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CORRESPONDENCE

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The Letter of Comrade Trotzky to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party.

The following is the full official text of the report of the decision of the Plenum of the C. P. of Russia regarding the attitude of Comrade Trotzky, as well as the letter addressed by the latter to the Plenum. The Report published in the Inprecorr of 22nd January last was a translation from a telegraphic report sent from Moscow at the time.

Ed.

Dear Comrades,

The first item on the agenda of the forthcoming Plenum of the Central Committee is the question of the resolutions from local organisations on Trotzky's "conduct". Owing to my state of health, I will not be able to take part in the work of the Plenum, but I think I can contribute towards the elucidation of this question, by making the following remarks:

1. I considered and consider now that I could, in the discussion, bring forward a sufficient number of weighty objections on principle and in fact against the charge brought against me, that I am aiming to "revise Leninism" or "minimise" the role of Lenin. I refrained, however, from doing so, not only because of the state of my health, but also because in the atmosphere of the present discussion, every statement I made on this question, irrespective of its content, character and tone, would but serve as an impetus to intensify the controversy, to turn it from a one-sided to a two-sided controversy and give it a more acute character.

Even now, weighing up the whole progress of the discussion, and in spite of the fact that throughout it, many untrue and even monstrous charges have been brought forward against me, I think that my silence was correct from the standpoint of the general interests of the Party.

2. However, under no circumstances can I admit the charge that I am advocating a special policy ("Trotzkyism") and that I am striving to revise Leninism. The conviction that is ascribed to me, to the effect that, not I came to bolshevism, but bolshevism came to me, is simply monstrous. In my introduction to "Lessons of October", I frankly stated (page 62) that bolshevism prepared for its rôle in the revolution by its irreconcilable struggle, not only against the Narodniki and the Mensheviks, but also against the "reconcilers", i. e. to the tendency to which I belonged. Never at any time during the past 8 years has it entered my head to regard any question from the point of view of "Trotzkyism" which I have considered and consider now to have been politically liquidated long

ago. Quite apart from whether I was right or wrong concerning any other questions that came before our Party, I always endeavoured to solve them in accordance with the general theoretical and practical experiences of our Party. Throughout all this time, no one ever told me that any of my thoughts or proposals indicated a special tendency, i. e. "Trotzkyism". Quite unexpectedly for me this expression came out during the course of the discussion of my book on "1917".

3. The question of the estimation of the peasantry in this connection is of the greatest political importance. I absolutely deny that the formula "permanent revolution", which applies wholly to the past, in any way caused me to adopt a careless attitude towards the peasantry in the conditions of the Soviet Revolution. If at any time after October, I had occasion for private reasons to revert to the formula, "permanent revolution", it was only a reference to Party history, i. e. to the past, and had no reference to the question of present-day political tasks. To my mind, the attempt to construct an irreconcilable contradiction in this matter is not justified either by the 8 years' experience of the revolution, through which we have gone together, or by the tasks of the future.

Equally I refute the statements and reference to my alleged "pessimistic" attitude towards the progress of our work of socialist construction in the face of the retarded process of the revolution in the West. In spite of all the difficulties arising out of our capitalistic environment, the economic and political resources of the Soviet dictatorship are very great. I have repeatedly developed and argued this idea on the instructions of the Party, particularly at international congresses, and I consider that this idea preserves all its force for the present period of historical development.

4. I have not spoken once on the controversial questions settled by the Thirteenth Congress of the Party, either on the Central Committee or on the Council of Labour and Defence, and I certainly have not, outside of leading Party and Soviet institutions, ever made any proposal that would directly or indirectly raise questions that have already been decided. After the Thirteenth Congress, new problems arose, or to speak more clearly, defined themselves of an economic, soviet and international character. The solution of these problems represented an exceptional difficulty. The attempt to put forward any kind of "platform" as against the work

of the Central Committee in solving these questions, was absolutely alien to my thoughts, for the comrades who were present at the meetings of the Politbureau, the Plenum of the Central Committee, of the Council of Labour and Defence or of the Revolutionary Council of the USSR, this assertion requires no proof. The controversial questions settled at the Thirteenth Congress were again raised in the course of the last discussion, not only in no connection with my work, but as far as I can judge at the moment, with no connection with the practical questions of Party policy.

5. In so far as my introduction to my book "1917" has served as the formal ground for the recent discussion, I consider it necessary first of all to repudiate the charge that I published my book, as it were, behind the back of the Central Committee. As a matter of fact, my book was published (while I was undergoing treatment in the Caucasus) on exactly the same terms and conditions that all other books, mine or of other members of the Central Committee, or of members of the Party generally are published. Of course, it is the business of the Central Committee to establish some form of control over Party publications, but I have in no way and not in the slightest degree violated the forms of control which have been established up till now, and of course I had no reason to violate them.

6. The introduction to "Lessons of October" represents a further development of the ideas which I have frequently expressed in the past and particularly during the past year. Here I enumerate only the following lectures and articles: "On the Road to European Revolution" (Tiflis, April 11, 1924), "Prospect and Problems in the East" (April 21), "The First of May in the West and in the East" (April 29), "A New Turning Point" (introduction to "Five Years of the Comintern"), "Through What Stage are we Passing?" (June 21), "Fundamental Questions of Civil War".

All the lectures enumerated above were prompted by the defeat of the German revolution in the autumn of 1923, and were printed in the "Pravda", "Isvestia" and other publications. Not a single member of the Central Committee nor indeed of the Politbureau ever pointed out to me anything wrong in these lectures, nor did the editor of "Pravda" make any comment on these lectures or make any attempt to point out to me anything with which he did not agree in them.

Of course, I never regarded my analysis of October in connection with the German events as a "platform" and never believed that anybody would regard it as a "platform" which it never was and never could be.

7. In view of the fact that in the charges brought against me, are several of my books including several of which have been published in several editions, I consider it necessary to state that, not only did not the Politbureau as a whole, nor any single member the Central Committee ever indicate that any of my articles or books could be interpreted as "revision" of Leninism. Particularly does this apply to my "1905" which was published during the life-time of Comrade Lenin, went through several editions, was warmly recommended by the Party press, was translated by the Comintern into foreign languages and is now being used as the principal evidence in the charge of revising Leninism.

8. The purpose I pursue in putting forward these views, as I stated in the beginning of this letter is but one, viz. to assist the Plenum to settle the question standing as the first item on the agenda.

With regard to the statement which has been repeated in the discussion to the effect that I am aiming to secure "a special position" in the Party, that I do not submit to discipline, that I refuse to perform work given me by the Central Committee, etc., etc., I categorically declare, without going into an investigation of the value of these statements, that I am ready to perform any work entrusted to me by the Central Committee in any post without any post and, of course, under any form of Party control.

There is no necessity therefore particularly to point out that after the recent discussion, the interests of our cause demands my speedy release from the duties of the Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council.

In conclusion, I think it necessary to add that I will not leave Moscow prior to the Plenum so that if necessary

it will be possible for me to reply to any questions or give any explanation that may be required.

(signed): L. Trotzky.

January 15, 1925.

Certified correct: Balashov.

Kremlin.

RESOLUTION

on the action of Comrade Trotzky passed at the Joint Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (two against) and the Central Control Commission (one abstained from voting).

The fundamental basis of all the successes of the Bolshevik Party has always been the steel-like unity and iron discipline, genuine unanimity of views on the basis of Leninism. Comrade Trotzky's unceasing attacks against Bolshevism confronts the Party with the necessity either to abandon this fundamental condition or once and for all to put an end to these attacks.

On an international scale, Comrade Trotzky's attacks against the Party are regarded by the bourgeoisie and the Social Democrats as a precursor of a split in the Russian Communist Party and therefore of the collapse of the proletarian dictatorship generally. It is from this partly that international imperialism draws its practical conclusions with regard to the USSR, in spite of the fact that the objective position of the USSR, is stronger now than it has ever been before.

Within the country, Comrade Trotzky's opposition is regarded by all anti-soviet and wavering elements as a signal to combine against the policy of the Party for the purpose of influencing the regime of the proletarian dictatorship towards making concessions to bourgeois democracy.

The anti-proletarian elements in the State apparatus are striving to "emancipate" themselves from Party guidance and see in Comrade Trotzky's fight against the Central Committee of the Party their hope. The dictatorship of the proletariat and particularly one of the most important teachings of Comrade Lenin concerning the necessity of transforming the whole of the State apparatus in the spirit of a workers' and peasants' government, is being threatened by enormous damage.

In the Party and around the Party, Comrade Trotzky's opposition has made his name the banner around which are rallying all the non-bolshevist, non-communist, anti-proletarian deviations and groupings.

In the most general form Comrade Trotzky's actions against the Party as a whole can now be described as an attempt to convert the ideology of the Russian Communist Party into a sort of "modernised" (by Comrade Trotzky) "bolshevism" without Leninism. This is not bolshevism. This is a revision of bolshevism. This is an attempt to substitute Leninism by Trotzkyism, i. e. an attempt to substitute for the Leninist theory and tactics of international proletarian revolution that variety of menshevism which the old Trotzkyism represented and which is represented to-day by the resurrected "modern" Trotzkyism. Essentially, modern Trotzkyism is a counterfeit of communism approaching the "European" model of pseudo-Marxism, i. e. in the last resort, to "European" social democracy.

* * *

During the course of the few years that Comrade Trotzky has been in the Russian Communist Party, our Party has had to conduct against him four discussions on a national scale not including less important controversies on extremely important questions.

The first discussion was that over the Brest Peace. Comrade Trotzky failed to understand that the peasantry did not wish to fight any more, and he conducted a policy which nearly cost the revolution its head. It required the threat on the part of Comrade Lenin to leave the Government, it required an intense struggle at the Seventh Congress of the Party to rectify the error and secure — although on worse terms — the Brest "respite".

The **second** discussion was on the **Trade Unions**. As a matter of fact, this was a discussion concerning the **attitude towards the peasantry** raised against war-communism, concerning the attitude towards the non-party masses of the workers and generally concerning the Party's approach to the masses in the period when the civil war had come to an end. An acute controversy over the whole country, an intense campaign conducted by the whole nucleus of the Party, headed by Comrade Lenin against the "feverish heights" of Trotskyism were required in order to save the Party from mistakes which threatened all the gains of the revolution.

The **third** discussion was over the "Party apparatus", "plan", over the alleged "inclination towards the peasantry" on the part of the Central Committee, over "the conflict between two generations", etc. An matter of fact, this too was a question of the **economic** alliance between the proletariat and the **peasantry**; the question of the policy of prices, of currency reform, of the necessity for steering the policy of the Party by the **workers'** compass of maintaining the leadership of the Party in the economic and State apparatus, concerning the fight against "freedom", to form fractions and groupings within the Party, the maintenance of the leadership in the hands of the Bolshevik cadres of the Party, in a word, of keeping to the Leninist policy of the Party in the period of NEP. In this discussion, Comrade Trotsky became the mouth-piece of petty bourgeois deviations. Again he urged the Party to adopt the policy which might have led to the collapse of the revolution, for this policy would have crushed the economic successes of the Party in their embryo.

The petty bourgeois opposition, headed by Comrade Trotsky, forced themselves into a position, in which, refusing to admit their radical errors, they were compelled to adopt the attitude of "the worst the better", i. e. to stake their case on the **failure** of the Party and of the Soviet Government.

It was necessary to put up an intense fight to resist this petty bourgeois attack upon the fortress of bolshevism. It is now clear to all that the Trotskyist talk of the "ruin of the country" in the autumn of 1923, was merely an expression of petty bourgeois fear, of lack of confidence in the forces of our revolution, and complete failure to understand our economics. The reform of the currency, in opposition to which, Comrade Trotsky proposed his "plan" and the failure of which was prophesied, restored the economic position and proved a tremendous step forward on the road towards the economic revival of the country. Industry is reviving in spite of the bad harvest in 1924. The economic conditions of the workers are improving. The Party emerged from the trial, stronger than ever. The Lenin enrolment strengthened the Party by infusing fresh proletarian forces into it. But had not the Bolshevik Party so sharply and unanimously resisted the semi-menshevik relapse of Comrade Trotsky, the genuine dangers for the country, for the working class and for our Party would indeed be innumerable.

All the actions of Comrade Trotsky against the general Party policy from 1918 to 1924 in their last resort, had their source in the semi-menshevik failure to understand the role of the proletariat in relation to the non-proletarian and semi-proletarian sections of the working class, in minimising the role of the Party in the revolution and in socialist construction, and the failure to understand that the Bolshevik Party can fulfil its historic mission only if it is really unanimous in opinions and monolithic in character.

The **Fourth** and present discussion still more revealed the serious and all-embracing differences between Comrade Trotsky and the Bolshevik Party. The matter now stands clearly as two fundamentally opposite systems of politics and tactics. In the present discussion, Comrade Trotsky commenced a direct attack upon the basis of bolshevist philosophy. Comrade Trotsky 1. completely denies the doctrine of the driving forces of the Russian Revolution outlined by Comrade Lenin in 1904 and upon which has been based the tactics of Bolshevism in the course of three Russian revolutions; 2. puts forward against the Bolshevik estimation of the driving forces of the Russian Revolution and against the Leninist doctrine of the world proletarian revolution his old "theory of permanent revolution", which was utterly discredited in three Russian revolutions (and also in Poland and in Germany) and was described by Comrade Lenin more than once as an eclectic attempt to combine petty bourgeois menshevik opportunism with "left"

phrases and as an attempt to leap over the peasantry; 3. tries to convince the Party that before bolshevism adopted the path of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it was obliged "intellectually to re-arm itself", i. e. it was obliged to abandon Leninism and adopt Trotskyism; 4. advocates the theory of "bisecting" bolshevism, viz. a) bolshevism prior to the October Revolution of 1917, which is alleged to be of secondary importance and; b) bolshevism, commencing from October 1917, which it is alleged, had to grow into Trotskyism before it could fulfil its historic mission; 5. "interprets" the history of October in such a manner that the role of the Bolshevik Party disappears altogether and first place is taken by the personality of Comrade Trotsky himself, according to the formula of "the hero in the crowd" and his version of the "peaceful revolt" which is alleged to have taken place on the 10th of October 1917 had nothing in common with the Bolshevik views concerning armed uprising; 6. describes the role of Comrade Lenin in the October Revolution very ambiguously. Lenin is made to appear as if advocating the seizure of power by conspirative methods behind the back of the Soviets, and that the practical proposals made by Comrade Lenin arose from his failure to understand the conditions prevailing; 7. radically distorts the relations between Comrade Lenin and the Central Committee of the Party and represents them as an unceasing war between two "powers". Comrade Trotsky endeavours to convince his readers of the truth of his "version" by publishing (without the consent of the Central Committee) extracts from certain documents presented in a false light and in a connection distorting the truth; 8. describes the role of the whole of the Central Committee which led the revolt in such a light as to sow the most profound distrust towards the kernel of the present Party Staff; 9. distorts the most important episodes of the revolution in the period between February and October 1917 (the April and June demonstrations, the July days, the preliminary parliament, etc.); 10. distorts the tactics of the Executive Committee of the Comintern and endeavours to throw the responsibility for the failures in Germany, Bulgaria, etc. upon the kernel of the Ecc. This sowing distrust towards the Central Committee of the R. C. P. and the Ecc.

Thus the differences that divide Comrade Trotsky from the Bolshevik Party from year to year and lately from month to month, increase. These differences concern not only questions of the past; the past is being "reviewed" in order to "prepare" a platform for the present real political difficulties. The retrospective exposure of the "Right Wing" in the old Bolshevik Party is necessary for Comrade Trotsky to use as a screen under cover of which to win for himself the right to form a urable for the formation of a right wing in the Russian Communist Party and the Comintern are in evidence.

The "revision" of Leninism on the question of the driving forces of the revolution, i. e. principally the question of the relations between the proletariat and the peasantry is the "justification" of Comrade Trotsky's non-bolshevist views concerning the **present** policy of the Party with regard to the peasantry. The incorrect anti-Leninist estimation of the **role of the peasantry** in the revolution made by Comrade Trotsky, is the subject to which the discussion between the Party and Comrade Trotsky brings us back again and again. Mistakes on this question become particularly dangerous at this time when the Party, carrying out the slogan of "face the village", is working intensely to strengthen the ties between the city industry and peasant agriculture, to enlist the broad masses of the peasantry into the work of Soviet administration, to revive the Soviets, etc. and when the future success or failure of the revolution is being determined precisely by the correct or incorrect relations between the proletariat and the peasantry.

On fundamental questions of international politics (the role of fascism and social democracy, the role of America in Europe, the length and character of the "democratic-pacifist" era, in the estimation of which his views in many ways coincided with the social democratic "centre", etc.) Comrade Trotsky occupied a different position from that of the Russian Communist Party and the whole of the Comintern without troubling, first of all, to explain his point of view to the Central Committee or to the Ecc. The delegation of the Russian Communist Party at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, in complete agreement with the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party proposed to Comrade Trotsky that he explain his views on international questions to the Congress of the Communist International. Comrade Trotsky refused to do this at the Con-

gress, but considered it expedient to do so a little while after at a gathering of veterinary surgeons over the heads of the Comintern and the R. C. P. In recent times, there has not been a single important question upon which Comrade Trotzky has acted with the Party, but more frequently has acted against the views of the Party.

The Party is confronted by a most important and immediate political task, viz. to take a determined course towards overcoming the elements dividing the town from the country, i. e. to take up in its full scope the question of further lowering prices on manufactures, to create conditions for a real revival in agriculture (land re-distribution and land utilisation) to devote concentrated attention upon developing agricultural cooperation (genuine voluntary membership, election of officers, credit) bring up and solve the question of easing the burden of taxation for the peasantry and reforming the system of taxation and also to exert all the efforts of the Party towards the solution of the question of improving political conditions in the villages (proper conduct of elections, enlisting non-party peasants, etc.)

This policy alone, in the main outlined by Comrade Lenin, can lead to the real consolidation of State industry, secure further development and lead to the growth and concentration of the social power of the industrial proletariat, i. e. not in mere words, but in fact, to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat under the existence of the Nep.

The primary condition enabling this policy to be carried out is the absolute maintenance of the leading role of our Party in State and economic organs, and genuine unity of the Party on the basis of Leninism.

It is precisely this decisive (in the present circumstances) relation between the Party, the working class and the peasantry that Comrade Trotzky fails to understand.

This situation inevitably led to all the non-bolshevist and anti-bolshevist elements in the country and outside of the country placing their own construction upon the position taken up by Comrade Trotzky and to their supporting Comrade Trotzky precisely because he was being condemned by the R. C. P. and the Comintern. A party leading the dictatorship of the proletariat in circumstances in which all anti-proletarian parties and groups are deprived of „liberties“ must inevitably make enemies. All these enemies, particularly the well-to-do petty bourgeois desire to see in the present Comrade Trotzky the individual who could shake the iron dictatorship of the proletariat, split the Party and divert the Soviet Government to other lines.

All the leaders of the Second International, the most dangerous lackeys of the bourgeoisie, strive to make use of Comrade Trotzky's intellectual „revolt“ against the basis of Leninism, in order to discredit Leninism, the Russian Revolution and the Comintern in the eyes of the masses of Europe, and in this way to bind the social democratic workers to the chariot of capitalism. The renegade, Paul Levi, published Comrade Trotzky's „Lessons of October“ in German, with his own introduction, and German social democracy has undertaken to spread this bock broadcast. It is widely advertising it as a book directed against communism. Souvarine, who was expelled from the Comintern is trying to cause a split in the French Communist Party by spreading counter-revolutionary lies about the Russian Communist Party. Balabanova, Högl und and other renegades from communism act in a similar manner. The Italian social fascists of „Avanti“, the hirelings of the German bourgeoisie from „Vorwaerts“, Renaudel and Grumbach of the „Quotidien“, etc., etc., all these elements endeavour to associate themselves with Comrade Trotzky, because of his opposition to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party and the Eccl.

The non-Party workers, who should see in this prominent Party worker a model of solidarity for the whole Party, as a matter of fact, for the last few years, have seen Comrade Trotzky shaking the unity of the Party with impunity. Such a situation undermines elementary class discipline without which victorious proletarian dictatorship is impossible.

The peasantry should be able to see that on the question of unity between the working class and the peasantry, there is not the slightest hesitation in the Russian Communist Party and that on this question the Party is more united than on any other. But the conduct of Comrade Trotzky causes the peasantry to believe the very opposite, and this important question

becomes the subject of all kinds of legends. This represents extreme danger to the workers' and peasants' bloc. Our Party has to conduct the dictatorship of the proletariat in a peasant country. To carry out this dictatorship while Comrade Trotzky continues to affront the peasantry is impossible.

The youth who formerly saw in Comrade Trotzky, one of the greatest leaders of the Party, now see that leader is dragging the youth into „a war between generations“ on anti-Leninist lines.

The red army and the red fleet who should see in the leader of the army a model of Party discipline and of correct understanding of the relations between the proletariat and the peasantry (our army in the main is a peasant army) is now presented with a spectacle of the very opposite in Comrade Trotzky. Such a situation is pregnant with enormous dangers for the internal state of the army.

The whole Party is convinced that in such a state of affairs, there could be no talk of preserving a genuine, bolshevist, monolithic Russian Communist Party and is coming to the conclusion that our Party would be faced by a tremendous intellectual and organisational danger if it permitted Comrade Trotzky to continue his fight against the Bolshevist Party. The Lenin enrolment which is sincerely striving to imbibe genuine Leninism is becoming convinced that Trotzky is striving to introduce Trotzkyism in the place of Leninism and demand that the Party bring this to the light of day.

The whole comintern observes how one of the most prominent members of the Russian Communist Party hampers the work of bolshevising the Sections of the Comintern and is in fact rendering intellectual political support to the enemies of bolshevism in the camp of the Second International.

Under these circumstances the joint Plenum of the Central Committee and of the Central Control Committee is of the opinion that to leave things in a position when the Party decides on one thing and Comrade Trotzky continues to act against the Party would mean the beginning of the abandonment of the bolshevik character of the Party and the beginning of its collapse. With the controversy over Trotzkyism is closely connected the question as to what does the Russian Communist Party represent in 1925: — a Bolshevist Party hewn out of a single piece and standing on the lasting foundation of Leninism, or a Party in which semi-menshevik views may become a „Legitimate“ shade of view“.

Having read Comrade Trotzky's declaration to the Central Committee, dated the 15th of January, 1925, the Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Committee notes Comrade Trotzky's readiness to carry out any work entrusted to him by the Party, under the control of the Party and declares that Comrade Trotzky has not uttered a single word in his declaration indicating that he recognises his errors, but on the contrary, in fact strives to defend his anti-bolshevik platform and limits himself merely to formal expressions of loyalty.

* *

Following from what has been said above and particularly from the fact that in spite of the well known decisions of the Thirteenth Congress, Comrade Trotzky is again raising the question of the fundamental alteration of the leadership of the Party and is advocating views which have been categorically condemned by that Congress, the plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Committee.

Resolves:

1. Most categorically to warn Comrade Trotzky that membership of a Bolshevist Party demands real and not mere verbal subordination to Party discipline and complete and unreserved abandonment of opposition to Leninism in any form.

2. In view of the fact that leadership of the army is impossible unless this leadership is backed by the authority of the whole Party, that without this support, the danger of breaking the iron discipline in the army arises; in view of the fact that the Conference of political workers and the fraction of the Revolutionary Military Council of the U. S. S. R. have already passed resolutions calling for the removal of Comrade Trotzky from army work and in view of the fact that Comrade Trotzky himself in his declaration to the Central Committee dated 15th of January 1925 admits that „The interests of the cause de-

mands" his speedy release from the duties of the Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council, — that Comrade Trotsky's continued work on the Revolutionary Military Council of the U. S. S. R. be regarded as impossible.

3. That the question of Comrade Trotsky's work in the future be postponed to the next Party Congress and that Comrade Trotsky be warned that in the event of any fresh attempt on his part to violate or refuse to carry out Party decisions, the Central Committee will be compelled, without waiting for the Congress to be convened, to deem it impossible for Comrade Trotsky to continue further on the Politbureau and will raise the question at the joint meeting of the Central Committee and the Central Control Committee of removing him from work in the Central Committee.

4. To regard the discussion as closed.

5. To continue and develop the work of the Party in explaining throughout all the ranks of the Party the anti-bolshevik character of Trozkyism — from 1903 to "Lessons of October" — and instruct the Politbureau to convey to all the organs of propaganda (Party schools, etc.) proper instructions on this matter and to include in the programmes of political instruction an explanation of the petty bourgeois character of Trozkyism, etc.

6. Simultaneously with the explanatory propaganda conducted within the Party and the Young Communist League, etc., it is necessary to explain in a popular manner to the non-Party masses of workers and peasants the meaning of the deviations of Trozkyism and reveal its false paths leading to the break-up of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry.

Concerning the Theories of Permanent Revolution.

By N. Bucharin.

The question of permanent revolution is the question of the general estimate made of the course of development followed by our revolution, the question of the relations existing between the main classes of our society, the question of the changes taking place in social class conditions in the course of the revolution, and thus it is the question of what conclusions we are to draw from the corresponding theoretical analysis.

Our country is placed in a peculiar situation at present. We are on the brink of a historical turning point. The essential character of every internal turning point in the life of our country corresponds to a change taking place in the relations between the main classes of our society: between the working class and the peasantry. This has always been the case hitherto, and will continue to be the case for a long time to come. The present turning point again originates in a change of relations between the working class and the peasantry. We raise the question for the sole reason of demonstrating the following: If our country is at a turning point, and this turning point demands from our Party a reply to the question on the new relations arising between the working class and the peasantry, then it goes without saying that the "theory of permanent revolution", which "touches" mainly upon this question, is bound to be closely bound up with our actual practical action today. This discussion mirrors and expresses the absolute necessity felt amongst us to find an answer to the new questions of our "great policy", an answer harmonising with the general principles laid down by comrade Lenin on the workers' and peasants' bloc.

Everyone is aware that great differences of opinion have existed between comrade Trozky and the majority of the Party, not only in the pre-October period, but also in the post-October period. A general theoretical light has now been thrown upon all these differences of opinion. Comrade Trozky's latest literary works, as also the letter published in the "Inprecorr." (No. 8, Vol. V.) with a commentary by comrade Olminsky, cast a brilliant searchlight upon the nature of the various differences of opinion, contentions on details, and conflicts between the majority of our Party and comrade Trozky.

Comrade Trozky's letter has made it evident to all that there is a great difference between comrade Trozky's standpoint and that of our collective Party in the question of the most important driving powers behind our revolution, and — within this general question — on the question of the relations between the proletariat and the peasantry. This is the point where all the individual errors defended by comrade Trozky merge into one, forming a knot inextricably bound up with the theory of permanent revolution. The endeavour to prove this is the object of the following.

The Formal Logic of Trozkyism and of Leninist Dialectics.

If we recall to our memories some of the errors committed by comrade Trozky (many of them shared by us), and seek sincerely for the common basis of all these errors, we find that this may be defined, as a formally rationalist and literary manner of treating the questions of our social life. The method of formal logic, and not the method of living dialectics which characterises Bolshevism, was and still is typical for the specific standpoint maintained by comrade Trozky. It is now not difficult for us to recognise that the mistakes made by comrade Trozky bear certain specific features, and are of one certain type. And now that we are able to do this, we must track these mistakes back to their methodological beginnings. The difference between Leninism and Trozkyism will then be made perfectly clear.

What is the secret of the power inherent in Leninist dialectics, and in the policy pursued by the Party on the basis of these dialectics? What is the secret of the power of the Leninist teachings, and what genius enabled Lenin to master circumstances in every period of the revolution, in the midst of the stormy rise and fall of the revolutionary tides? To this question we might reply that comrade Lenin possessed not only that capacity of foreseeing great historical perspectives which was part of his genius, but at the same time three other characteristics demonstrating his perfect mastery of Marxist dialectics: Firstly his magnificent ability for discovering what was **unique** in any given situation, for finding out what was special and original; secondly, the capability of seeing the transition from one situation to another, of seeing how one historical stage passes into another; thirdly — the combination of the first two characteristics — the ability of seizing upon the exact link required to enable him to control the whole chain.

Comrade Lenin must indeed be judged by a very different standard to the ordinary — or even the somewhat extraordinary — revolutionist. That Leninism demands a revolutionary attitude goes without saying. It is not that which was so characteristic of Lenin, but his capacity for not only holding the general aim in view, but for grasping the main point peculiar to every stage of transition, and invariably placing his finger on the key to the whole situation, enabling us to keep on the right path in our revolution. But if we measure comrade Trozky's errors by this criterion, and judge all that which is peculiar and specific in comrade Trozky by this standard, then we find that Trozkyism fails us at once. It is **too small** for the standard by which the politics of a Bolshevik Party can and must be measured. Many of us have been — and still are — carried away by comrade Trozky's brilliant capacity for drawing pictures which are at the first glance superlatively revolutionary. But all this has to be measured by a smaller

standard. If we apply a less severe test, Trozkyism at least bears favourable comparison with social democracy, which has sunk completely in the bog of opportunism, and has nothing to do with revolution, being a social democratic and counter-revolutionary party. In a comparison of this kind the advantage is, of course, on the side of comrade Trozky. But from the standpoint of Leninism this is merely an "A B C,"

But if we apply the Leninist standard to comrade Trozky's standpoint, and put the following question: Agreed. But how are we to proceed under these or those actual circumstances? How is every concrete stage of development in this brilliant revolutionary plan to be analysed? What is to be done in actual practice for the realisation of these aims, so well expressed on paper? What of the complicated theoretical analysis here required? If we approach comrade Trozky's standpoint with this criterion, it then becomes immediately evident that Trozkyism is inevitably bound to fall into error, and that its bankruptcy is obvious. Trozkyism cannot stand the test of such questioning.

Whatever problem we may approach, whether great or — comparatively — small, as soon as we view it in the light of comrade Trozky's errors, we find him lacking in precisely that capacity which distinguishes Leninism as a continued development of Marxism. It is for this reason that he makes such grave errors in actual practice. Let us first take the example offered by the contentions on the "planned economics": one of the subjects of our discussion last year. What was the actual object of comrade Trozky's attack? His object was to find a means of escape from the crisis in which we were involved by means of an ideal and rational economic plan. This was the origin of a number of practical propositions aiming, or rather intending to aim, at the development of our industry. But the economic revival which we succeeded in attaining was **not** due to the execution of comrade Trozky's plan, but to an **entirely different** circumstance — to the **financial reform** and the policy of price reductions. This is now an established fact. The financial reform and the price reduction policy were the two factors which **actually** pushed our economics over the dead point. The economic success we have to record for the past year is also chiefly attributable to these two main factors. It thus becomes evident that the remedies recommended by comrade Trozky for our economics, and comprising a part of his plan, contained many errors.

What are these errors? The greatest of these has been that the opposition has not recognised the uniqueness of the economic position, resultant on the total situation and the total structure of the country. The opposition has placed essentially abstract viewpoints and slogans in the foreground, but the truths contained in these dwindle down to the very simple fact that a definite plan is better than anarchy, and that systematically planned economics are better than anarchist economics. This sounds extremely revolutionary. Who can raise any objection to such a plan? Perhaps some small shopkeeper. The impression is given that those protesting against the "plan" are guilty of a "petty bourgeois deviation", whilst the "basis of planned economics" proposed by comrade Trozky represents the embodiment and the expression of "proletarian socialist reasoning" in its struggle against counter-revolutionary and petty bourgeois elements.

But this impression is merely the first "superficial view of the phenomenon." When we penetrate further we get quite another view of the matter. The question to be dealt with was not a decision on the comparative advantages of "plan" or "anarchy", of socialism or commodity economy. The question was not of whether we were tending towards socialism or planned economics or not, the question was to discover the best preliminary steps towards socialised and planned economics, hampered as we were by the existence of an enormous number of small producers, by the tremendous significance of the market, the collapse of paper money, and the difficulty in selling goods. This was the practical question of the moment. And here comrade Trozky did not accord sufficient attention to the peculiarities of our situation. Although his writings in the "post-discussion period" have invariably shown an endeavour to refute the political reproach that he has underestimated the importance of the peasantry, he has repeated this error even during this period. Here his lack of realisation of the importance of the peasantry has been shown in his underestimation of the power of the market, and in his lack of understanding

for the whole significance of the nervous system of the markets, that is, of the money system. And it has again been shown in his one-sided analysis of industry, which he has regarded as isolated.

The peculiarity of the position — its chief peculiarity — did not consist of unsound productive conditions as such, but rather in a crisis in the relations between town and country. It would have been **impossible**, even with the most carefully worked out "plan" at our disposal, to promote industry in face of a policy of high prices (in the midst of a crisis caused by lack of markets), and in face of the collapse of our paper money (which completely lost its purchasing powers). Thus comrade Trozky was not looking in the right direction. He did not observe the **peculiarity** of the situation. And in the second place he did not take into consideration the **transition** from one stage to another. The fact that our agriculture is widely scattered, and that we have an enormous number of small producers, obliges us to progress only very gradually and slowly from non systemized economics to planned economics.

In order to pass through one stage to another, we need to take a number of measures which we cannot ignore in actual practice, and we have to find out the nature of the measures required if we are to rise from one step to another. What was the **first** step required to bring us a little nearer to planned economics? What link of the Leninist "chain" had first to be grasped at this given moment? The link demanded at that moment was financial reform. In other words: In order to ensure our being able to take the next step towards planned economics, we had to first step from the stage which may be named "preparatory to financial reform" to the actual stage of financial reform. This was our sole possibility of taking a real step forwards planned economics. But comrade Trozky failed to observe this link in the chain, and the whole of the opposition followed him.

It is generally known that some of the comrades belonging to the opposition regarded the financial reform very sceptically, and prophesied its rapid collapse, preferring to support the "Soviet money". Events proved precisely the contrary tactics to be correct. Here we had clear evidence of the incapacity to find the link in the chain. Here we see a scheme instead of an analysis, the abstract in place of the concrete, formal logic in place of dialectics. **Trozkyism in place of Leninism.**

Let us take another question, in which we ourselves along with comrade Trozky committed a grave error. We refer to the occasion of the peace of Brest-Litovsk. We take the liberty of citing this instance again for the reason that the matter at present under discussion, though dealing with entirely different conditions, represents a very definite example of exactly the same type of error. What was the **peculiarity** incidental to the position at Brest? It consisted of the fact that the **peasantry did not want to fight**. This was the crux of the whole situation. And what did we then "left communists", including Trozky, propose at this juncture? We drew up a "plan", which looked very presentable indeed: Revolutionary struggle. It is true that comrade Trozky issued an intermediate slogan: "Neither war nor peace".

But at the same time he proclaimed that it would be better to die beneath the sword of German imperialism than beneath the blows of the profiteers. An immediate fight, a heroic battle — these were the ideas with which I too was filled. These "plans" looked very well, we considered that they alone were revolutionary, and everybody failing to agree with these aims was a "capitulator" in our eyes. The "left communists" continued to maintain this ideology with the utmost consistency; among the "left communists" and among Trozky's sympathisers the view was expressed that our Party, in recognising the fact that the peasantry were retreating from the front, was transforming itself into a **petty bourgeois** party, a peasants' party. This was emphasised in particular detail by comrade Riasanov, who left the Party on account of its alleged loss of proletarian chastity.

Comrade Trozky concerned himself but little about the trend of feeling among the peasantry. He staked everything upon the immediate action of the West European proletariat.

Comrade Trozky thus failed to fulfil the first requirement demanded by a correct analysis. He did not take into con-

sideration the peculiarity of the situation; he pronounced no judgment upon this peculiarity, though to do so was the obvious duty of a politician anxious to serve the Party, not by words alone, but by deeds leading to victory. Lenin's incomparable analysis of the situation is one of the best proofs of his genius.

The second question is: was due consideration accorded to the transitional stage from one phase to another, from one situation to another? What was the essential factor in the transition from one phase to another at the time of the Brest negotiations? We had to grasp the fact that the right mode of transition had to be found from the period in which the peasantry retreated from the front, and the period in which revolutionary defence of the country could be taken up. Neither the left communists nor Trotzky were ever able properly to realise this.

And finally, the third question: What was the "link in the chain" to be seized upon under these circumstances, in order to facilitate this transition to another stage, that is, the transition from the phase of peasant desertion to the phase of the "plan", the phase of defence? This link was the conclusion of peace. This was the link to which we had to cling, enabling us to disband the old disintegrated army and to enlist fresh and capable troops upon new lines, upon an appeal for the defence of the peasants' rights to land against the great landowners, and enabling us to gain time to collect our forces for a successful struggle. But comrade Trotzky did not observe this link. Here we have a most striking example of the Leninist "link in the chain". It is more obvious now than ever. Again we find Trotzky falling into the same type of error with regard to the "plan". Again we find excellent revolutionary conceptions "in general", and a "theory" most eloquently defended, but impossible of application in actual practice. Such a theory, put into practice, brings about precisely the contrary of its stated object.

In conclusion we must emphasise the fact that Leninism destroys all possibility of worshipping mere phrases as fetishes. Leninism does not invariably lead to a "left" policy. It leads to the correct policy, that is, to the policy corresponding to the common interests of the proletariat, and adapted to the peculiarity of the situation. For this reason it is the indispensable weapon of international class war.

The General Estimate of our Revolution.

Let us proceed to the general estimate of our revolution. Comrade Trotzky's theory bears the name of the "theory of permanent revolution". Here we at once encounter the general estimate of our revolution. On this point comrade Trotzky writes as follows in one of his latest works:

"With respect to the theory of permanent revolution, I most certainly see no reason, to take back anything which I wrote on this subject in the years 1904/5/6 or later. I am still of the opinion that the general line of thought developed by me at that time comes incomparably closer to the essential character of Leninism than much, very much, of what has been written by a great number of the then Bolsheviks. The term "permanent revolution" is a Marxian term . . . permanent revolution, exactly interpreted, signifies constant or uninterrupted revolution. What is the political import of these words? Their import is that for us communists the revolution does not cease with this or that political achievement, but develops further, and that for us the only limit of revolution is the socialist state of society . . . Under Russian conditions this means: The bourgeois republic is not to be regarded as any complete political achievement, and not even the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry can lay claim to being this, but solely a workers' government, leaning on the peasantry, and opening out an era of international socialist revolution . . . In this manner the permanent revolution is in complete agreement with the strategic fundamentals of Bolshevism. . . . My writings at that time made no attempt to ignore the peasantry. A direct path led through the theory of permanent revolution to Leninism, and especially to the theses of April 1917. ("The new Course", Russ. ed. p. 50, etc.)

In his preface to his book "1905" comrade Trotzky writes:

" During the time elapsing between 22.(9) of January and the October strike of 1905, the present writer formed those views on the character of revolutionary development in Russia which have received the designation of the theory of "permanent revolution". These views, though with an interruption lasting 12 years, have been fully confirmed." ("1905", German ed. pp. 5/6.)

And finally, comrade Trotzky wrote as follows in his letter to comrade Olminsky:

"I by no means believe that I was always in the wrong in my differences of opinion with the Bolsheviks . . . I believe that, my estimate of the driving forces of the revolution was decidedly right Even now I could divide my polemical articles against the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks into two categories: The one is dedicated to the analysis of the internal forces of the revolution and its perspectives and the other to the valuation of the fractions of Russian social democracy, their fights, etc. I could publish the articles of the first category even now without alternations, as they concur in every detail with the attitude of our Party beginning with the year 1917".

Comrade Trotzky thus now maintains that:

1. The theory of permanent revolution has proved correct, being "fully confirmed" by experience;
2. The theory of permanent revolution comes incomparably closer to Leninism than anything else;
3. The theory of permanent revolution corresponds perfectly to the strategy pursued by our Party and by Bolshevism since 1917;
4. The theory of permanent revolution is by no means based upon an under-estimate of the importance of the peasantry; and
5. The theory of permanent revolution contains a perfectly correct estimate of the driving forces of our revolution.

Comrade Trotzky, in thus showering compliments upon his theoretical darling, renders his internal Party policy easily comprehensible.

Why does comrade Trotzky consider the whole history of our Party as almost null and void up to the year 1917? Solely for the reason that in his opinion the Party did not adopt the theory of permanent revolution until 1917.

Why is it superfluous to occupy ourselves with the prerevolutionary struggles against the Mensheviks and against Trotzky? Because the theory of permanent revolution covers over all the past, present, and future errors of comrade Trotzky, and so forth.

To sum up: The essential character of Leninism, which, like our Party, did not really see the light until 1917 (see also the articles of comrade Preobraschensky, which show much intellectual kinship with Trotzkyism), consists of the theory of permanent revolution. It is thus no wonder that comrade Trotzky appears on the scene as head of the Leninists and guardian of Lenin's commandments, since what he represents is no longer historical Bolshevism, but Trotzkyism with the label of Leninism.

The theory of permanent revolution is asserted to be a theory finding its first substantiation in Marx's teachings. "The permanent revolution", that is: "uninterrupted revolution" is a revolution to which a limit is solely put by the attainment of a socialist state of society. From this comrade Trotzky draws the conclusion, in a number of his latest writings, that this state of affairs has already been attained, and the theory of permanent revolution has been confirmed, since our proletariat has appropriated state power. But before 1917 the Bolsheviks combatted the theory of permanent revolution, and maintained that our revolution would have to be a bourgeois one.

Truly. We really did do this in 1905, and up to the February revolution. Who was right? The theory of permanent revolution or the orthodox Bolsheviks?

Let us examine more closely into the matter. First of all we must emphasise the fact that the nature of the theory of permanent revolution has nothing whatever to do with the fact that our revolution is one forming the culminating stage of a course of development, and placing the working class in power. Taken in this sense, the permanent revolution has taken place, since the working class really has attained power.

The question is in reality quite different. And it is precisely this difference in which consists the nature of the theory of permanent revolution. This nature, this essential character of the theory of permanent revolution, must first of all be made perfectly clear. But we must first take Marx's conception of the theory of permanent revolution. In Stalin's pamphlet we find an authoritative passage quoted from Marx, and correctly commented upon by Stalin. Marx writes:

"Whilst the bureaucratic petty bourgeoisie is anxious to end the revolution with the utmost celerity by carrying out the largest possible number of the above mentioned demands, our task consists of maintaining the revolution without interruption until all the more or less propertied classes are deprived of ruling power, the proletariat has seized state power, etc." (quoted in Stalin's "Lenin and Leninism." p. 42.)

What did Marx thus understand under the theory of permanent revolution? Marx understood conditions under which the proportions of forces shifted continually in the course of the revolution, and the revolution advanced in an "upward" grade. Let us say that the large landowners are overthrown for instance. Their place is taken by one of the bourgeois fractions, for instance the liberal bourgeoisie. This does not mean the end of the revolution. The liberal bourgeoisie is overthrown, and replaced by radical petty bourgeois. The radical petty bourgeoisie is overthrown and replaced by the poor of the cities, allied in the strict sense of the word, with the poor peasantry and the working class. And finally this government is substituted in its turn by the rule of the working class. To be sure this is only a scheme, but it is a "correct scheme" *).

What is then the essential character of permanent revolution? The essential character of the Marxist, that is, of the correct theory of permanent revolution, is that it implies actual changes taking place in the social import of the revolution. The Marxist theory expresses the fact that the relations between the conflicting classes change constantly in the course of the revolution, that the revolution proceeds steadily from stage to stage in the course of its evolution, advancing from the feudal stage to the stage of liberal bourgeoisie to petty bourgeoisie, and from this to the stage of proletarian revolution.

This is the meaning of the Marxist theory of permanent revolution (but not of Trotsky's). Can we raise any objection to such a theory? No, there is nothing to be said against it. It is perfectly correct. In this sense our revolution was "permanent". Our revolution passed through a series of stages. In February 1917 the regime of the land owners was supplanted by a liberal government of the imperialist bourgeoisie, and parallel with this the organisations of the workers and peasants (Soviets) came into existence; this was followed by another regrouping, leading to the substitution of the liberal bourgeoisie by various fractions of the petty bourgeoisie allied with the liberals ("coalition" government, participated in by the Mensheviks, the SR, etc.). After we had seized power in October, the Bolsheviks and the left SR, ruled. After the insurrection of the SR, another change took place, and our Party became the sole state party. In Russia the curve of revolution was thus an upward one during practically the whole period. The nature of the process thus passed through

*) It must however be mentioned that this scheme cannot be "simply" applied to reality. The proportions of social forces must be accorded due consideration. Thus the peculiarity of the Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution consisted in the fact that it could only be carried through in the struggle against that liberal bourgeoisie which had already become a counterrevolutionary force before the victory over Czarism. The Mensheviks did not realise this, and were led into actual betrayal of the revolution.

was expressed in the structure of the state power, in the passing of power from one class to another, and from one social group to another, continuing until a stable situation was reached, in which the working class took possession of power, the dictatorship of the workers obtained a firm foothold, and the Communist Party became the sole Party holding state power in its hands.

If we approach the question in this manner, that is, from the standpoint of the actual historical course taken by events, and then ask: Does this represent the essential character of Trotsky's permanent revolution? we find ourselves bound to reply to this general question with: No.

Had comrade Trotsky formed any idea of the real state of affairs as confirmed by subsequent events, he would not have joined with Parvus in 1905 in giving out the slogans then issued. In 1905 Trotsky in opposition to the Bolsheviks, issued the slogan of. "Down with the Czar and up with the workers' government". Thus comrade Trotsky issued a slogan, at the beginning of the first stage of our revolutionary movement, calling for the immediate realisation of something unrealisable until the last stage of the revolutionary process had been reached. Trotsky's slogan was not in the least in touch with realities at that time. In other words, the great political error of which we accuse Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution is the fact that it completely ignores all intermediary stages, thus omitting precisely the main factor distinguishing permanent revolution in the Marxist sense. These various stages of the revolution, in which various classes fulfil their tasks and relieve one another, demand individual methods adapted in each case to the peculiarities of each stage, all methods of course tending towards the common aim; a revolution can be carried through in this way only. But comrade Trotsky thrust the final stage of the revolution into the foreground before its prerequisites existed. He sprang over a series of transitional stages, and had our Party followed comrade Trotsky instead of carrying out the revolution as it actually was carried out, the result would have been a miserable failure. Strange as it may appear, it is precisely Trotsky who kills the idea of permanent revolution, for if the end is placed at the beginning, then there is no process to be gone through, no transition, no "uninterrupted revolution".

Did comrade Trotsky understand the peculiarity of our revolution? Did comrade Trotsky recognise that it was passing from one stage to another? Did he discover the exact "link in the chain" important at a given moment? All these questions must be replied to in the negative.

To comrade Trotsky the question was exceedingly simple: In Russia there could only be a proletarian revolution. (In 1905 comrade Trotsky still denied the possibility of a bourgeois revolution). In Russia there could only be a proletarian revolution, but in a petty bourgeois country this proletarian revolution was condemned to failure unless it received state support from the victorious proletariat of Western Europe.

"Without direct state assistance from the European proletariat the Russian working class cannot maintain its power, nor transform its temporary rule into a permanent socialist dictatorship. This cannot be doubted for a moment." ("Our revolution".)

Comrade Trotsky began by failing to grasp the peculiarity characteristic of our revolution, that is, the original combination of a peasant war against the land owners and a proletarian revolution. Comrade Trotsky further failed to recognise the factor peculiar to the preliminary stage of our revolution, the breaking of the fetters of feudalism and the demolishing of large ownership of land. ("The agrarian question forms the basis of the bourgeois revolution in Russia, and determines the national peculiarity of this revolution." "The experience gained in the first period of the Russian revolution has finally proved that it can only be inevitable as a peasant agrarian revolution".)**)

Comrade Trotsky did "not notice" that stage during which the bourgeois revolution in Russia grew into a socialist proletarian revolution.

***) From an unpublished chapter of Lenin's work on the agrarian question.

Again, comrade Trotsky did not recognise those **peculiarities** distinguishing our socialist revolution from the socialist revolutions of other countries.

Comrade Trotsky further failed to recognise those special international conditions which render it possible for our socialist revolution — even without the state assistance of a victorious West European proletariat — to defend itself, to become stronger, to grow, and to work towards carrying off the final victory in cooperation with the victories won by the working classes of other countries.

Comrade Trotsky has judged like a schematist: **Either** bourgeois revolution or proletarian. **Either** a classic proletarian revolution followed by permanent victory, or a proletarian revolution mixed with other elements, followed by failure. **Either** state aid from the Western proletariat and following it salvation, or no such aid and consequently no salvation.

Actual events have however entirely confuted these schematic interpretations, and have given entirely different replies to our questions. We have had a bourgeois revolution and a proletarian revolution as well (one merging into the other); we have received no state assistance from the Western proletarians, and nevertheless we have received aid from both the proletariat and from the colonies (and at the same time we have received "aid" from the capitalists, whose mutual conflicts help the proletarian states); our revolution has not been classically proletarian, and yet it is not a failure, but a success, etc. Reality has proved much more manysided than the dry schematic diagrams of the carefully worked out theory of "permanent revolution."

Trotsky's failure to recognise realities is the cause of his **political weakness**.

Lenin's and our Party's ability to recognise all the various stages, transitions, and peculiarities of our revolutionary process enabled them to lay their hands upon the decisive link in the chain on every occasion, and thus to lead the working class and the peasantry to victory.

Our Party has truly no reason to exchange the Leninist theory of our revolution for comrade Trotsky's "permanent" theory.

The General Estimate of the Proportions of Class Forces in our Revolution.

We have already discussed the stages of our revolution: we must now deal with the same question, and still in a general form, in its connection with the class struggle and the shiftings of forces within the separate classes. The contentions in which we have been involved have chiefly related to the workers' and peasants' bloc, to the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, and to the hegemony of the proletariat within this "alliance" or "bloc." Now, in the eighth year of our revolution and our dictatorship, we see clearly the greatness of this problem, first definitely substantiated by Lenin, and developing later into one of the foundation stones of both the theoretical and the practical structure of Bolshevism. For this problem is not alone concerned with the alliance between the working class and the peasantry in the Russian Soviet Republics, but with the greatest — and in a sense the most decisive — problem of **international revolution**. The **colonial question** for instance, one of the most burning questions of the day, and a question of life and death to capitalism, is nothing more nor less — when considered from the standpoint of world revolution — than an alliance between the West European and American industrial proletariat and the peasantry of the colonies.

It is true that the colonial question, though chiefly a question of the relations between the proletariat and the peasantry, is not this **alone**. It possesses its special features, and it would be wrong to regard both aspects of the question as identical. One thing is however perfectly evident, and that is that the colonial question has its social roots down in the peasant question. When we state that the peasantry is now undermining the pillars of capitalist society, then we may assert that the working class, in aiding the colonial insurrections, thus realises its hegemony over the colonial peasants' movement. If we put the question of the probable conditions prevailing in the world's economics after the workers have taken possession of power, we are again confronted by the question of the relations between the victorious proletariat and

the colonial peasantry. If we ask why it is that European social democracy has not in the least grasped the importance of the colonial question, why it has devoted so little attention to this question, and has never approached the problems of so great a significance for us, the explanation is not that we are living in an agrarian country and the European social democrats in industrial countries. They too possess their "agrarian complement", with the sole difference that it does not lie in their immediate vicinity, but in their distant colonies. The fact that European social democracy devotes but scanty attention to the peasant question is a part of its general contemptuous attitude towards a revolutionary standpoint as applied to the colonies. Social democracy has either adopted an actually hostile attitude towards the colonial movement (social imperialism), or its "attitude" has been represented by silence. When comrade Trotsky permitted himself to be so far carried away by his "Europeanism" on more than one occasion as to emphasise the Asiatic and peasant character of the "immature" proletariat (this was his estimate of the Bolsheviki), then this "Europeanism" of his contained something of that contemptuous treatment accorded by social democracy to the peasant and colonial question, and this although comrade Trotsky has personally devoted a considerable amount of attention to the colonial question. These general conceptions with reference to the classes, and this "European" estimate of the roles played by these classes, form the basis of comrade Trotsky's conclusion that the revolution in Russia is inevitably lost unless it receives state support from a victorious European proletariat.

Comrade Trotsky, replacing concrete analysis by an abstract scheme, concludes that the European revolution represents a classic revolution, the "non-classic" revolution being condemned in advance to failure. But a classic proletarian revolution would be a revolution in which the proletariat was the sole representative of the "people". In other words: An ideal revolution is only possible in a state of society in which no peasantry exists.

But this "ideal" conception does not in the least correspond to reality. Viewed internationally, the strictly proletarian class represents a small minority of the population. If we take for instance the largest countries in the world, we find them composed of a small number of densely populated and proletarianised metropolises, and of mighty peasant colonies. The greater part of France lies in Africa, the greater part of England in Asia, etc... What will the English proletariat do after its victory if it cannot depend upon the sympathy of the Hindu and Egyptian peasantry, if it does not lead them into the struggle against capitalism, if it fails to gain their sympathy and support, if it does not possess the hegemony, the leadership over these gigantic masses.

There is no doubt whatever that comrade Trotsky is fully aware of the enormous significance of the colonial question. But unfortunately his correct views on the colonies are not in accordance with comrade Trotsky's estimate of the peasantry in 1905, in his theory of permanent revolution. And he insists on the correctness of this estimate to this day, with unnecessary obstinacy. Here comrade Trotsky is guilty of absolute inconsistency.

Before seizing power the working class must have the support of the peasantry in the struggle against capital and large land ownership. After seizing power, the proletariat must secure the support of a considerable section of the peasantry in the civil war, until the proletarian dictatorship is established.

And further? Are we to limit ourselves to regarding the peasantry **solely** as cannon fodder to be employed against the capitalists and large landowners?

No. The proletariat, after its victory, must maintain friendly relations with the peasantry at any price, for the peasantry represents the majority of the population, and is of the utmost importance both economically and socially. Nothing but an entire lack of comprehension of international economic relations can cause anyone to ignore this task. Sooner or later it has inevitably to be placed on the agenda. Consequently we have to grasp the fact that the proletariat has here no alternative. It is forced to carry the peasantry with it when building up the socialist structure. It must learn how to do this, or it cannot maintain its power.

It need not be said that various methods must be employed for leading the peasantry, adapted to the requirements of the concrete situation in every case.

During the trade union discussion Lenin wrote:

"The whole dictatorship of the proletariat is a transitional period. But just now we are witnessing a whole series of transitional periods, so to speak: the demobilisation of the army, the end of the war and the possibility of a much longer and more peaceful pause for breath than we have had before, the possibility of a permanent transition from the military front to the labour front. This in itself alone suffices to alter the relations of the proletarian class to the peasant class."

The same applies, in an even greater degree, to the whole of the exceedingly important stages of the revolutionary process.

Comrade Trotzky, in his theory of permanent revolution, has not grasped:

1. the general standpoint with reference to the peasantry,
2. nor the methods enabling the proletariat to lead the peasantry,
3. nor the various stages of development undergone by the relations between working class and peasantry in the course of our revolution.

In his preface to his book "1905", comrade Trotzky himself gives a highly graphic description of his manner of treating the peasant question. After having formulated (in the year 1922!) the theory of permanent revolution, and emphasising the correctness of this theory, comrade Trotzky writes to the effect already dealt with above, as follows:

"In order to secure its victory, the proletarian vanguard will have to begin its rule by far-reaching encroachments upon not only feudal property, but bourgeois property as well. This means that the proletariat will come into hostile collision with not only every group of the bourgeoisie..., but with broad masses of the peasantry who have helped it to seize power. The contradictions inherent to the position of a workers' government in a backward country with an overwhelmingly peasant population can only be solved on an international scale, and in the arena of proletarian world revolution. If the victorious proletariat, in virtue of historical necessity, has once broken down the narrow bourgeois democratic barriers of the Russian revolution, it will then be forced to break down its national state barriers, that is, it will have to strive consciously to make the Russian revolution the prelude to the world revolution". (The "Russian revolution of 1905" German ed. p. 6.)

This last assertion is correct. But this is not the point of the matter at all. For Trotzky the main point is that the victorious proletariat is absolutely and inevitably bound to come into inextricable conflict with the broad masses of the peasantry, that the proletariat is incapable of solving this problem in a country with a petty bourgeois majority, and that in consequence of this unavoidable conflict proletarian rule is bound to break down unless help comes from abroad, and this help is state help.

The most conspicuous thing about this (in view of the mighty experience gained in the international movement) is that Trotzky's "solution" is really no solution at all, any more than his "permanent revolution" is a permanent revolution, strictly speaking.

For: if the conflict between the proletariat and the peasantry is really unavoidable, inevitable, etc., then it is unavoidable and inevitable, even after the international victory of the proletariat.

On our planet the peasantry possesses the overwhelming majority. If the proletariat has no means at its disposal enabling it to draw this majority over to its side, then even international revolution is either doomed to failure, or (see Cunow) it must be postponed until such time as the proletariat is in the majority on the globe. For surely we are not to assume that we must break through the "confines of earth", and await the assistance — the "state" assistance of course — of the proletarian forces of the heavens!

Thus if we follow the problem further, and examine it in its full extent, we see at once that comrade Trotzky does not solve the question, but merely shifts it.

The above adduced estimate of the peasantry again gives the basis for those methods of influencing the peasantry formulated by comrade Trotzky during the period of reaction. With regard to this Lenin wrote as follows:

... Finally, the third of comrade Trotzky's views referred to by comrade Martov, and held by comrade Martov to be correct, is the most incorrect of all: ... "If (the peasantry) may do this (affiliate itself to the regime of the workers' democracy) without any greater degree of consciousness than that with which it generally affiliates itself to the bourgeois regime". **The proletariat must not calculate upon either the lack of consciousness nor upon the prejudices of the peasantry, as is done by the rulers of a bourgeois regime, nor must the proletariat assume that the customary lack of consciousness among the peasantry, or their passivity, is bound to continue during the revolutionary period**". ("The fighting aims of the proletariat in our revolution". Vol. XI. Lenin's complete works.)

And in the epoch of proletarian dictatorship, when words had to be replaced by deeds, and the situation became particularly difficult, Lenin said:

"The greater the extent of historical action, the greater the number of participants in this action, the profounder the change we are aiming at bringing about, then the greater in proportion must be the **conscious interest** which we awaken for this action, and the greater the necessity of convincing new millions and tens of millions that our action is necessary". (Report issued by the Council of People's Commissaries, 20. December 1920.)

Do we not see a special attitude adopted towards the peasantry? And is this attitude not a part of the general estimate of the peasantry as one of the necessary allies in the proletarian struggle?

But if we are to be in a position to "convince", we must be able to "attach" the peasantry to the "link of the chain" most necessary at the moment. But here we have the clearest evidence of the incompetence of Trotzkyism even to approach this question properly.

In 1905 Trotzky ignored the agrarian revolution, and did not grasp the fact that it was the essential factor of the epoch. Neither did the Mensheviks grasp this, and Lenin rightly pointed out that they "when fighting against Narodnikism... overlooked its historically real and progressive import as a theory of the petty bourgeois struggle of democratic capitalism against liberal landowning capitalism", for which reason Lenin designated this their "idea" as "monstrous", "idiotic", and "apostate". (See Lenin: "Prussian and American ways of development, letter to Skorsov", in the periodical "Proletarian Revolution", May 1924.)

Comrade Trotzky still maintains that his estimate of the driving powers of the revolution was correct, that it contained no leap over the peasantry, and that it never entered his mind to "underestimate" the peasantry. He writes:

"A popular argument, employed by many (!) of late, is to draw attention — mainly indirectly — to my "under-estimation" of the role played by the peasantry. But it would be a vain effort to seek for any analysis of this question... My writings at that time contained no attempt at "leaping over the peasantry." ("The new course". pp. 50/51.)

But what was the estimate formed by Lenin on Trotzky's standpoint, as early as 1915, during the war:

"Trotzky's original theory takes over from Bolshevism the appeal for a determined revolutionary struggle on the part of the proletariat, and for the seizure of political power by the proletariat, and from the Mensheviks it takes over the "negation" of the role played by the peasantry". (Two tendencies in the revolution", compl. works, "Against the Stream", German ed. p. 296.)

"In reality Trotzky inclines to the side of the liberal labour politicians of Russia, who understand under the "negation" of the role played by the peasantry the disinclination to arouse the peasantry to revolution". (Ibid. p. 297.)

Lenin supplements this by a brief but brilliant description of the various stages of the revolution, of the import of these stages, and of our tasks:

"And this (that is, the arousing of the peasantry. N. B.) is now the keystone to the whole. The proletariat is fighting, and will fight relentlessly, for the conquest of state power, for the republic, for the confiscation of land, **that is**, for the inclusion of the peasantry in the movement and for the **making use** of its revolutionary forces, and for the participation of the "non-proletarian masses of the people" in the emancipation of bourgeois Russia from military feudal "imperialism" (Czarism.) And this emancipation of bourgeois Russia from Czarism, from the agrarian rule of the land owners, will be immediately used by the proletariat, not for the purpose of helping the wealthy peasantry in their conflicts against agricultural labour, but for the purpose of — bringing about socialist revolution, in alliance with the proletarians of Europe". (Ibid.)

Comrade Lenin thus differs from comrade Trotzky, and finds that Trotzky's theory underestimates the role played by the peasantry. And however comrade Trotzky tries to evade an acknowledgement of this fundamental error in his theory, he does succeed in doing so. Here it must be clearly and unequivocally stated who is right and who wrong. For it is perfectly evident that we are dealing with two different theories: According to the one theory the peasant is an ally, according to the other unreservedly an enemy. According to the one we can carry on a successful struggle for our hegemony over the peasantry, according to the other we cannot; according to the one a severe conflict is inevitable, according to the other the conflict may be avoided by a skilful policy, etc.

Is it not sufficiently obvious that this "permanent" question of the "permanent" theory is a "permanent" antagonism between Trotzkyism and Leninism!

The Stages of our Revolution and Comrade Trotzky's Theory.

Let us begin our analysis with the year 1905.

At that time the standpoint of the Bolsheviks was the following: We estimate the revolution of the year 1905 as a bourgeois democratic revolution overthrowing the landowners and their government, giving land to the peasantry, emancipating the country from feudalism, and — and here lies our aim — establishing the revolutionary dictatorship of the working and peasant class, this dictatorship however not having a socialist character at this given stage of development. Comrade Trotzky brought definite charges against this standpoint. He said that in the first place such a state of affairs was impossible, and in the second place the Bolshevik theory was reactionary; the Bolsheviks, so comrade Trotzky maintained, possessed not only certain revolutionary aspects, but also a reactionary aspect, and the reactionary aspect of Bolshevism consisted of its inclination to cooperate with the peasants. It is only necessary to look up this assertion in comrade Trotzky's book "1905". Comrade Trotzky writes:

"It is now proposed to supplement the political self limitation of the proletariat by an objective antisocialist "guarantee" in the form of the peasant as collaborator." ("1905", German ed. p. 230.)

What result do we arrive at if we decipher this quotation? At the following: The Bolsheviks propose to bring the bourgeois democratic revolution to an end, and to do this by means of the democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry, which will demolish the relics of the feudal regime down to the last atom.

What objection does comrade Trotzky raise to this? He says: that precisely this is the **reactionary** aspect of Bolshevism, for it shows the endeavour to establish a regime in which the peasant and the proletarian share power. What is the peasant? The peasant is a small holder. What is the small holder? From the standpoint of evolution towards socialism small holdings are a reactionary force. If you Bolsheviks, want to have the peasant as collaborator in your government (all this was said in 1905), then you are reactionaries, for you are anxious to secure for yourselves this reactionary, antisocialist "guarantee", disastrous to the socialist proletariat.

And comrade Trotzky continues:

"Whilst the anti-revolutionary aspects of Menshevism are already manifest in full force, the anti-revolutionary features of socialism threaten to form a great danger after a great victory has been gained". ("1905", p. 231.)

In a footnote to the second edition (Russian 1922, German 1923), comrade Trotzky obligingly "explains" this interesting point further, as follows:

"As is well known, this did not occur, since Bolshevism, under the leadership of comrade Lenin (not without internal struggles) had completed its ideological metamorphosis in this extremely important question by the spring of 1917, that is, before the seizure of power".

We shall see later on how ridiculous is the assertion that the Party, under the actual leadership of Lenin, should have gone over to Trotzky's standpoint "in the spring of 1917". We may observe at once that this idea, so consoling to the self-love of its author, explains why comrade Trotzky so greatly fears a "degeneration" in our Party. For in the opinion of comrade Trotzky Bolshevism was pro-peasant in character, it possessed certain resultant anti-revolutionary features, and the government of the Bolsheviks bore within it the mighty "danger" of an anti-proletarian, peasant, petty bourgeois policy. "It changed its equipment under the leadership of Lenin", and borrowed its "weapons" from comrade Trotzky's proletarian theory.

The "danger" did not put in an appearance. But now Lenin is gone, that Lenin who in "the spring of 1917" had the courage to learn of Trotzky in "the most important question". What now? The Party must be well "permanentised" (hence the fertility of literary activity in this direction), for this represents the **socialist** guarantee against the "antisocialism" (peasant cooperation) inherent in the **old** Bolshevism. The youth of the Party, not yet infected by the "great antisocialist danger" must be educated with all speed in the spirit of the "new course". And if the Party does not listen to this teaching (for which the "old guard" will be to blame), then the result will be the danger of petty bourgeois "degeneration."

We thus see that last year's clamour on the degeneration of the old guard rests upon a very deep foundation, closely connected with the "theory of permanent revolution", which, as comrade Trotzky declares almost on oath, has been "completely confirmed."

Let us pass on to the essential factor of the matter.

In 1905 comrade Trotzky thought it proper to make an attack upon the "mujik" (peasant). This is a fact. Here he perceived a "great danger." In 1906 comrade Trotzky contended against the Bolshevik slogan of: Dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. Was this standpoint politically correct?

When writing of the year 1905, of the **peculiarity** characteristic of the situation in that year, and on the revolutionary tasks resultant on this situation, Lenin made the observation:

"This agrarian question is now a **national** question in Russia."

Was it then right to direct our course towards the utilisation of the revolutionary possibilities of the peasantry?

It was absolutely necessary. It was the only possible course at that time. (We must remember that at that time there was no trustified industry in Russia, no imperialist war, no fermentation among the West European proletariat, etc., that is, the whole of the **peculiarities** and historical conditions existing by "the spring of 1917" had not yet come to pass, and on the other hand the peasantry was intimidated and not class conscious, not yet aroused against the landowners, and just beginning to come into touch with political life.) The first task was for the working class to awaken the peasantry to revolution against the whole semi-feudal regime, using as a medium the struggle for land.

Comrade Trotzky regarded the situation through quite another pair of spectacles. He did not grasp the tasks with which history confronted the revolutionary Party. If we consider the revolution of 1905, and the whole of that period, and ask why the revolution of 1905 broke down, the answer is not far to seek. The revolution of 1905 broke down because there was no alliance between the movements in the cities and in the

country. In 1905 the revolution reached its culmination in the cities in December 1905 (the December insurrection of the Moscow workers); the agrarian movement reached its highest point in 1907, when the peasantry arose and set fire to the landowners' houses. In other words: The peasant rearguard awakened to revolution after the city vanguard of revolution had been crushed. Thus the revolution broke down because there was no joint action between the two classes, despite the efforts which our Party directed at that time towards the peasantry.

Comrade Trotzky, who at that time charged us with devoting too much attention to the peasantry, was doubly in error. Under his leadership the revolution could never have been victorious, for comrade Trotzky, in spite of all his assurances to the contrary, leaped over the peasant stage of our revolution. His policy was wrong from the start, his estimate of proportional class forces did not in the least correspond with the truth. How is it possible to assert, after all this, as comrade Trotzky does, that the essential character of Bolshevism is contained in the theory of permanent revolution?

"Comrade Trotzky's fundamental error — writes Lenin, when dealing with this stage of the revolution — "consists of his disrespect for the bourgeois character of the revolution, in his lack of clear comprehension of the transition from this revolution to a socialist revolution. (The emphasis is mine. N. B.) This fundamental error leads to those partial errors being repeated by comrade Martov... Let us at least point out the incorrectness of comrade Trotzky's standpoint. The coalition of proletariat and peasantry "presupposes that either one of the existing bourgeois parties dominates the peasantry, or that the peasantry forms an independent and powerful party". This is obviously wrong, both from the general theoretical standpoint and the standpoint of the experience won in the Russian revolution. A "coalition of classes" presupposes nothing, neither the existence of this or that powerful party, nor the existence of parties as such. This is a confusion of the class question with the party question. The experience of the Russian revolution has shown us that a "coalition" may be realised ten times and one hundred times, without any "powerful independent peasant party." (Lenin, compl. works, vol. XI/1. pp. 226/27.)

What role is played by the peasantry, asked Trotzky in 1905, and replied: The peasantry will either become the immediate agent of the bourgeoisie, or it will possess its own powerful independent party.

From this the conclusion is drawn that a dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry is impossible, since in both cases severe conflicts between the working class and the peasantry were inevitable. In other words, the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat was here denied in advance. Trotzky feared the peasantry at a time when it was necessary to call upon the peasantry to take part in the struggle against the landowners. Trotzky feared that "coalition" of classes which could alone render it possible to gain a victory over Czarism.

Trotzky's standpoint was thus entirely different, it accorded to the peasantry a very different rôle in the revolution, it failed to grasp the inner essence of Bolshevism, and would have led to the collapse of the whole revolution if it had become the standpoint of the leading proletarian party.

Let us now pass on to the next stage of our revolution, leaving aside that period of reaction during which comrade Trotzky was entirely on the side of the Mensheviks. Let us take the February revolution of 1917. What did Lenin say at this time, Lenin, who, according to Trotzky, had "changed his equipment" and admitted the correctness of the theory of permanent revolution in the "most important question" (the peasant question); what did our strategic genius say in 1917, twelve years after the first revolution, under entirely different and greatly matured conditions, after capitalism had made great advances, after the imperialist war had been going on for some years, after the great revolutionary stirring among the masses of the people had become an actual fact, and after the first signs of West European revolution had been shown? What estimate did Lenin form of this fresh stage? In his substantiation of the theses on the Soviet power (those

same theses of which comrade Trotzky maintains that they were written entirely in his — Trotzky's — spirit!):

"Are we not threatened by a danger of dropping into subjectivity, of being misled by a desire to make a leap to socialist revolution, over the head of the still incomplete bourgeois democratic revolution which has not yet mastered the peasants' movement? Were I to say: "Down with the Czar and up with the workers' government" then I should be threatened by this danger."

Lenin thus states that if he had said, in 1907, that which Trotzky said in 1905, then he would have been in danger of leaping over several stages and plunging into nothingness. And Lenin continues:

"I have however not said this, but something quite different. Except for a bourgeois government, there can be no government in Russia but that of the Soviets, of the delegates of the workers, poor peasantry, soliders, and peasants. I have said that in Russia today power can only pass out of the hands of Gutschkov and Lvov into the hands of these Soviets. And in these pre dominance is held by the peasantry, the soldiery, the petty bourgeois, if we wish to use class designations, and not the Menshevik, Philistine, and craft terminology". (Compl. works. Vol. XIV/1.)

We thus see that Lenin designated it as foolish to believe that our revolution had entered into a phase permitting of the immediate proclamation of the slogan of a purely proletarian dictatorship. ("Down with the Czar and up with the workers' government.") Why would this have been foolish? Because the agrarian peasant movement had not yet been mastered. The peasantry had not yet ended its agrarian revolution, it had not yet defeated the landowners, it was still in advance. It was our task to make use of this revolutionary force, and to push the revolution forward through this stage, in the direction of socialism. Here Lenin's dialectic method enabled him to grasp the peculiarity characterising the situation. The Bolshevik slogans and ideas of 1905 have received general confirmation, but in the present actuality "the position is different... more original, peculiar, and variegated". (Letter on Tactics.) The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry "has already been realised, but in an extremely original manner", existing side by side with bourgeois power. (The Soviets and the Provisional Government.) This was the peculiarity of the year 1917.

"Formerly we thought as follows: The rule of the bourgeoisie can and must be followed by the rule, the dictatorship, of the proletariat and the peasantry. But things turned out differently in actual reality, what actually came about was an exceedingly original, new, and hitherto unknown fabric interweaving the two with one another." (Ibid.)

Lenin, having recognised this original state of affairs, points out the necessity of passing on to the revolutionary class next in order, that is, of devoting attention to the petty bourgeois Soviets. He does not yet say: "Soviets with communists", but emphasises the fact of the petty bourgeois character of the Soviets, in which the peasantry is in the majority. No sudden leap to the workers' dictatorship, but cautious steps over all obstacles, careful calculation of all possibilities, most careful analysis of all transitional stages and their peculiarities. Does this in the least resemble the slogans and theory defended by comrade Trotzky? Let us read what Lenin wrote about the economic aspect of our politics. We cite from the article "One of the main questions". (Compl. works, vol. XIV/1.)

"Is the majority of the peasantry in Russia in a position to demand and accomplish the nationalisation of the land? Undoubtedly it is. Is this a socialist revolution? No, that is still bourgeois revolution, for the nationalisation of land is a measure compatible with capitalism, though at the same time dealing a blow against the rule of private property over the most important means of production".

Lenin continues:

"Is the majority of the peasantry in Russia in a position to stand for the amalgamation of all banks, and to demand that there is a branch of the state bank in every village? Yes, it can do this, for the conveniences and advantages of such a measure are incontestable. Even the "national defenders" can be in favour of this measure, for it would greatly increase Russia's defensive powers. Is the immediate amalgamation of all banks economically possible? It is undoubtedly perfectly possible. Is it a socialist measure? No, this is not yet socialism. Is the majority of the peasantry in a position to even demand that the syndicate of the sugar manufacturers passes into the hands of the state, is placed under the control of the workers and peasants, and lowers the price of sugar? This is quite possible, for it would be of advantage to the people. And is it economically possible? Yes, perfectly possible", etc. etc.

Let us take careful notice of how Lenin approaches the question. He asks continually what the "peasant" will say. This is not accidental. On the contrary. Here we see the magnificent capacity for dispassionate judgment peculiar to this leader of the proletariat. Does the above extract show Bolshevism to have adopted the standpoint of comrade Trotzky's permanent revolution? No, nothing of the kind. Lenin led the masses to the next revolutionary class, holding in view the transition from one stage to another in its economic aspects. Why was this necessary, and for what reason was it done in this manner? In order that we should not lose contact with our peasant base, but should carry the peasantry along with us by a series of gradual measures.

In the year 1917 we still find Lenin far from demanding that "workers' government" of which Trotzky spoke as early as 1905: on the contrary, we find him protesting against this slogan. I do not say: "Down with the Czar and up with the workers' government", but: "petty bourgeois Soviets". I do not say: "Immediate socialism", but: "These and those measures advantageous to the peasantry, and at the same time signifying a blow dealt at the rule of private property." The reader may see how Lenin's genius enabled him to pass from one step to another, to grasp the peculiarity of the moment, and to seize upon the very link in the chain required to lead the revolution from one stage to another.

We now come to October. Here we must not overlook to recognise two facts. On the one hand the revolutionary government preceding the October victory consisted of a coalition of the Bolsheviks and the left SR.; on the other hand we took over and carried out the agrarian programme of the SR, whilst the SR organisation, composed of intellectuals, and leaning upon the peasantry, became frightened of this peasantry at the decisive moment, when the peasants began to take possession of the farms and houses of the landed proprietors. Lenin, obviously acting on the consideration that the peasantry must be called upon to take part, constructed a courageous tactical manoeuvre, and declared: "You peasants have drawn up this programme under the leadership of the SR. Magnificent! We shall help you to carry out this programme." At that time the SR still really leaned upon the peasantry, and were still closely in touch with the peasantry. We all remember how closely in touch with the people Maria Spiridonova was for instance.

What did we do? We took the peasantry into the government. And at that time comrade Trotzky did not utter a syllable about the "antisocialist guarantee" afforded by the "cooperation of the peasantry." By means of this policy, by means of the acceptance of the programme of the SR and the admission of the left SR into the government, we brought many millions of the peasantry under the leadership of the proletariat. Has this proved right? Indeed it has.

What followed? The next stage followed. What form was taken by the progress of revolution? One form among many was that we found ourselves obliged to arouse the class struggle in the villages. In October the working class and almost the whole of the peasantry, including the large farmers, rose against the landowners. Why? One of the reasons was that the large farmers found it to their advantage to destroy the rule of the landowners.

And among us the whole masses rose against the landowners. Was it right for us to bring the whole of these masses into action for this purpose? Yes, it was right. And did this state of affairs continue during the further course of the revolution? No, the revolution advanced further. And how did it advance? By means of a differentiation among the peasantry, and through the agency of a desperate class struggle out in the country. This was expressed at the time in the policy of the committees representing the poorer peasantry. This policy was absolutely necessary at that time. To what did it lead? To an insurrection on the part of the left SR against the policy of the committee representing the poorer peasantry, so that the rich peasants and a part of the middle peasantry deserted us, and we began to depend upon the poor peasantry and the remaining section of the middle peasantry. Thus the revolution passed on to the class next in order, and we arrived at an actual dictatorship of the working class. It will be seen that the revolution did not develop so simply as comrade Trotzky imagines. Comrade Trotzky placed the dictatorship of the working class at the beginning of the process, but failed to observe the steps and transitions leading to this dictatorship; he ignored the actual relations of forces, he did not recognise the changes taking place in these proportions, he did not notice the various stages of the revolution, he did not recognise the necessity of altering the slogans, in a word, he failed to see what was required to carry through the revolution successfully. But now he maintains: "Everything has turned out just as I prophesied, I have been right all along." But nothing has turned out as he prophesied. Had we acted "according to Trotzky", then we should never have reached our goal. It is because the Party followed Lenin and not Trotzky that we obtained the workers' dictatorship. And since we intend following Lenin in the future, that is, carrying the peasantry along with us and looking to it for aid, we have the assurance that we shall reach our goal of socialism.

The Peculiarity of our Revolution.

We must now sum up our analysis. This is best done by a consideration of the general estimate arrived at by comrade Trotzky with regard to the whole past, and that arrived at by Lenin, at a time when we had already got the power into our hands, and the workers' dictatorship was already established in our country. We find the following passage in comrade Trotzky's "Lessons of October":

"The February revolution, regarded as an independent revolution, was bourgeois in character. But as bourgeois revolution it came too late, and showed no elements of permanency. Torn by the contradictions suddenly expressed by the double power (provisional government and Soviets, Ed.), it was forced to either become the immediate introduction to the proletarian revolution — as it did in actual fact — or to throw Russia back into a semi-colonial state under the rule of this or that form of bourgeois oligarchy. The period following the February upheaval could thus be regarded from two standpoints: **Either** as a period establishing the development or completion of the "democratic" revolution, or as a period of preparation for proletarian revolution".

Comrade Trotzky thus puts the matter as follows: We regard the period following February and the February revolution, from **either** one of the standpoints or the other. Here we have to choose. **Either** it was a period of establishment and completion for the bourgeois democratic revolution, and this is the **only** true standpoint. Or we have to regard this period as a prologue, an "introduction" to the proletarian revolution, in which case **this** is the only right way of looking at it. This is what comrade Trotzky's formulation comes to: "**Either** — or", "this or that". The general estimate has been made, the analysis summed up.

And comrade Lenin's estimate? Let us open the 18th volume of his complete works, and take a glance at his speech held on the IV. anniversary of the establishment of Soviet power. This speech was made after we had held power for four years. Lenin spoke as follows:

"Both the anarchists and the petty bourgeois democrats, that is, the Mensheviks and the SR., as Russian representatives of an international socialist type, have

talked and continue to talk incredible nonsense about the relations between the bourgeois revolution and the socialist, that is, the proletarian. We have carried our bourgeois democratic revolution through to its end as no other country has done. We are moving forward consciously, determinedly, and continuously towards socialist revolution, and we know that this is not divided by a Chinese wall from the bourgeois democratic revolution. We know that the fight only will decide to what degree we shall be successful in the future (and this he writes after the Soviet power had existed for 4 years! N. B.) in advancing towards our object, to what degree we shall fulfil our incredibly enormous task, and to what extent we shall maintain our victory.."

How cautiously this is formulated! In the same speech we find the following:

"Kautsky, Hilferding, Martov, Macdonald, Turati, and the rest of the 2½ Marxists have not been able to understand this relation between the bourgeois democratic revolution and the proletarian socialist revolution. The former, the bourgeois democratic revolution, grows into the other. The second solves the problems of the first in passing. The fight itself, and the fight only, will decide the extent to which the second revolution succeeds in overtaking the first."

Nothing could be more different than these standpoints! For Trotzky it is a question of **either** a democratic bourgeois revolution or a socialist revolution. Lenin on the other hand tells us that one stage should not be divided from the next by a Chinese wall. There is no question of a choice: "**Either — or**". This is precisely the **peculiarity** of the Russian revolution, that the one type of revolution merges into the other. But if the question is to be solved from the viewpoint of a formally logical schematic diagram, then Trotzky is "right" all along the line.

The matter is different if the question is to be solved from the viewpoint of living dialectic reality, and treated with the methods characteristic of comrade Lenin's art of war (his art consisting of the application of revolutionary dialectics). Then nothing remains of comrade Trotzky's effective "plan" but a few dead and lifeless words.

But Lenin's theory has nothing lifeless about it; it accords perfectly with that actual practice of leadership of which Lenin was the pastmaster. For the finding of the right path through the chaos of life with its present multiplicity of complications, the drawing of correct conclusions at a time when the relations of the classes towards one another change with the rapidity of a kaleidoscope design, at a time when fresh problems are constantly arising and fresh slogans are constantly required — this is not such a mere (literary) muscular effort as that performed by comrade Trotzky. It means a capacity of adaption to changing circumstances, and the ability to force these circumstances towards a common goal. As soon as class relations have changed and another step forward has been taken, then another slogan must be chosen, and the new line must be carefully pursued, that we neither take a false step nor fall over the precipice. We may judge whether comrade Trotzky was right or wrong in maintaining that he has not been guilty of underestimating the peasantry. He has been guilty of this. And we may judge whether he has a right to say that he has not been guilty of leaping over various phases. Of this again he has been guilty.

He is right in so far that the final result was a proletarian dictatorship. No differences arise about this. But when he takes to himself the credit that the Bolsheviks acted in accordance with the theory of "permanent revolution", and were thus enabled to establish the dictatorship of the workers, then this can only be designated as a self-deception. If it thus easily comprehensible that we, seeing that comrade Trotzky persists in his errors, are obliged to say: If the question of permanent revolution is to be brought up again now, at a moment when the country is at a turning point; if the whole application of this theory to the peasantry question is now demanded; if the standpoint of permanent revolution is insisted upon, and the effort made to convert the whole Party to this standpoint — then we are forced to say that we did not intend to strike into this path, for we will not abandon Lenin's

standpoint, being convinced that to do so is to ruin our whole cause. For this reason we must liquidate Trotzkyism ideologically; we must gather the whole Party around Lenin's banner at any price. For the question of the workers' and peasants' bloc is the central question, the question of questions.

We should like to devote a few words to the general judgments formed on our revolution during quite another period, the period following the seizure of power by the working class.

What are the original ideas given us by Lenin for promoting our comprehension of the later development of our revolution, after the seizure of power? Here we find many things which have not yet met with the appreciation in our literature which they deserve. Speaking generally, every one of us should reread Lenin's works at the present time, and for this reason: He writes simply, so simply that many comrades, especially among the intelligentsia, pass much of it by; it is all too simple. And the result has been that we have not penetrated deeply enough into these simple things. But now that we have gone through a number of quarrels and contentions, and we see that the "small" questions involved lead to fresh judgments on the course of our revolution and to the raising of the question of the relations between the working class and the peasantry, we must admit that it will be exceedingly useful if we look through Lenin's writings now and again.

Let us take the question of the broader aspects of our revolution. Comrade Trotzky maintains that his estimate of the driving forces of the revolution, an estimate formed in 1905, has proved correct. But if this estimate is correct, then we are almost inevitably bound to be ruined by our anti-revolutionary collaborators long before the working class has been victorious, that is, before a proletarian dictatorship has been established in Western Europe. But according to Lenin it is our task "to live in friendship with the peasantry." This was Lenin's definition of our general attitude. Lenin did not say that we were inevitably doomed to failure if the working class in Europe did not come into possession of power early enough. Why? Because, if we act wisely, we shall gain the cooperation of our peasantry. The psychology of the Trotzkyist opposition during the past year is easily comprehensible, for to this opposition every delay in revolutionary development raises the spectre of a conflict between the proletariat and the peasantry. Must we not raise a desperate cry for help — asks the opposition. But in reality the position is by no means so desperate; if we do nothing foolish, if we continue along the line of alliance between the workers and peasants, we shall hold out.

What idea of socialist revolution is to be gained from books as a general rule? It may be formulated as follows: If the proletariat is numerically weak, if it is in a country possessing an overwhelming peasant majority and thus a crushing preponderance of small producers, then the proletariat, having come into possession of power, will find it entirely impossible to master these masses, and will inevitably suffer defeat in one form or another. This is the standpoint resultant on the customary literary manner of regarding the question of socialist revolution. And unfortunately this standpoint still finds a place in the minds of many of our Party members.

This view was subjected to much criticism by Lenin. His shorter writings on this matter have unfortunately not met with proper appreciation. We refer especially to his remarkable article on Suchanov. This article is a theoretical jewel in the truest sense of the word.*)

This unusually bold criticism, with its unusual breadth of thought, is an excellent application of revolutionary dialectics. We here see an extraordinary profundity of penetration into the problem of the **peculiarity** of our revolution, sufficient in itself to form the basis of a correct and successful policy.

As a matter of fact, the customary idea of socialist revolution is as follows: The material pre-requisites of socialism are: a highly developed industry and a large working class. Without these the proletarian revolution is predestined to failure' for under these conditions it would be a premature birth. How does Lenin approach the question? He says: "Taken on the whole, this is right." But under certain circumstances this **right becomes wrong**. We have to see what these special

*) See Inprecorr No. 7/1925. Concerning Our Revolution by V. I. Lenin.

circumstances are. These circumstances consist, for instance, in the fact that in Russia we had the great war, the rule of the landowners in the state and the oppression of the peasantry, a fermentation among the workers of Western Europe, insurrections in the colonial East, etc., a combination forming a situation in which — despite the backwardness of this Russia — the application of the general principle would be **wrong**." This is the root of the whole matter. We believe that these expositions of Lenin's give to a certain extent the key to his whole viewpoint.

The general rule is important, says comrade Lenin. But it is foolish to suppose that man can live by general rules alone. If we carefully consider the case before us, we shall observe the opportunity offered by the special conditions of war and revolution, the revolution in the West and the beginning of revolution in the East, etc., enabling the working class and the peasantry to overthrow the landowners, to drive away the capitalists, to seize upon the works and factories, and to stride forwards on new paths, surrounded by a new atmosphere, one which had never existed until then. (Crisis in capitalism, etc.) Lenin opens fire upon the customary deeply rooted ideas of revolution, and of the possibilities of a proletarian victory, etc. And he undertakes considerable rectification of this traditional bookish idea. He asks us in what books have we read that there is no possibility of an exception to the rule? It need not be said that this standpoint is in no way inconsistent with Marxism. On the contrary, it is precisely this standpoint which implies an extraordinarily fine application of Marxist theory, of Marxist revolutionary dialectics. For it is just this standpoint which enables the peculiarities characterising precisely our revolution — peculiarities which may never be repeated in history, — to be grasped. But how does comrade Trotzky look at it? Here we find no indication of this standpoint. He has a very plain and simple conception of the matter, the conception possessed by "all" who accept the customary rule laid down by social democratic literature. A small proletariat, a non-developed industry. The proletariat seizes power, but is inevitably bound to lose it again. But comrade Lenin says: No, this is by no means inevitable, for the position may be such, and the conditions in the country can take such a turn, that it not inevitable at all.

The result of the difference of standpoint is naturally a difference of prognosis, of outlook, of opinion in a large number of questions of practical politics. Lenin's viewpoint led to his general "plan" of not losing touch with the peasantry, and of gradually developing industry. We have to remember that the accumulation of a copek in agrarian economics is the basis for the accumulation of a rouble in socialist industry. The peasantry is to be held fast with both hands in every branch of economic and other policies. The peasantry is to be remodelled by the aid of the cooperatives, the peasant is to be induced to join us by means of the cooperatives. We have the banks and the credit. In the course of decades we shall transform the peasant, without concerning ourselves about the fact that he is a — property owner. We are to remember that he has to be our ally, and that we have to remodel him.

But if we turn to comrade Trotzky, we find no indication of the existence of the cooperative, placed in the foreground by comrade Lenin in his last articles, in which he described his attitude towards these organisations. Does not all this talk of inevitable ruin contradict Lenin's plans?

Now a few remarks on the aid to be rendered by the West European proletariat. Here too matters are not as comrade Trotzky imagines. Comrade Trotzky demands **State** help from the West European proletariat: it has to seize power in its own countries, and thus aid us to drag our cart out of the fatal agrarian bog. But the Western proletariat has **not** been

victorious. But is it not helping us none the less? And is there not another force coming to our aid, the force of the colonial peoples? What error does comrade Trotzky commit here? It is always the same error; the clinging to the formally logical conception of things.

He does not observe the peculiarities of form of a given stage of evolution, he fails to see the needs of the era in the Leninist sense. For Trotzky there are only two possibilities, **either State help or no help whatever**.

But how is it in real life? In real life we find a series of semi-victories, the plus of the colonial movement, the plus of the crisis in capitalism, brought to a head by the war. Real life has proved much more variegated and many sided. And all these peculiarities of the international situation, including the peculiar form taken by international proletarian help, a form which cannot be pressed into the narrow coffin of the schematic logic of Trotzkyism — all this is taken into account by Leninism; Leninism, this most flexible of all the perceptive theoretical instruments of our time.

Any Central Committee following comrade Trotzky's standpoint in the question of the peasantry would have "brought the country to the verge of the abyss." Such a central would have delivered our revolution over to failure; it would have maintained the outward appearance of a purely "proletarian" ideology and a purely "proletarian" policy, but in reality all it would have accomplished would have been a semi-Menshevik guild policy; and such a policy would have inevitably plunged us into the abyss; we should have lost contact with the peasantry, and should have become involved in a conflict which might very well have resulted fatally. It is thus needful at the present time that we adopt a very definite political attitude. Here all personal sympathies and antipathies must be set aside.

Comrade Trotzky has again come forward with the system of views forming Trotzkyism, but it is utterly impossible for our Party to adopt a standpoint which it has combatted unwearingly for many years. The theory of permanence is not a matter of indifference to us. If this flag is unfurled again, then we are forced to fight, for our Party can only bring its task to a successful end if it gathers closely around a definite ideological and political structure. But if dynamite is laid beneath this structure, beneath the foundation upon which our Party rests — and this is what is being done — then our Party cannot look on quietly. Our revolution is not finished. We have not the slightest intention of abdicating. But sooner or later it will be our duty to hand over the fortunes of the revolution to the coming generation. We must preserve and hand over intact the Bolshevist ideology of the Party. After the lapse of many decades our Party will still exist. The history of our Party did not by any means begin in October 1917, nor did it by any means come to an end in October 1917. Our Party will continue to exist for many years to come, and is thus responsible for its ideological posterity. Should we train the students of our higher educational institutions and our youth in the spirit of Leninism? Or should we say: "These are all old contentions. Let us forget them. We have other problems, and these conflicts have nothing to do with the matter in hand." No, we have no right to say this. All these "old" contentions are immediately and closely connected with the new problems. For this reason we hold it to be our duty to warn the Party against any attempt at the slightest remodelling of Lenin's teachings, and against the idea of revising these teachings in the direction of the permanent revolution. There is nothing so bad that it has not its good side, and the necessity of dealing with such questions, the careful consideration of all arguments, the working out of our Party history, the combination of our past Party history with the current political questions of the day — this is the guarantee that we are Bolshevising our Party.