germany.

Starting out from the charges brought against our Party by our Opposition, the "Ultra-Left" in Germany, headed by Herr Korsch, drew "further" conclusions; they dotted the i's and crossed the t's. It is known that Korsch, the ideologist of the "Ultra-Lefts" in Germany, asserts that our socialist industry is "purely capitalist industry." It is known that Korsch describes our Party as a "kulakized" Party and the Comintern as an "opportunist" organization. It is known also that in view of this, Korsch advocates the necessity for a "new revolution" against the existing rule of the USSR. The Opposition may say that it cannot be held responsible for the position of Korsch, but that would not be true. The Opposition is wholly and completely responsible for the "acts" of Herr Korsch. What Korsch says is the natural deduction to be made from the premises which the leaders of our Opposition preached to their adherents, in the form of certain charges against the Party. For if the Party is slipping on the line of opportunism, if its policy runs counter to the class line of the revolution, if it is degenerating and proceeding towards Thermidor, and if our state is far from being a proletarian state, then, one and only one deduction can be made from all this, and that is: the necessity for a new revolution against the "kulakized" government. Moreover, it is known that the Ultra-Lefts in Germany, including the Wedding group, voted against the expulsion of Korsch from the party and by that accepted moral responsibility for the counterrevolutionary propaganda of Korsch. Who does not know that the Ultra-Left support the Opposition in the VKP(b)?

The Practical Work of the Followers of the Opposition in France.

The same thing must be said of the followers of the Opposition in France. I have in mind Souvarine and his group, which expresses its views in a certain journal in France. Starting out from the premises laid down by our Opposition in its charges against the Party, Souvarine comes to the conclusion that the principal enemy of the revolution is the Party bureaucracy, the leading stratum of our Party. Souvarine asserts that there is only one road to "salvation," and that is a new revolution against the leading stratum in our Party, in our government; a new revolution, first of all, against the Secretariat. In Germany they advocate a new revolution against the existing rule of the USSR. In France they advocate a new revolution against the Secretariat of the Central Committee. Well, and how is this new revolution to be organized? Can it be organized with-

out a special party devoted to the aims of the revolution? Of course not. Hence, the question of forming a new party. The Opposition may say it is not responsible for what Souvarine writes. That would not be true. It is known firstly, that Souvarine and his group are adherents of the Opposition, particularly of the Trotskyist section; secondly, that only very recently the Opposition planned to secure the appointment of Comrade Souvarine as a member of the editorial board of the central organ of the Communist Party of France. It is true that this plan did not succeed; but that was not the fault but the misfortune of the Opposition.

It follows therefore that the Opposition in its practical work — if we take it not in the form in which it describes it to us, but as it appears in the progress of work — in the USSR as well as in France and Germany — it follows, I say, that the Opposition in its practical work came right up to the question of destroying the existing cadres of our Party and the formation of a new Party.

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

Why do the Social Democrats and Cadets† praise the Opposition, or in other words, whose moods does the Opposition reflect?

You have no doubt observed that the so-called "Russian question" has recently become the question of the day in the Social Democratic and bourgeois press in the West. Is that an accident? Of course it is not an accident. The growth of Socialism in the USSR and the unfolding of the Communist movement in the West cannot but rouse great alarm in the ranks of the bourgeoisie and its agents in the working class — the Social Democratic leaders. The dividing line between the revolution and the counterrevolution now runs along the line between the malicious hatred of some and the comradely friendship of others towards the proletarian Party in the USSR. The extreme international significance of the "Russian question" is now a fact, which the enemies of Communism cannot ignore. Two fronts have been formed in connection with the Russian question: The front of the enemies of the Soviet Republic and the front of its loyal friends. What do the enemies of the Soviet Republic desire? They are striving to establish the intellectual and moral prerequisites in the broad masses of the people for a fight against the proletarian dictatorship. What do the friends of the Soviet Republic desire? They are trying to establish the intellectual and moral prerequisites among the broad masses of the proletariat for the support and defence of the Soviet Republic.

Let us seen now why the Social Democrats and the Russian emigré Cadets praise our Opposition.

For following, for example, is what Paul Levi, the well-known Social Democratic leader of Germany says:

> "We are of the opinion that the special interest of the workers, and in the final analysis, the interests of Socialism, contradict the existence of peasant private property, that the identity of interest of the workers and the peasants were only apparent and that the further development of the Russian revolution would make this contradiction more obvious and more acute. We consider that the idea of the community of interests is only another form of the idea of coalition. If Marxism generally has any grounds at all, if history is developing dialectically, then this contradiction should have smashed the idea of coalition in the same way as it has smashed it in Germany... To those of use who are watching events in the USSR from the outside, from the West, it is clear: *Our views coincide with the views of the Opposition.* The fact is that in Russia an independent anti-capitalist movement is commencing anew on the lines of the class struggle." ‡

That there is a certain amount of confusion in this quotation concerning the "identity" of interests of the workers and peasants is obvious. But that Paul Levi is praising our Opposition for fighting against the idea of a bloc between the workers and peasants, against the idea of the alliance between the workers and peasants, is also beyond a doubt.

The following is what [Teodor] Dan, the well-known leader of "Russian" Social Democracy, the leader of the "Russian" Mensheviks, who are fighting for the restoration of capitalism in the USSR, has to say:

†- "Cadets" were the adherents of the Constitutional Democratic Party, an organization founded upon the ideology of classical liberalism — the establishment of a constitutional republic in place of Tsarist autocracy and maintenance of a capitalist economy. The leading figure in this organization was the historian and politician Pavel Miliukov.

‡- *Leipziger Volkszeitung,* July 30, 1926. Second generation translation by Inprecorr.

"By their criticism of the existing system, which is almost a literal repetition of the criticism made by the Social Democrats, the Bolshevik Opposition is *preparing the people's minds*... for the adoption of a positive platform of Social Democracy."

Further on he says:

"The Opposition is cultivating, not only among the workers, but also among the Communist workers, the young shoots of such ideas and moods which, with proper nurturing, could *easily produce Social Democratic fruits.*" †

And this is what the central organ of the Miliukov [Cadet] Party, *Poslednie Novosti,* has to say about our Opposition:

"Today the Opposition is undermining the dictatorship. In every new publication the Opposition gives utterance to more and more 'frightful' words. The Opposition itself is evolving in the direction of sharper and sharper attacks against the prevailing system and this, for the time being, is sufficient to be gratefully accepted as a megaphone for the broad masses of the politically discontented population." ‡

And further:

"The most dangerous enemy of the Soviet rule now is he who will steal up to it unobserved, embrace it on all sides with his tentacles, and liquidate it sooner than it itself realizes that it is liquidated. It is precisely this role, inevitable and necessary from the preparatory period from which we have not yet emerged, which the Soviet Opposition is playing." §

I think that comment here would be superfluous.

I will limit myself only to these quotations in view of the shortness of time, although I could quote tens and hundreds more like them.

This then is what the Social Democrats and the Cadets are praising the Opposition for.

Is this an accident? No, it is not.

From this it is clear that the Opposition reflects not the mood of the proletariat of our country, but the mood of the non-proletarian elements who are dissatisfied with the dictatorship of the proletariat, who are angry with the dictatorship of the proletariat, and who are thirsting impatiently for its disintegration and collapse.

Thus, the logic of the factional struggle conducted by our Opposition has led to this, that the front of our Opposition has merged objectively with the front of the opponents and the enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin taught us that it was the fundamental duty of the Communists to defend and strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat. But things have turned out so that the Opposition, owing to its factional policy, found itself in the camp of the opponents of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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

Nor could it be otherwise. The correlation of forces on the front of the struggle between capitalism and Socialism is such that only one of the two policies can be adopted in the ranks of the working class, i.e. either a policy of Communism or a policy of Social Democracy. The attempt of the Opposition to occupy a third position at a time when the fight against the VKP(b) is becoming acute could only end in the Opposition, in the progress of the struggle, being thrown into the camp of the opponents of Leninism.

This is what happened, as can be seen from the facts quoted.

That is why Social Democrats and the Cadets praised the Opposition.

VI. The Defeat of the Opposition Bloc.

I have said already that in its struggle against the Party, the Opposition brought weighty charges against the Party. I said that in its practical work, the Opposition came right on to the threshold of the question of a split and formation of a new Party. This raises the question: how long was the Opposition able to maintain this schismatic position? The facts say that they managed to hold on to this position only for a few months. The facts say that towards the beginning of October of this year, the Opposition was compelled to *admit defeat and retire.* What caused the retreat of the Opposition?

I think that the retreat of the Opposition was due to the following causes:

†- *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik* ["The Socialist Courier"], Nos. 17-18.
‡- *Poslednie Novosti* ["The Latest News"], No. 1990.
§- *Poslednie Novosti,* No. 1893 (Aug. 27, 1926).

First, the fact that the Opposition found that it had no army in Russia. It is quite possible that the establishment of a new party is a very entertaining task. But since it turned out after the discussion that there was no material from which to form a new party, then obviously retreat was the only way out that was felt.

Second, the fact that in the course of the factional struggle all sorts of shady elements attached themselves to the Opposition, both in the USSR and abroad, and that the Social Democrats and Cadets began to laud the Opposition to the skies, shaming and degrading it in the eyes of the workers by their kisses. The Opposition had to make its choice: either to accept the praises and kisses of the enemies as their due, or else to make a sharp turnabout and retreat in order to shake off all the shady hangers-on that had attached themselves to it. In signing their order of retreat, the Opposition admitted that the second choice was the only way out left open for them.

Third, the fact that the situation in the USSR proved to be much better than the Opposition assumed; that the masses of the Party proved to be much more intelligent and compact than it may have seemed to the Opposition at the beginning of the fight. Of course, had there been a crisis in the country, had there been growing discontent among the workers, and had the Party been less compact, the Opposition would have taken another path, it would not have decided on retreat. The facts have shown, however, that the calculations of the Opposition collapsed in this sphere.

This is the cause of the defeat of the Opposition. This is the cause of its retreat.

The defeat of the Opposition passed through *three stages.*

The first stage. This is the *"declaration" of the Opposition of October 16, 1926.* In this document the Opposition abandoned the theory and practice of freedom of factions and factional methods of struggle and frankly and unambiguously admitted its errors in this sphere. But the Opposition not only abandoned this. Insofar as in its "declaration" it dissociated itself from the Workers' Opposition and from all the Korsches and Souvarines, the Opposition also abandoned its ideological positions which recently linked it with these tendencies.

Second stage. This is the *practical withdrawal of the charges which the Opposition recently brought against the Party.* It must be admitted, and in admitting it, it must be emphasized, that the Opposition in fact abandoned its former charges against the Party at the 15th Conference of the VKP(b) [Oct. 26-Nov. 3, 1926]. If we compare the minutes of the July Plenum of the CC and CCC with the minutes of the 15th Conference of the VKP(b), we cannot fail to observe that at the 15th Conference no trace was left of the charges of opportunism, Thermidorism, slipping from the class line of the revolution, etc. If in addition to this we bear in mind the fact that a number of delegates put question to the Opposition concerning the former charges and that the Opposition remained obstinately silent, it cannot but be admitted that the Opposition in fact abandoned the former charges against the party. Can this be described as the actual abandonment by the Opposition of a number of its ideological positions? It can and must be so described. It is the deliberate furling of the fighting flag of the Opposition in view of its defeat. Nor could it be otherwise. The charges that were brought against the Party were based on calculations for forming a new party, but since these calculations collapsed, the charges had to collapse also, at least for a time.

Third stage. The *complete isolation of the Opposition at the 15th Conference.* It should be observed that the Opposition did not receive a single vote at the 15th Conference and thus proved to be absolutely isolated. Compare the noise and bustle which the Opposition raised at the end of September this year when it started out on its campaign for its open attack upon the Party with the fact that at the 15th Conference it remained as it were in a minority of one; it will be understood then that a "better" defeat of the Opposition could not be desired.

Can the fact be denied that the Opposition really abandoned its charges against the Party and dared not repeat them at the 15th Conference in spite of the fact that they were challenged to do so by the delegates?

No, it cannot, because facts cannot be denied.

Why did the Opposition take this path? Why did it furl its flag?

Because the unfurling of the ideological flag of the Opposition absolutely and inevitably implied a theory of two parties, the reanimation of all the Katzes, Korsches, Maslows, Souvarines, and other shady ele-

ments, the release of the anti-proletarian forces in our country, praises and kisses from the Social Democrats and the Russian emigré, liberal bourgeoisie.

The Ideological Banner of the Opposition kills the Opposition. This is the fact, comrades.

Therefore, to prevent its utter decay, the Opposition was obliged to retreat and throw away its banner.

This is the cause of the defeat of the Opposition bloc.

VII. The Practical Sense and Significance of the 15th Conference of the VKP(b).

I will now conclude, comrades. It remains for me to say only a few words about the deductions to be made from the point of view of the sense and significance of the 15th Conference of the VKP(b).

The *first deduction* to be made is that the Conference summarized the internal Party struggle that followed the 14th Conference, defined the victory which the Party won over the Opposition and, isolating the Opposition, put an end to the factional Bacchanalia which the Opposition had let loose in the Party in the preceding period.

The *second deduction* is that the Conference rallied the ranks of our Party more than it had eve been before on the basis of the socialist perspectives of our constructions, on the basis of the idea of the struggle for the victory of socialist construction, against the Opposition tendencies in our Party and against all deviations in our Party. The burning question that confronts our Party today is the question of the construction of Socialism in our country. Lenin was right when he said that the eyes of the whole world are turned on us, on our economic construction, upon our successes on the front of construction. But in order to achieve successes on this front it is necessary that the principal instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat, our Party, shall be prepared for this task, that it shall recognize the importance of it and be in a position to serve as the level of the victory of socialist construction in our country. The sense and significance of the 15th Conference lies in that it defined and crowned the task of arming our Party with the idea of the victory of socialist construction in our country.

The *third deduction* to be made is that the Conference put up a stern resistance to all ideological wavering in our Party and by that facilitated the complete triumph of Leninism in the VKP(b).

If the Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern will approve of the resolution of the 15th Conference of the VKP(b) and will recognize the policy of the Party in relation to the Opposition as being correct, of which I have no reason to doubt, it will lead to the *fourth deduction,* namely, that the 15th Conference prepared the necessary conditions, of no little importance, in order that Leninism may triumph in the whole of the Comintern, in the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat of all countries and all peoples.

(*Loud and prolonged applause.*)

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