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## CLASS RELATIONS IN THE SOVIET UNION

*By JOHN G. WRIGHT.*

Although the military operations at the front are of extreme importance, the fate of the Soviet Union will not be decided on a purely military plane but on the arena of the class struggle.

It cannot be repeated too often that the greatest breach in the defensive power of the USSR lies not so much in any salient which the Nazi armoured divisions have driven through the Red Army's lines of defence as it does in the atomisation, disorientation, demoralization and resulting passivity of the European labour movements. No matter how stubbornly and heroically the Red Army resists the Nazi onslaught, if the world working-class remains prostrate the end result will be not only the downfall of Stalin's regime, but also of the remaining conquests of the October revolution. As Lenin and Trotsky warned time and again, the fate of the Soviet Union will be decided on the international arena.

The foreign policies of the Kremlin, carried out obediently and unquestioningly always and everywhere by the parties of the Third International, prepared the ground for

Hitler's previous triumphs. Stalin's policy is once again clearing the way for Nazi success. It is not accidental that from the Communist International there emanates today only the silence of the grave. Dimitrov, the "helmsman of the Comintern," has not dared to this day to open his mouth. When and if he is permitted to do so it will not be to rally the world masses to the policy of defence through revolutionary war. The Kremlin is once again staking everything on another alliance with imperialists, this time the camp of Anglo-American "democracies." A victory of Churchill and Roosevelt opens up only the perspective of a new and much worse edition of the Versailles Treaty. What appeal can this possibly have for the German masses? It only drives them into Hitler's hands. The German workers will begin to move only if the way out through socialism—through the Socialist United States of Europe—is opened for them. But this is the road which the Kremlin seeks to block at all costs. Stalinism is again dealing the greatest blows to the defence of the Soviet Union.

## Stalin Fears the October Tradition

After having boasted for so many years of having "irrevocably" achieved the building of socialism in one country, after having announced that the very "threshold of Communism" had already been reached, the Kremlin now prohibits even a whisper about it. All references to socialism are carefully deleted from Moscow's official statements, in particular, from all appeals to the German soldiers. The "Manifesto" of the Communist Party in America follows suit ("Daily Worker," June 30). This curries favour with London and Washington, but will not spur German soldiers to fraternize with the Red Army fighters.

There is also another reason for Stalinist reticence about socialism. The Kremlin's fear of the resurgence of the traditions, programme and spirit of October surpasses its fear of the Nazi military might. This fear epitomises the renegades from Bolshevism. This fear is expressed in everything the Kremlin says or does. It should be recalled that the Stalinists always have sworn that

the great victories of the Civil War of 1918-1921 in which the imperialist intervention was repelled on 22 fronts were primarily gained through the efforts of Stalin. But Molotov preferred to refer instead to the traditions of the Czarist triumph over Napoleon. He carefully evaded all references to those historical events with which Stalin is, according to the official myth, most closely associated. Was this perhaps done out of consideration for the modesty of the "Great Father of the Peoples"? No, it was done because the bureaucracy must at all costs prevent the banner of October and of the Civil War—the banner of Lenin and Trotsky—from being raised high again over the battlefields.

But the final decision in this sphere, as in so many others, does not rest with the Kremlin. It rests with the greatest internal bulwark of defence, the Soviet working-class. With the aid of the international vanguard the Soviet workers must and can summon the workers of the world to a revolutionary war

## The Soviet Proletariat

The Soviet working-class today is ten to twelve times stronger numerically than were the workers in 1917 who led the Russian masses to the conquest of October and who defended them against the entire capitalist world in the greatest civil war in modern times. Thirty million Soviet workers now operate the modern industrial apparatus and inhabit the cities of one-sixth of the world.

In addition to quantitative differences there are profound qualitative differences between this numerically and productively more powerful working-class and the workers under the Czar.

The abolition of private property and of the proprietors is sharply expressed in the social composition of modern Soviet cities. The world has never seen such urban centres before. For the first time in history, events will occur under wartime conditions in cities where no bourgeoisie exists. Nor is there an urban petty bourgeoisie in the proper sense of the term. The proletariat constitutes the overwhelming majority of the urban population with a thin crust of the bureaucracy at the top, and a thinner stratum of the Stalinist underworld at the bottom. Even in Moscow, Leningrad and other capital cities of the Federated Republics and autonomous regions the same thing holds true. The bureaucracy in these capital cities constitutes but a minority. Only in the cities of the occupied areas (Esthonia, Lithuania, Latvia) are there still sizeable remnants of the old ruling

classes and a middle class of any proportion. But the cities in Soviet Union proper have no middle class. All the petty bourgeois tendencies are concentrated within the ranks of the bureaucracy itself, and in the villages. This means that the counter-revolution faces an unprecedented task in the cities, i.e., the decisive centres, the counter-revolution lacks a genuine class base and will have either to improvise it or to import it. On the other hand, this provides the revolution with class resources never before at its disposal.

Although the bulk of the workers stems from the land and was absorbed into industry during the first two Five Year Plans, the Soviet working-class is far more homogeneous, despite its relative youth, than the Russian workers were in 1917, or the workers in any advanced capitalist countries are today. Trotsky estimated that at the outbreak of the February, 1917, revolution, about 40 per cent. of the Russian proletariat was of recent petty bourgeois origin, consisting predominantly of those who went into industry to avoid military service. Among the workers today not more than ten per cent. are recent recruits from rural areas; moreover, they are extremely young and therefore tend to become proletarianised much more rapidly and readily than older peasants. The other workers who originally came from the villages have already behind them from five to ten years of proletarianisation.

## Contrast between Bourgeoisie and Kremlin

The bourgeoisie possesses many means for intensifying differentiation within the ranks of workers. The bourgeoisie of any given nation can create a stable labour aristocracy; a social ladder, as it were, with gradations between the various skilled workers, and between the skilled and the unskilled. In addition, through the functioning of its educational, religious and state organs, the bourgeoisie is able to divide the workers along racial and religious lines. It is able to maintain its own political agencies within the working-class from the outright bourgeois parties down to the various varieties of reformism.

In contrast to this the Kremlin bureaucracy, which lacks a genuine class function, has not been able really to stratify the Soviet workers. Not that it hasn't sought to create a labour aristocracy and to create all possible divisions among the workers.

But the Kremlin, while successful in creating an unbridgeable gulf between the privileged bureaucracy and the rest of the population has not been successful, despite all its efforts, in its attempts to foster any broad and stable labour aristocracy as a

basis of support. What happened instead was this: the Stalinist aristocrats of labour—the Stakhanovists—became incorporated with the bureaucracy itself, replacing in many instances the older generations of revolutionists who became bureaucratized during and after the period of the NEP and who were by and large removed during the purges (1935-1938).

Furthermore, the marked tendency in recent years has been to drive down the living standards of all workers, both skilled and unskilled. This has acted to fuse the various sections of the working-class in a common hatred against the rapacious and oppressive bureaucracy.

The living standards of all workers must now inevitably fall still lower. The working day, which was fixed at eight hours and a six-day week by the vicious decrees of June 21, 1940, has now been hiked to nine, ten and eleven hours a day. A dispatch from Moscow dated June 27, 1941, announces a decree which makes "obligatory overtime work from one to three hours daily, both for all workers and office employees." ("Daily Worker," U.S.A., June 28). This means a legal working day of 11 hours and more.

## New Conflicts between Workers and Bureaucrats

The vast majority of the Soviet workers will undoubtedly strain every ounce of energy to supply the fighters at the front. But their efforts come at all points into conflict with the irresponsible administration. The contradiction between the bureaucratic method of management and the demands of defence instead of weakening will intensify literally with every hour of war. For instance, the transportation facilities, already overstrained in peacetime, must now be used primarily to supply the front. How will the plants be supplied?

The already monstrous physical strain upon the workers must presently reach the breaking point. The bureaucracy apparently realises this, and has offered a special inducement in the form of an increase in pay for overtime. The decree specifies that "remuneration for obligatory overtime (is) one and a half times the regular rates." What will the workers be able to purchase with their increased wages in the face of scarcity and skyrocketing prices? Nevertheless, the "raise" is highly symptomatic. **It is the first time in years that the Kremlin has deemed it advisable to make any sort of concession to**

the workers. It is a tacit admission of the rising tide of opposition.

To continue functioning, Soviet industry requires entirely different incentives and entirely different methods of management. Initiative on the part of the masses is now more indispensable than ever before. The struggle for rational working conditions and for the revival of workers' democracy coincides at all points with the life and death needs of Soviet enterprises and of the Red Army. The bureaucracy bars the way. The traditions of October and of the Civil War—the programme of Lenin and Trotsky—point the only way out. Will the Soviet workers take this road which is dictated by necessity? They have no other.

To be sure, there exists as yet no organised and independent political force within the ranks of Soviet labour. But it ought not to be forgotten that there still remain many millions in the land who participated directly or indirectly in the October revolution and who passed through the years of the Civil War. There are other thousands who have not forgotten the lessons of the struggle of the Left Opposition from 1923 to 1929, a struggle

which reached the masses. In Stalin's jails and concentration camps now sit many who are capable of providing the necessary leadership and of working and fighting shoulder to shoulder with the masses, the Red Army ranks, and with the new leaders now being tempered at the front, in the factories, the collective farms and among the youth.

The traditions and methods of the great historical experiences of the Soviet masses will revive under the pressure of this gravest crisis. Once revived they will sweep the land with a speed and power beyond that of any Panzer divisions the imperialist world could muster. The very fact that Stalin chooses to keep so rigid a silence on the subject of October is in itself evidence that the bureaucracy already senses its approaching death.

## The Soviet Peasantry

What will the peasants do? They still constitute the great majority of the Soviet population. Has this social force, next in importance only to the proletariat, been irretrievably lost to the revolution because of the criminal policies of Stalinism? Or will they again as in 1917 and in the Civil War follow the lead of the revolutionary workers?

The differentiation within the peasantry—its heterogeneity—contrary to Stalin's empty boasts of yesterday—does not fundamentally differ from that in capitalist countries. In general, the agricultural population is divided into the same main classes as exist in capitalist countries—the rural bourgeoisie (landlords, large scale farmers), the rural petty bourgeoisie (the well-to-do farmers, the individual proprietors), and the rural proletariat (the agricultural labourers).

Although the Czarist landlords have been abolished along with the old rural bourgeoisie, there nevertheless remains in Soviet agriculture a clearly delineated rural petty bourgeoisie in the shape of the kolkhoz (collective farm) aristocracy. Among the so-called "millionaire kolkhozi" are even to be observed personages who strikingly resemble large scale farmers, i.e., rural bourgeois. In other words, capitalist tendencies, far from having been abolished in agriculture, have merely been driven inside the collectives, and have luxuriated there. The capitalist tendencies in the collectives are further reinforced by some three million individual homesteads which have survived. In addition there are almost two million artisans, most of whom are organised into co-operatives, with special privileges, tax exemptions, etc., granted them in January of this year. As the scarcity of foodstuffs and necessities becomes more and more acute, all the individualistic tendencies in agriculture will intensify. This is one of the main reservoirs of the counter-revolution. With the aid of Hitler or other imperialists, these elements might well be able to turn the hatred of all the peasants against Stalin into channels leading to capitalist restoration.

The camp of the revolution, however, possesses this advantage: Hitler has really

little to offer the peasants. The mask of "liberator" sits poorly on a conqueror, all the more so an invader who comes to pillage after first sowing destruction and death. Phrases and promises, even threats and violence, will carry little weight with the great masses of the peasantry. They have had their fill of this diet from Stalin.

The most backward and superstitious peasant is capable of reasoning. He is cognisant of the superiority of tractors and scientific large scale farming. Besides there has been an acute shortage of horses since the days of forced collectivisation when all cattle were slaughtered. How will the crops be raised?

Once the peasant is convinced that the fruits of his labour will not be devoured by bureaucratic blood suckers or fascist despoilers—nothing will swerve him from his support of the resurgent revolution. Once the peasant is convinced that he is free to choose whether he wishes to cultivate his own land or to participate as a full-fledged and genuine shareholder in a collective farm, he will fight tooth and nail against the counter-revolution both from within and without. Once the peasant is convinced that the nationalised economy will be so planned as to take his vital needs into account he will readily lay down his life in defence of it.

He will be further impelled to this choice by the fact that even his present scanty ration is directly threatened by the Nazis. All history teaches that the bitterest struggles are waged over the scantiest rations. Whatever territories Hitler may succeed in over-running temporarily, he will have to hold with armies of occupation. It took more than 500,000 German soldiers to hold the Ukraine during the last war, when the Kaiser's Germany had the support of the old Ukrainian and Russian ruling classes. The results were very disappointing to the Kaiser. Hitler may well experience even a greater disappointment.

Success for the counter-revolution can come only in the event that the proletariat fails to advance its own class programme, and follows blindly Stalin's policy. The

majority of the peasants who are members of the collectives or employees of Machine Tractor Stations, Sovkhozi (state farms), etc., are really agricultural labourers. Their

interests coincide most closely with the interests of the urban workers. They will rally to the programme of October; no other programme can win them over, least of all the nationalist demagoguery of the Kremlin.

## The Soviet Youth

A crucial role in deciding the fate of the USSR is destined for its youth, the primary reservoir of the revolution. The giant Soviet proletariat is young not only in point of formation, but also in actual age. A decisive section consists of young men and women under 27. Among the staunchest fighters in the Red Army are those young soldiers who received their training under the old command—the legendary heroes of the Civil War, the idols of the people, who modernised and mechanised the troops, developed the air force, introduced parachute troops and many other innovations, and whom Stalin murdered.

The bureaucrats stand in greater fear of the youth than of any other single section of the population. The **Komsomol** (the Russian Y.C.L.) has been purged more frequently and savagely than any other branch of the apparatus. Five years ago, shortly before the staging of the first Moscow Frameup Trial in 1936, the **Komsomol** was dissolved as a political organisation for fear lest it develop into an opposition political party. The ideas and programme of Trotskyism (Bolshevism) have from the outset met their maximum response and sympathy precisely among the Soviet youth.

Even in its spontaneous forms the resistance of the youth to the regime was marked by its militant spirit. For example, the official Press was compelled to admit that it was the young workers and members of the **Komsomol** who were in the forefront of resistance to the Ukases of June 26, 1940, which lengthened the working day to eight

hours (and six days), and chained the workers to their job like mediæval serfs.

The most astonishing thing is that this militancy characterises even striplings. When the decrees were adopted drafting children and youngsters from fourteen to seventeen into large scale industry, mines and railways, the bureaucracy insisted on paying them only one-third of the prevailing wages. But these bureaucrats reckoned without the children. **They forced the Kremlin to change its mind and to grant them very substantial increases**

Article 19 of Order No 1 issued by the Labour Reserves Administration in October, 1940, fixed the following wage scale:

"It is hereby established that one-third of the revenues accruing from the fulfilment of orders as well as work done . . . during their period of training for industry is allotted to the state budget; one-third is to remain at the disposal of the Director . . . and one-third is to be given into the hands of those fulfilling the work." ("Pravda," October 5, 1940. Our emphasis.) The children began work on December 1, 1940. Eight weeks later, their wages were increased to 80 per cent. of the prevailing rates for those sixteen to seventeen and to 50 per cent. for those fifteen and under ("Pravda," February 5, 1941). Noteworthy, indeed, is the fact that the initiative compelling this "concession" came from below, that is, from the most defenceless section of the working-class, the child labourers. More than a million of these children are already in industry. Let us recall that the original party of Bolshevism under Czarist illegality was a party of very young workers.

## The Stalinist Bureaucracy

The chief obstacle in the path of successful defence is the Stalinist bureaucracy. Although all data relating to this malignant and monstrous growth upon the organism of the first workers' state in history are a most closely guarded secret, it is nevertheless possible to estimate its numerical strength as somewhere in the neighbourhood of ten per cent. of the entire population, i.e., from 10 to 15 million, approximately twice the size of the former ruling classes and their retinue in Czarist Russia.

In point of social origin and composition this bureaucracy is no monolith, but a sort of crude patchwork. The oldest generation of

those who either supported Stalin or capitulated to him after Lenin's death, has been annihilated physically. Hardly more than a few hundred survivors still remain, most of whom are in jail. The next generation, brought up and trained in the school of Stalinism and in utter ignorance of Bolshevism, its history, its traditions, its leaders, its methods, and its programme, was likewise decimated during the purges before and after the signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact (1935-1938). The "bloodless" purges of 1940—after the Finnish invasion—completed the devastation of its ranks. The incumbent bureaucracy now largely consists of callow recruits.

Among them are many sons and daughters of the former ruling classes, the progeny of former landlords, former capitalists, bourgeois intellectuals, Czarist generals, functionaries, etc. Another large tier is composed of Stakhanovists, most of whom are of very recent peasant origin and background. Fewest are those with proletarian background and origin.

In the coming events, the bureaucracy will not be able to play an independent role. The final differentiation in its ranks will occur along class lines. There already exists an embryonic Fascist wing, typified by such individuals as Butenko, who, it will be recalled, deserted to Mussolini. Hitler no doubt hopes there are many more Butenkos who will desert to him.

The days of this bureaucracy, as it is now constituted, are numbered. The war submits it to the final test.

Stalin's regime now stands stripped of all its trappings and masks, naked before the

world in its true despicable reactionary colours under conditions which make secrecy or camouflage no longer possible.

"There are no Munichers in the Soviet Union!" scream the Stalinists in one more hysterical attempt to hide all the abominations and crimes of Stalinism. The Moscow frameups, all the purges, the beheading of the Red Army, the destruction of the entire generation of Bolsheviks who made the October revolution and fought to victory in the Civil War, and, the crowning crime of all, the murder of Leon Trotsky—all this, these hirelings of the GPU are trying to palm off as measures indispensable for the defence of the Soviet Union.

What these scoundrels are really saying is this: **that it is impossible for Stalin any longer to produce scapegoats for his own crimes.** Yes, the Soviet masses and the whole world will now fix the responsibility for every breach in the lifelines of Soviet defence where it really belongs—upon the Judas-Cain in the Kremlin.

## Why Stalin Must Fall

Stalin's regime—which has stifled all initiative, every living voice and every creative tendency in Soviet society—must crumble if only for the reason that initiative and creative ability are most indispensable precisely in war-time. Wherever this initiative arises it will come into mortal conflict with the bureaucracy.

The initial impetus against the regime may come from the beheaded Red Army which is in direst and most immediate need to free itself from the dead hand of the totalitarian "leadership." The Kremlin has not the ability nor the policy for preserving the morale of the soldiers; it cannot keep the front properly supplied and equipped. The Kremlin and its flunkies put their own prestige and power above all other considerations.

Moscow's official war communiques reveal the panic in the Kremlin which seeps through in its frantic attempts to paint up the officer-corps, to instill it with confidence, and, especially, bolster up its prestige. It is the lieutenants, majors, colonels who are singled out for acclaim. If a rank-and-file Red soldier receives brief mention, it is only to mention his unquestionable readiness to shed his life-blood under any and all conditions. Yet it is precisely the initiative and the spirit of daring of the rank-and-file soldier and of the lowest command which will prove most decisive on the military arena. The Kremlin has done everything in its power to destroy this. Only a revolutionary war can release the vast creative forces latent in the masses at the front as well as behind the lines.

We proceed from the knowledge that the strangled revolution still lives in the USSR. Every day of war will refresh the memories of those who fought in Trotsky's Red Army. Their sons and daughters, too, have not forgotten.

But war speeds up in the extreme all processes, not only those of regeneration, but also those of degeneration. It is a race for time between the still living forces of October and the march of the German imperialist war machine whose path is being cleared more by the corrupt and degenerate regime than by its own military might. Stalin is staking everything on the assistance of Churchill and Roosevelt. No force is too reactionary for Stalin if only he can temporarily summon it to his aid. His latest ally is the Russian Orthodox Church in the person of the Acting Patriarch Sergei, Primate of the All-Russian Orthodox Church and Metropolitan of Moscow. Pray on, gentlemen!

We, however, stake everything on the real defence of the USSR—revolutionary war. We stake everything on the resurgence of the October spirit and the traditions of the Civil War.

The strength of the resistance of the Soviet Union is not, as Hitler calculates, identical with the strength of resistance of Stalin's regime. The revolution once arisen will prove unconquerable. It will rise—as it has risen in the past—from the shambles of the most terrible defeats—and lift high once again the great and glorious banner of struggle and victory—the unconquerable banner of the October revolution and of the Civil War—the banner of Lenin and Trotsky.

# The Lessons of the First Anglo-Russian Committee

## By LEON TROTSKY

The T.U.C. Congress has decided to set up an Anglo-Russian Committee composed of delegates from the British and Russian trade unions, in order to achieve the "unity" of the British and Russian trade union movement. This move will have tremendous consequences for the working class movement in Britain.

The trade union officialdom has conveniently forgotten the past "crimes" of Stalinism, which they were recently so loud in proclaiming while the Stalinists in their turn have extended amnesty to the Citrines and Bevins. It must be remembered that it was principally the resistance of the British Trade Union bureaucracy in the period immediately preceding the war, which prevented the agreement between the I.F.T.U. and the Russian trade unions. All the ardent advances of the Russians were sternly rejected because "the Russian trade unions were not free agents," the British trade union leaders argued.

At the time of the invasion of Finland the British trade union leaders went so far as to collect funds to assist the Finns "in resisting Russian aggression." Had the British and French Governments become involved in war with the Soviet Union there is no doubt that they would have received the full support of the trade union bureaucracy.

Now, again, as always, acting in the interests of British capitalism, the trade union leaders have decided to "co-operate" with the Russians. The trade union "rapprochement" is a reflection of the diplomatic and military agreements of British imperialism with the Soviet Union; it is a direct reflection of the interests of British capitalism, and significant to note, the entire capitalist press received the news of the coming negotiations with approval.

For the trade union leaders and the bourgeoisie the agreement will serve, as did the Anglo-Russian Committee of 1926-27, to act as a means to keep the British workers docile and harnessed to the war machine of British imperialism. They intend, as in 1926, to use the prestige of the Soviet Union as a cover for the attacks of British imperialism on the standards of the workers. With the excuse of "the defence of the Soviet Union" as a basis, they will

utilise this cover as a means of breaking the resistance of the workers to the attacks on their already lowered standards of living. But the moment that the interests of British imperialism demand it, and the Committee has served its purpose, the British trade union leaders will break off all relations, and return to a denunciation of the crimes of "Russian Communism."

In March, 1926, Trotsky was opposing the Anglo-Russian Committee because of the inevitable betrayal of the workers by the trade union bureaucracy. He pointed to the impossibility of the trade union leadership, even its so-called left wing, to conduct a struggle against British capitalism or for the defence of the Soviet Union. He urged the young Communist Party of Britain to conduct a campaign of educating the British workers; a campaign of ruthless criticism and struggle against the treacherous trade union leadership.

Much water has flown under the bridges since those days. The Soviet bureaucracy and the Communist International have degenerated completely. In the interests of Soviet diplomacy the Communist Party in Britain does not merely refrain from criticising the role of the trade union leadership but has developed a strenuous competition with them to prove itself a better weapon of strike-breaking and tool of imperialism.

Trotsky's criticism was intended to show the harmful effects of the failure of the British Communist Party and the Russian Trade Union leaders to expose the true role of the British trade union bureaucracy as an instrument of imperialism. Today it is not merely a question of exposing the bureaucracy and rectifying the policy of the Communist Party; today our task is to expose both partners.

Today the criticism of Trotsky, written fourteen years ago, retains its validity. The honest workers within the Communist Party and in the workers movement generally would do well to study the documents of this period. A failure to profit from the lessons of the past will have even more disastrous consequences than the ill-fated Committee of 1926.

EDITOR.

## The Struggle for Peace and the Anglo-Russian Committee

The whole international situation and all the tendencies of its development make the struggle against war and for the defence of the U.S.S.R. as the first workers' state the first task of the international proletariat. But it is just the tension of the situation that demands clarity, a precise political line and firm correction of the errors made.

1. War is the continuation of politics by other means. The struggle against war is a continuation

of revolutionary policy against the capitalist regime. To grasp this idea means to find the key to all opportunist errors in questions relating to war. Imperialism is no external factor existing by itself; it is the highest expression of the basic tendencies of capitalism. War is the highest method of imperialist policy. The struggle against imperialist war can and must be the highest expression of the international policy of the proletariat.

Opportunism, or radicalism that is turning to opportunism, always inclines to estimate war as such an **exceptional** phenomenon that it requires the annulment of revolutionary policy and its basic principles. Centristism reconciles itself to revolutionary methods but does not believe in them. That is why it is always inclined, at critical moments, to refer to the **peculiarity** of the situation, to **exceptional** circumstances, and so on, in order to substitute opportunist methods for revolutionary ones. Such a shift in the policy of Centristism or pseudo-radicalism is, of course, acutely provoked by the war danger. With all the greater intransigence must this touchstone be applied to the main tendencies of the Communist International.

2. It is already clear to everybody that the Anglo-Russian Committee must not be regarded as a trade union organisation into which the communists must enter to fight for influence over the masses, but as a "peculiar" political bloc with well-defined aims, directing its activities primarily against the war danger. With tenfold attention to the experience and the example of the Anglo-Russian Committee, the methods of struggle against the war danger must be closely re-examined so as to be able to tell the revolutionary proletariat openly and precisely **what must not be done** if the Comintern is not to be destroyed and the bloody work of imperialism against the international proletariat and the U.S.S.R. facilitated.

## The Trade Unions as Instruments of Diplomatic Action

3. In the presidium of the E.C.C.I, on May 11, comrade Bukharin advanced a new interpretation of our capitulation to the General Council in Berlin. He declared that the capitulation must not be considered from the standpoint of the international revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, but from the standpoint of a "diplomatic" counter-action to the offensive of imperialism against the U.S.S.R.

Various weapons of international action are at our disposal: the party (Comintern), the trade unions, diplomacy, the press, etc. Our activities in the trade union field are dictated to us by the tasks of the class struggle. But only "as a general rule." In certain cases as exceptions, we must according to Bukharin, utilise the organs of the trade union movement as instruments of diplomatic action. This is what happened with the Anglo-Russian Committee. We capitulated to the General Council not as the General Council, but as the agent of the English Government. We obligated ourselves not to interfere not out of party reasons, but for reasons of state. That is the substance of the new interpretation of the Berlin capitulation which, as we will soon show, only makes it still more dangerous.

4. The Berlin agreement of the Central Council of the Soviet Union with the General Council was discussed a short time ago at the April plenum of the Central Committee of our party. The decisions of the Berlin Conference were defended by comrades Tomsky, Andreyev, and Melnichansky, that is, our

outstanding trade unionists, but not our diplomats. All these comrades in defending the Berlin capitulation, accused the Opposition of not understanding the role and methods of the trade union movement, and declared that the masses of trade unionists cannot be influenced by breaking with the apparatus, that the apparatus cannot be influenced by breaking with its upper sections, and these were just the considerations that dictated the attitude of our trade unionists in Berlin.

Now comrade Bukharin explains that the decision of the Berlin Conference constitute, on the contrary, an exceptional case, an exception from the principled Bolshevik method of influencing the trade unions, an exception in the name of temporary, but acute diplomatic tasks. Why did not comrade Bukharin, and comrade Tomsky together with him, explain this to us at the last plenary session of our Central Committee?

5. Where did such an appalling contradiction come from in the course of a few weeks? It grew out of the impossibility of standing, if even for a single month, on the April position. When our delegation left for Berlin it did not have Bukharin's subsequent explanation of the position it was to take. Did Comrade Bukharin have this explanation at the time? At all events, it was nowhere expressed by anybody . . . It is quite clear that this explanation was thought up after the event.

## Our Predictions Termed "Ultra-Left" by Stalinists

5. It becomes still clearer when we go back further, that is, to the origin of the question. After the extremely rascally calling off of the general strike by the General Council, the "Left" vying with the Right for the palm, the Opposition in the C.P.S.U. demanded an immediate break with the General Council so as to make easier and accelerate the liberation of proletarian vanguard from the influence of the traitors. The majority of the Central Committee opposed to this their viewpoint that the retention of the Anglo-Russian Committee was allegedly required in the interests of our revolutionary influencing of the English proletariat, despite the counter-revolutionary policy of the General Council during the strike. It was precisely at this moment that comrade Stalin advanced his theory of stages that cannot be skipped over. By the word "stage" in this case, must not be understood the political level of the masses, which varies with different strata, but of

the conservative leaders who reflect the pressure of the bourgeoisie on the proletariat and conduct an irreconcilable struggle against the advanced sections of the proletariat.

In contradiction to this, the Opposition contended that the maintenance of the Anglo-Russian Committee after its open and obvious betrayal which closed the preceding period of "Left development" would have as its inevitable conclusion an impermissible weakening of our criticism of the leaders of the General Council, at least of its "Left" wing. We were answered, primarily by the same Bukharin, that this is a revolting slander; that the organisational alliance does not hinder our revolutionary criticism in the slightest degree; that we would not permit any kind of principle concessions, that the Anglo-Russian Committee would only be an organisational bridge to the masses for us. It occurred to nobody at the time to justify the maintenance of the Anglo-Russian



Committee by referring to grounds of a diplomatic character which necessitates a temporary abandonment of the revolutionary line . . .

7. The Opposition foretold in its writings that the maintenance of the Anglo-Russian Committee would steadily strengthen the political position of the General Council, and that it would inevitably be converted from defendant to prosecutor. This prediction

was explained as the fruit of our "ultra-Leftism." Incidentally, an especially ridiculous theory was created, namely, that the demand for the dissolution of the Anglo-Russian Committee was equivalent to the demand for the workers to leave the trade unions. By that alone the policy of maintaining the Anglo-Russian Committee was invested with the character of an exceptionally important question of principle.

## The Maintenance of Connections with the General Council at the Cost of Betrayal

8. Nevertheless it was very quickly proved that the choice must be made between maintaining organisational connections with the General Council or calling them traitors by name. The majority of the Political Bureau inclined more and more to maintain the organisational connections at any cost. To achieve this aim, no "skipping over stages" was required, it is true; but it did require sinking politically one degree after another. This can most distinctly be followed in the three conferences of the Anglo-Russian Committee: in Paris (July, 1926), in Berlin (August, 1926) and most recently in Berlin (April, 1927). Each time our criticism of the General Council became more cautious, and completely avoided touching on the "Left," that is, on the most dangerous betrayers of the working class.

9. The General Council felt all along, by its consistent pressure, that it held the representatives of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions in its hand. From the defendant it became the prosecutor. It understood that if the Bolsheviks did not

break on the question of the general strike which had such a tremendous international importance, they would not break later on, no matter what demands were placed before them. We see how the General Council, under the pressure of the English Bourgeoisie, conducted an offensive against the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions with ever greater energy. The Central Council retreated and yielded. These retreats were explained on the grounds of revolutionary strategy in the trade union movement, but by no means for diplomatic motives . . .

The line of the Political Bureau ended naturally and inevitably with the Berlin conference of the Anglo-Russian Committee at the beginning of April. The Capitulation of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions on the basic questions of the international working class movement was neither an unexpected side-leap nor an abrupt manoeuvre. No, it was the inevitable crowning, predicted by us long before, of the whole line followed in this question.

## Role of the Labour "Lefts"

10. At the beginning of June of last year, comrade Bukharin, as we said, was the creator of a theory according to which the necessity of working in reactionary trade unions allegedly brought with it the maintaining of the Anglo-Russian Committee under all circumstances. In the face of all the evidence, Bukharin at that time flatly denied that the Anglo-Russian Committee was a political bloc and called it a "trade union organisation."

Now Bukharin creates a new theory, according to which our remaining in the Anglo-Russian Committee, bought at the price of an absolutely unprincipled capitulation, was not called forth by the needs of "a trade union organisation" but by the necessity of maintaining a **political bloc** with the General Council in the name of diplomatic aims.

Bukharin's theory of today is in direct contradiction to his theory of yesterday. They both have this in common, that they are both one hundred per cent. deceitful, that they were both dragged in by the hair in order to justify after the fact, at two different stages, the sliding down from a Bolshevik to a compromising line.

11. That the Right will betray us in the event of war, is recognised as indisputable even by Bukharin. So far as the "Left" is concerned, it will "probably" betray us. But if it betrays us, it will do it, according to Bukharin, "in its own way," by not supporting us but by playing the role of ballast for the English Government. Pitiful as these considerations may be, they must nevertheless be demolished.

Let us assume for a moment that all of this is really so. But if the "Left" betrays us "in its own way," that is, less actively, in a more veiled manner than the Right, it will surely not be because of the lovely eyes of the delegation of the All-Russian Cen-

tral Council of Trade Unions, but because of the English workers. That is the general line of policy of the "Left" in all questions, internal as well as external: to betray, but "in its own way." This policy is profitable for it. Then why are we obliged to pay the "Left" with the abandonment of our policy, for a policy which in any case they are forced to carry out in their own interests?

12. But in what sense will the "Left" become a ballast for the English Government? Obviously in the sense that they were "ballast" during the imperialist war, or are now, during the war of England against revolutionary China, and during the campaign of the conservatives against the trade unions. The "Left" criticises the government within such limits as we do not interfere with its role as exploiter and robber. The "Left" gives expression to the dissatisfaction of the masses within these limits, so as to restrain them from revolutionary action.

In case the dissatisfaction of the masses breaks through to the outside, the "Left" seeks to dominate the movement in order to strangle it. Were the "Left" not to criticise, not to expose, not to attack the bourgeoisie, it would be unable to serve it "in its own way."

If it is admitted that the "Left" is a ballast, then it is admitted that it is useful, appropriate, necessary, succouring ballast without which the ship of British imperialism would have gone down long ago.

To be sure the Diehards are fulminating against the "Left." But this is done to keep the fear of God in it, so that it will not overstep the bounds prescribed for it, so that no unnecessary expense be incurred for their "ballast." The Diehards are just as necessary an ingredient in the imperialist mechanism as the "Left."

## The Role of the Communists in the Mass Movement

13. But under the pressure of the masses cannot even the Left overstep the bounds prescribed for it by the bourgeois regime! This unexpected argument is also launched.

That the revolutionary pressure of the masses can undo the game of Chamberlain-Thomas-Purcell is uncontested. But the dispute does not hinge on whether the international revolutionary movement of the proletariat is advantageous for a workers state,

but rather whether we are helping or obstructing it by our policy.

The pressure of the masses, all other conditions being equal, will be all the stronger the more the masses are alarmed by the perspective of war, the less they rely upon the General Council, and the less confidence they have in the "Left" traitors (traitors "in their own way"). If we sign "unanimously" a pitiful, hypocritical declaration on the war together with the General Council, we thereby pacify the masses, appease their restlessness, lull them to sleep and thereby reduce their pressure on the "Left."

## The Interests of the USSR and the International Proletariat are One

14. The Berlin Conference can be justified by the "international interests of the U.S.S.R.!" Here the mistake of Bukharin becomes especially atrocious. Precisely the interests of the U.S.S.R. will suffer chiefly and most directly as a result of the false policy of the Political Bureau towards the General Council. Nothing can cause us such harm as mistakes and hypocrisy in the revolutionary camp of the proletariat. We will not deceive our enemies, the experienced and shrewd imperialists. Hypocrisy will help the vacillating pacifists to vacillate in the future. And our real friends, the revolutionary workers, can only be deceived by the policy of illusions and hypocrisy.

That is why Lenin wrote in his instructions for our delegation to the pacifist conference at The Hague, where we had to deal with the same trade unionists, co-operators, and so forth:

"It seems to me that we will have at The Hague Conference a few people who are able to make a speech in one or another language against the war, the most important thing will be to refute the idea that those participating in the conference are opponents of war, that they understand how war can and may burst upon them at the most unexpected moment, that they have the least knowledge of the means to employ against war, or that they are in any way capable of adopting an intelligent and effective path of struggle against the war." (Lenin, Works, Vol. XX, Supplementary Vol. Part 2, p. 530, Russian ed.)

What interests did Lenin have in mind in writing these words: the international interests of the U.S.S.R. or the revolutionary interests of the international proletariat? In such a basic question Lenin did not and could not set one against the other. Lenin was of the opinion that the slightest yielding to the pacifist illusions of the trade unionists would render more difficult the real struggle against the

war danger and injure the international proletariat as much as the U.S.S.R.

Lenin had conscientious pacifists in mind here, and not branded strike-breakers who are condemned by their whole position after May, 1926, to a further chain of betrayals . . .

16. In what manner can the thoroughly rotten, pseudo-pacifist agreement with traitors, whom we have already declared by common accord to be the "only representatives" of the English proletariat, strengthen our international position? How? The Berlin Conference took place in the period of the opening of hostilities by the English Government against China and the preparation of similar hostilities against us.

The interests of our international position demanded above all that these facts be openly called by their proper name. Instead, we pass over them in silence. Chamberlain knows these facts and is obliged to conceal them. The English masses do not correctly know these facts and are obliged to learn them from us. Honest pacifists among the workers cannot go over to a revolutionary line in face of these facts. The base merchants of pacifism in the General Council cannot speak aloud about facts which would, at best and without doubt, expose their silent conspiracy with Chamberlain against the English workers, against China, against the U.S.S.R. and against the world proletariat.

Now what did we do in Berlin? With all the authority of a workers' state, we helped the "pacifist" lackeys of imperialism to preserve the thieves secret. Worse yet, we assumed responsibility for this secret. We proclaimed before the whole world that we are in "unanimous accord" with the agents of Chamberlain in the General Council in the cause of the struggle against war. We thereby increase Chamberlain's freedom of action. We thereby injured the international position of the U.S.S.R.

## The Berlin Capitulation Strengthened the British Imperialists

It must be said more concretely. The Berlin capitulation of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions to the General Council extraordinarily facilitated Chamberlain's attack on the Soviet institutions in London, with all the possible consequences of this act.

17. It must not be forgotten that thanks especially

to the insular position of England and the absence of a direct threat to its borders, the English reformists during the war, allowed themselves a somewhat greater "freedom" of words than their brothers-in-treason on the continent. But in general they played the same role. Now, with the experiences of the imperialist war, the reformists, especially of the

Left will endeavour in the event of a new war to throw even more sand in the eyes of the workers than in the years 1914-1918.

It is entirely probable that, as a result of the attack on the Soviet institutions in London, which was prepared by the whole policy of the "Left," they will protest in a little louder tone than the liberals. But if the Anglo-Russian Committee were in any way capable of helping, not Chamberlain, but us, then would not both sides have come to an agreement in the first twenty-four hours, sounded the alarm, and spoken to the masses in a language corresponding to the seriousness of the circumstances? But nothing of the sort occurred and nothing will. The Anglo-Russian Committee did not exist during the general strike when the General Council refused to accept the "damned gold" of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions; the Anglo-Russian Committee did not exist during the miners' strike; the Anglo-Russian Committee did not exist during the bombardment of Nanking, and the Anglo-Russian Committee will not exist in the event of the breaking of diplomatic relations between England and the U.S.S.R. These harsh truths must be told the workers. They must be honestly warned. That will strengthen the U.S.S.R.

18. It may be replied: But concessions on our side to the bourgeoisie are permissible, and if the present General Council is considered an agent of the bourgeoisie within the working class movement, why should we not make concessions to the General Council out of the same considerations that we make concessions to imperialism? Certain comrades are

beginning to play with this formula which is a classic example of the falsification and overthrow of Leninism for opportunist political aims.

If we are forced to make concessions to our class enemy, we make them to the master himself, but not to his Menshevik clerk. We never mask and never embellish our concessions. When we resigned ourselves to Curzon's ultimatum we explained to the English workers that at the present moment we, together with them, are not yet strong enough to take up the challenge of Curzon immediately. We bought off the ultimatum to avert a diplomatic break, but we laid bare the real relations of classes by a clear presentation of the question; by that, we weakened the reformists, and strengthened our international position as well as the position of the international proletariat.

In Berlin, however, we got absolutely nothing from Chamberlain. The concessions we made to the interests of English capitalism (new crowning of the General Council, principle of "non-interference," and so forth), were not exchanged for any concession at all on their part (no breaking off of relations, no war). And at the same time, we camouflaged everything by depicting our concessions to capitalism as a triumph of the unity of the working class. Chamberlain received a great deal gratis. The traitors of the General Council received a great deal. We received a compromise. The international proletariat received confusion and disorder. English imperialism came out of the Berlin Conference stronger. We came out weaker.

## Interests of Proletariat Sacrificed to Cover up Errors of Stalinism

19. But, it is said, to break with the General Council at such a critical moment would mean that we could not so much as live in peace with the organised workers of England; it would give the imperialists a trump card, and so on and so forth.

This argument is false to its very roots. Of course it would have been incomparably more advantageous had we broken with the General Council immediately after its betrayal of the General Strike, as the Opposition demanded. This year would then not have been frittered away with doleful gallantries towards the traitors, but would have been used for their merciless exposure. The past year was not lacking in occasions for this. Such a policy would have forced the "Left" capitulators of the General Council to fight for the remnants of their reputation, to half-expose Chamberlain, in a word, to show the workers that they, the "Left," are not half so bad as Moscow people present them. This would have deepened the split in the General Council. And when the swindlers of reformism come to blows, many secrets come to light, and the workers can only gain by it. Such a struggle against the General Council would have been the sharpest form of struggle against the policy of Chamberlain in the labour movement. In this struggle, the revolutionary working class cadres in England would have learned in a year more skillfully to catch the sharpers of the General Council at their swindles and to expose the policy of Chamberlain. English imperialism would have to face much greater difficulties today. In other words: **Had the policy proposed by the opposition been adopted in June of last year, the international position of the U.S.S.R. would now be stronger.**

Even if belatedly, the break should have been made at least during the miners' strike, which would have been quite clear to the million miners, as well as to the millions of workers betrayed during the general strike. But our proposals in this respect were rejected as incompatible with the interests of the international trade union movement. The consequences are well known. They were registered in Berlin. Today it is declared that the radically false line which already caused so much harm must be maintained in the future as well because of the difficulties of the international situation, which means in essence that the international position of the U.S.S.R. is being sacrificed in order to conceal the errors of the leadership. All the new theories of Bukharin have no other meaning

20. A correction of the errors now, even after a year's delay, would only be of benefit and not detriment. Chamberlain will say, of course, that the Bolsheviks are not able to maintain peace with his trade unionists. But every honest and even partly conscious worker will say: the far too patient Bolsheviks who did not even break with the General Council during our strikes, could no longer maintain any friendship with it when it refused to struggle against the suppression of the Chinese revolution and the new war that is being hatched by Chamberlain. The putrid decorations of the Berlin Anglo-Russian Committee will be cast aside. The workers will see the real facts, the real relationships. Who will lose thereby? Imperialism, which needs putrid decorations. The U.S.S.R. and the international proletariat will gain.

## Turn from Bolshevism to Opportunism justified by "Exceptional" Conditions

21. But let us return again to the latest theory of Bukharin. In contradiction to Tomsky, Bukharin says, as we know, that the Berlin decisions are not the policy of the united front, but an exception to it evoked by exceptional circumstances.

What are these circumstances? The war danger, that is, the most important question of imperialist policy and the policy of the world proletariat. This fact alone must forthwith compel the attention of every revolutionist. It would appear from this that revolutionary policy serves for more or less "normal" conditions; but when we stand before a question of life or death, the revolutionary policy must be substituted by a policy of compromise.

When Kausky justified the iniquity of the Second International in 1914, he thought up the *post facto* theory that the International was an instrument of peace but not of war. In other words, Kautsky proclaimed that the struggle against the bourgeois state was normal, but that an exception must be made under the "exceptional conditions" of war, and a bloc made with the bourgeois government, while we continue to "criticise" it in the press.

For the international proletariat it is now a question not only of the struggle against the bourgeois state, but of the direct defence of a workers state. But it is precisely the interests of this defence that demand of the international proletariat not a weakening but a sharpening of the struggle against the bourgeois state. The war danger can only be averted or postponed for the proletariat by the real danger to the bourgeoisie that the imperialist war be transformed into a civil war. In other words, the war danger does not demand a passing over from the revolutionary policy to a policy of compromise, but on the contrary, a firmer, more energetic, more irreconcilable execution of the revolutionary policy. War

poses all questions forcefully. It admits of evasions and half measures infinitely less than does a state of peace. If the bloc with the Purcells who betrayed the general strike was a hindrance in peaceful times, in times of war danger it is a millstone around the neck of the working class.

If one admits that the turning back from Bolshevism to opportunism is justified by circumstances on which the life and death of the workers' state depends, then one capitulates in principle to opportunism; for what value has a revolutionary policy that must be abandoned under the most critical circumstances?

22. In general, can the trade unions be utilised at one time in the interests of international class policy, and at another time for any sort of alleged diplomatic aims? Can such a situation be established where the same representatives of the C.P.S.U., the Comintern, and the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions say at one moment that the General Council is a traitor and strike breaker, and at another time that it is a friend with whom we are in hearty accord? Is it sufficient to whisper secretly that the former must be understood in the revolutionary class sense and the latter in a diplomatic sense? Can such a policy be spoken of seriously? Can one speak seriously to people who propose and defend such a policy?

After the Berlin Conference, the word "traitor," as used for a Menshevik agent of the bourgeoisie, became terribly cheap. But such expressions as "hearty accord," "mutual understanding" and "unanimity" (the words of comrade Tomsky) became equally cheap. Who benefits by this unusually artful combination of methods? It does not deceive our enemy for a moment. It only confuses our friends and reduces the weight of our own words and deeds.

## The First Fruits of "Socialism in One Country"

23. The new theory of Bukharin is not an isolated one. On the one hand, we are told that the unprincipled agreement with the notoriously treasonable General Council allegedly facilitated the defence of the U.S.S.R. On the other hand, we hear ever more loudly that the building of workers' and peasants' Soviets in China would be a threat to the defence of the U.S.S.R. Doesn't this mean turning the foundations of Bolshevik policy upside down? Workers' and Peasants' Soviets in China would signify a magnificent extension of the Soviet front and the strengthening of our world position. The agreement with the General Council signifies on the contrary a weakening of the internal contradictions in England and the greatest facility to Chamberlain in his work of brigandage against China and against us.

Once it is admitted that Soviets in China are harmful to our international position, but that the General Council is useful, then the recognition of the principle of "non-interference" is essentially correct; but then supplementary conclusions must be drawn, at least with regard to Amsterdam. One can be sure that these conclusions will be drawn today or tomorrow, if not by Bukharin himself then by someone else. The new principle of opportunist exceptions "in particularly important cases" can find a broad appli-

cation. The orientation on the opportunist chiefs of the labour movement will be motivated everywhere by the necessity of avoiding intervention. The possibility of building socialism in one country will serve to justify the principle of "non-interference." That is how the various ends will be knotted together into a noose that will strangle to death the revolutionary principles of Bolshevism. An end must be made to this once and for all!

We must make up for lost time. A broad and politically clear international campaign against war and imperialism is necessary. Our bloc with the General Council is now the principal obstacle in the road of this campaign, just as our bloc with Chiang Kai-Shek was the chief obstacle in the road of the development of the workers' and peasants' revolution in China and, because of that, was utilised by the bourgeois counter-revolution against us. The more acute the international situation becomes, the more the Anglo-Russian Committee will be transformed into an instrument of British and international imperialism against us. After all that has happened, only he can fail to understand who does not want to understand. We have already wasted far too much time. It would be a crime to lose even another day.

Moscow, May 16, 1927.