

R U S S I A

Problems of the Development of the U. S. S. R.

A Draft of the Thesis of the International
Left Opposition on the Russian Question

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New York, 1931
Communist League of America (*Opposition*)

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Printed by the Militant Press in June 1931

I. ECONOMIC CONTRADICTIONS OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD

The Class Nature of the Soviet Union

THE CONTRADICTIONARY processes in the economy and politics of the U. S. S. R. are developing on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The character of the social régime is determined first of all by the property relations. The nationalization of land, of the means of industrial production and exchange, with the monopoly of foreign trade in the hands of the state, constitute the bases of the social order in the U. S. S. R. The classes expropriated by the October revolution, as well as the elements of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois section of the bureaucracy being newly formed, could re-establish private ownership of land, banks, factories, mills, railroads, etc., only by means of a counter-revolutionary overthrow. By these property relations, lying at the basis of the class relations, is determined for us the nature of the Soviet Union as a proletarian state.

The defense of the U. S. S. R. from foreign intervention and from attack by internal enemies—from the monarchists and former landowners to the “democrats”, Mensheviks and S. R.s—is the elementary and indisputable duty of every revolutionary worker, all the more so of the Bolshevik-Leninists. Ambiguity and reservations on this question, which in essence reflect the waverings of petty bourgeois ultra-radicalism between the world of imperialism and the world of the proletarian revolution, are incompatible with adherence to the International Left Opposition.

The World Historical Significance of the High Tempos of Economic Development

The possibility of the present truly gigantic successes of Soviet economy was created by the revolutionary overturn of the property relations which established the pre-conditions for a planned elimination of market anarchy. Capitalism never gave and is incapable of giving that progression of economic growth which is developing at present on the territory of the Soviet Union. The unprecedentedly high tempos of industrialization which have made a way for themselves in spite of the expectations and plans of the epigone leadership, have proved once and for all the might of the socialist method of economy. The frantic struggle of the imperialists against the so-called Soviet "dumping" is an involuntary, but for that an all the more genuine recognition on their part of the superiority of the Soviet form of production. In the field of agriculture, where backwardness, dismemberment, and barbarism have their deepest roots, the régime of the proletarian dictatorship also succeeded in revealing a mighty creative power. No matter how great the future recoils and retreats may be, the present tempos of collectivization, possible only on the basis of the nationalization of the land, credit and industry, with the leading rôle of the workers, signify a new epoch in the development of humanity, the beginning of the liquidation "of the idiocy of rural life".

Even in the worst case historically conceivable, if blockade, intervention, internal civil war should overthrow the proletarian dictatorship, the great lesson of socialist construction would retain all its force for the further development of humanity. The temporarily vanquished October revolution would be fully

justified economically and culturally, and consequently would be born again. The most important task of the proletarian vanguard, however, is to bar the doors to this worst historical variant, by defending and strengthening the October revolution and by transforming it into a prologue to the world revolution.

The Basic Contradictions of the Transition Period

Absolutely false is the official doctrine of fatalistic optimism prevailing today, according to which the continued speedy growth of industrialization and collectivization is assured in advance and leads automatically to the construction of socialism in a single country.

If a highly developed socialist economy is possible only as a harmonious, internally proportionate and consequently crisis-less economy, then, on the contrary, the transitional economy from capitalism to socialism is a crucible of contradictions where, moreover, the deeper and sharper ones are still ahead. The Soviet Union has not entered into socialism, as the ruling Stalinist faction teaches, but only into the first stage of the development in the direction of socialism.

At the core of the economic difficulties, the successive crises, the extreme tension of the whole Soviet system and its political convulsions, lie a number of contradictions of varying historical origin which are interlinked with each other in various ways. Let us name the most important ones:

(a) the heritage of the capitalist and pre-capitalist contradictions of old czarist-bourgeois Russia, primarily the contradiction between town and country;

(b) the contradiction between the general cultural-economic backwardness of Russia and the tasks of socialist transformation which dialectically grow out of it;

(c) the contradiction between the workers' state and the capitalist encirclement, particularly between the monopoly of foreign trade and the world market.

These contradictions are not at all of a brief and episodic character; on the contrary, the significance of the most important of them will increase in the future.

T H E C O N T R A D I C T I O N S O F T H E T R A N S I T I O N P E R I O D : I N D U S T R I A L I Z A T I O N

The realization of the Five Year Plan would represent a gigantic step forward compared to the impoverished inheritance which the proletariat snatched from the hands of the exploiters. But even after achieving its first victory in planning, the Soviet Union will not yet have issued out of the first stage of the transition period. Socialism as a system of production not for the market but for the satisfying of human needs is conceivable only on the basis of highly developed productive forces. However, according to the average per capita amount of goods, the U. S. S. R. even at the end of the Five Year Plan, will still remain one of the most backward countries. In order really to catch up with the advanced capitalist countries, a number of five year plan programs will be needed. Meanwhile, the industrial successes of recent years in themselves do not at all assure an uninterrupted growth in the future. Precisely the speed of industrial development accumulates disproportions, partly inherited from the past, partly growing out of

the complications of the new tasks, partly created by the methodological mistakes of the leadership in combination with direct sabotage. The substitution of economic direction by administrative goading, with the absence of any serious collective verification, leads inevitably to the inclusion of the mistakes in the very foundation of economy and to the preparation of ever newer "tight places" inside the economic process. The disproportions driven inside inevitably return at the following stage in the form of disharmony between the means of production and raw materials, between transport and industry, between quantity and quality and finally, in the disorganization of the monetary system. All these crises conceal within themselves all the greater dangers the less the present state leadership is capable of foreseeing them in time.

Contradictions of the Transition Period: Collectivization

"Complete" collectivization, even were it actually to be carried out in the coming two or three years, would not at all signify the liquidation of the kulak as a class. The form of producers' cooperatives, given the lack of a technical and cultural base, is incapable of stopping the differentiation within the small commodity producers and the emergence from their midst of capitalist elements. For a genuine liquidation of the kulak is required a complete revolution in agricultural technique and the transformation of the peasantry, alongside of the industrial proletariat, into workers of socialist economy and members of the classless society. But this is a perspective of decades. With the predominance of individual peasant implements and the personal or group interest of their owners, the differentiation of the peasantry will in-

evitably be renewed and strengthened precisely in the event of a comparatively successful collectivization, that is, with the general increase in the production of agriculture. If we should further assume that collectivization, together with the elements of new technique, will considerably increase the productivity of agricultural labor, without which collectivization would not be economically justified and consequently would not maintain itself, this would immediately create in the village, which is even now over-populated, ten, twenty or more millions of surplus workers whom industry would not be able to absorb even with the most optimistic plans. Corresponding to the growth of surplus, that is, of semi-proletarian, semi-pauperized population unable to find a place in the collectives, would be the growth at the other pole of rich collectives and more wealthy peasants inside the poor and medium collectives. With a short-sighted leadership, declaring *a priori* that the collectives are socialist enterprises, capitalist-farmer elements can find in collectivization the best cover for themselves, only to become all the more dangerous for the proletarian dictatorship.

The economic successes of the present transition period do not, consequently, liquidate the basic contradictions but prepare their deepened reproduction on a new, higher historical foundation.

The Contradictions of the Transition Period: The U. S. S. R. and World Economy

Capitalist Russia, in spite of its backwardness, already constituted an inseparable part of world economy. This dependence of the part upon the whole was inherited by the Soviet republic from the past,

together with the whole geographic, demographic and economic structure of the country. The theory of a self-sufficing national socialism, formulated in 1924-1927, reflected the first, extremely low period of the revival of economy after the war, when its world requirements had not yet found time to awaken. The present tense struggle for the extension of Soviet exports is a very vivid refutation of the illusions of national socialism. The foreign trade figures become ever more the dominating figures in relation to the plans and tempos of socialist construction. In the meantime, the problem of foreign trade or else: the problem of the mutual relation between transitional Soviet economy and the world market, is first beginning to reveal its decisive significance.

Academically, it is understood, one can construct within the boundaries of the U. S. S. R. an enclosed and internally balanced socialist economy; but the long historic road to this "national" ideal would lead through gigantic economic shifts, social convulsions and crises. The mere doubling of the present crop, that is, its approach to the European, would confront Soviet economy with the huge task of realizing an agricultural surplus of tens of millions of tons. To solve this problem, as well as the no less acute problem of growing rural over-population could be accomplished only by a radical re-distribution of the gigantic human mass among the various branches of economy and by the complete liquidation of the contradictions between the city and the village. But this task—one of the basic tasks of socialism—would in turn require the utilization of the resources of the world market in a measure hitherto unknown.

In the last analysis; all the contradictions of the development of the U. S. S. R. lead in this manner to the contradiction between the isolated workers'

state and its capitalist encirclement. The impossibility of constructing a self-sufficient socialist economy in a single country revives the basic contradictions of socialist construction at every new stage on an ever greater scale and with an ever greater depth. In this sense, the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U. S. S. R. would inevitably have to suffer destruction if the capitalist régime in the rest of the world would prove to be capable of maintaining itself for another long historical epoch. However, to consider such a perspective as the inevitable, or even the most probable one, can be done only by those who believe in the firmness of capitalism or in its longevity. The Left Opposition has nothing in common with such capitalist optimism. But it can just as little agree with the theory of national socialism which is an expression of capitulation before capitalist optimism.

The World Crisis and Economic
"Collaboration" of the
Imperialists with the
U. S. S. R.

The problem of foreign trade in its present exceptional acuteness caught the leading organs of the U. S. S. R. unawares, and by that alone became an element of derangement of the economic plans. In the face of this problem, the leadership of the Comintern also proved to be bankrupt. World unemployment made the question of developing the economic relations between the capitalist countries and the U. S. S. R., a vital problem for broad masses of the working class. Before the Soviet government and the Comintern there was opened up a rare opportunity to attract the social democratic and non-party workers on the basis of a vital and burning question, so as to acquaint them

with the Soviet Five Year Plan and with the advantages of the socialist methods of economy. Under the slogan of economic collaboration and armed with a concrete program, the Communist vanguard could have led a far more genuine struggle against the blockade and intervention than through the repetition of one and the same bare condemnations. The problem of planned European and world economy could have been raised to unprecedented heights and in this manner could have given new nourishment to the slogans of the world revolution. The Comintern did almost nothing in this field.

At a time when the world bourgeois press, including the social democratic press, was suddenly mobilized for the campaign of incitement against alleged Soviet dumping, the Communist parties marked time at a loss for what to do. At a time when the Soviet government, before the eyes of the whole world, seeks foreign markets and credits, the bureaucracy of the Comintern declares the slogan of economic collaboration with the U. S. S. R. a "counter-revolutionary" slogan. Such shameful stupidities, as if especially created for confusing the working class, are a direct consequence of the ruinous theory of socialism in one country.

2. THE PARTY IN THE SYSTEM OF THE DICTATORSHIP

The Dialectical Inter-Relationship Between Economics and Politics

The *economic* contradictions of transitional economy do not develop in a vacuum. The *political* contradictions of the régime of the dictatorship, even though in the final analysis they grow out of the economic, have an independent and also a more direct

significance for the fate of the dictatorship than the economic crisis.

The present official teaching, according to which the growth of nationalized industry and the collectives automatically and uninterruptedly strengthens the régime of the proletarian dictatorship, is a product of vulgar "economic" and not dialectic materialism. In reality, the inter-relationship between the economic foundation and the political superstructure has a far more complex and more contradictory character, particularly in the revolutionary epoch. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which grew out of bourgeois social relations, revealed its might in the period preceding nationalized industry as well as the collectivization of agriculture. Later on, the dictatorship passed through periods of strengthening and weakening, depending upon the course of the internal and world class struggle. Economic achievements were often bought at the price of politically weakening the régime. Precisely this dialectic inter-relationship between economy and politics directly produced sharp turns in the economic policy of the government, beginning with the New Economic Policy and ending with the latest zig-zags in collectivization.

T H E P A R T Y a s a W e a p o n a n d A s t h e M e a s u r e m e n t o f S u c c e s s e s

Like all political institutions, the party is in the last instance a product of the productive relations of society. But it is not at all an automatic recorder of the changes in these relationships. Being the extract of the historical experiences of the proletariat, in a certain sense of the whole of humanity, the party rises above the conjunctural and episodic changes in the economic and political conditions which only in-

vest it with the necessary power of foresight, initiative and resistance.

The conclusion that if the dictatorship in Russia was accomplished and afterwards withstood the most critical moments, it was thanks to the fact that in the form of the Bolshevik party it had its center of consciousness and will, can be considered entirely irrefutable. The inconsistency and in the final analysis, the reactionary nature of all species of anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism, consist precisely of the fact that they do not understand the decisive significance of the revolutionary party, particularly at the highest stage of the class struggle, in the epoch of the proletarian dictatorship. The social contradictions can without a doubt reach such an acute point that no party can find a way out. But it is no less true that with the weakening of the party or with its degeneration, even an avoidable crisis in economy can become the cause for the fall of the dictatorship.

The economic and political contradictions of the Soviet régime cross each other in the leading party. The acuteness of the danger depends, with each succeeding crisis, directly upon the state of the party. No matter how great the significance of the tempos of industrialization and collectivization may be in itself, it nevertheless takes second place before the problem: Has the party retained the Marxian clarity of vision, the ideological solidity, the ability of arriving collectively at an opinion, and self-sacrificingly fighting for it? From this point of view, the state of the party is the highest test of the condition of the proletarian dictatorship, a synthetic measure of its stability. If, in the name of achieving this or that practical aim, a false theoretical attitude is foisted on the party; if the party masses are forcibly ousted from political leadership; if the vanguard is dissolved

into the amorphous human mass; if the party cadres are kept in obedience by the apparatus of state repression—then it means that in spite of the economic successes, the general balance of the dictatorship shows a deficit.

The Replacement of the Party by the Apparatus

Only blind people, hirelings, or deceived ones, can deny the fact that the ruling party of the U. S. S. R., the leading party of the Comintern has been completely crushed and replaced by the apparatus. The gigantic difference between the bureaucratism of 1923 and the bureaucratism of 1931 is determined by the complete liquidation of the dependence of the apparatus upon the party which took place in this span of years, as well as by the plebiscitary degeneration of the apparatus itself.

Not a trace remains of party democracy. Local organizations are selected and autocratically reorganized by secretaries. New members of the party are recruited according to orders from the center with the methods of political compulsory service. The local secretaries are appointed by the Central Committee, which is officially and openly converted into a consultative organ of the General Secretary [Stalin]. Congresses are arbitrarily postponed, delegates are selected from the top according to their demonstration of solidarity with the irreplaceable leader. Even a shadow of control over the top by the lower ranks is removed. The members of the party are systematically trained in the spirit of passive subordination. Every spark of independence, self-reliance and firmness, that is, those features which make up the nature of a revolutionist, is crushed, hunted down and trampled under foot.

In the apparatus, there undoubtedly remain not a few honest and devoted revolutionists. But the history of the post-Lenin period—a chain of ever grosser falsification of Marxism, of unprincipled manœuvres, and of cynical mockeries of the party—would have been impossible without the growing predominance in the apparatus of servile officials ready for anything.

Under the guise of spurious monolithism, double-dealing permeates the whole of party life. The official decisions are accepted unanimously. At the same time, all the party strata are corroded by irreconcilable contradictions which seek roundabout ways for their eruption. The Bessedovskys direct the purging of the party against the Left Opposition on the eve of their desertion to the camp of the enemy. The Blumkins are shot down and replaced by the Agabekovs. Syrzoʻv, appointed chairman of the People's Commissars of the R. S. F. S. R. in place of the "semi-traitor" Rykov, is very soon accused of underground work against the party. Riazanov, the head of the most important scientific institution of the party, is accused, after the solemn celebration of his jubilee, of being a participant in a counter-revolutionary plot. In freeing itself of party control, the bureaucracy deprives itself of the possibility of controlling the party except through the G. P. U. where the Menzhinskys and Yagodas bring up the Agabekovs.*

* Bessedovsky was in charge of the Soviet Embassy in Paris and helped to "purge" the party nucleus there of Left Oppositionists. He recently completed his renegacy from Bolshevism by going over to the camp of the counter-revolution in so sensational a manner that it created an international scandal. Jacob Blumkin, a hero of the revolutionary civil war days, was shot by the G. P. U. in Moscow in 1930 for having visited Trotsky in Constantinople. He had been an agent of the G. P. U. entrusted with confidential work

A steam boiler, even under rude handling, can do useful work for a long time. A manometer, however, is a delicate instrument which is very quickly spoiled under impact. With an unserviceable manometer, the best of boilers can be brought to the point of explosion. If the party were only an instrument of orientation, like a manometer or the compass on a ship, even in such a case its derangement would threaten with great misfortune. But besides that the party is the most important part of the governing mechanism. The Soviet boiler hammered out by the October revolution is capable of doing gigantic work even with poor mechanics. But the very derangement of the manometer signifies the constant danger of the explosion of the whole machine.

T H E S O C I A L I S T D Y I N G A W A Y o f t h e P a r t y ?

The apologists and attorneys of the Stalinist bureaucracy attempt at times to represent the bureaucratic liquidation of the party as a progressive process of the dissolution of the party into the class, which is explained by the successes of the socialist transformation of society. In these theoretical throes, illiteracy competes with charlatanism. One could speak of the dissolution of the party into the class only as the reverse side of the process of mitigating the class antagonisms, the dying away of politics, the reduction to zero of all forms of bureaucratism and primarily the *diminishing of the rôle of coercion* in the Near East. His post was taken by a Stalinist mercenary named Agabekov who had hardly taken over his functions when he denounced Bolshevism openly and joined the White Guard camp.—Ed.

in social relations. However, the processes taking place in the U. S. S. R. and in the ruling party have a directly contrary character in many respects. Coercive discipline is not only not dying away—it would be ridiculous even to expect it at the present stage—but on the contrary, it is assuming an exceptionally severe character in all the spheres of social and personal life. Organized participation in the politics of the party and the class is actually reduced to zero. The debauchery of bureaucratism knows no limits. Under these conditions, to represent the dictatorship of the Stalinist apparatus as the socialist dying away of the party is a mockery of the dictatorship and of the party.

The Brandlerite Justification of Plebiscitary Bureaucratism

The Right camp-followers of Centrism, the Brandlerites, try to justify the strangulation of the party by the Stalinist bureaucracy by appealing to the “lack of culture” of the working masses, which does not at all prevent them, at the same time, from awarding the Russian proletariat the odious monopoly in the construction of socialism in one country.

The general economic and cultural backwardness of Russia is indubitable. But the development of historically retarded nations has a *combined* character: In order to overcome their backwardness, they are compelled in many fields to adopt and to cultivate the most advanced forms. The scientific doctrine of proletarian revolution was created by the revolutionists of backward Germany of the middle of the nineteenth century. Thanks to its retardation, German capitalism later outstripped the capitalism of England and France. The industry of backward bourgeois Russia was the most concentrated in the whole world. The

young Russian proletariat was the first to show in action the combination of the general strike and an uprising, was the first to create Soviets, and the first to conquer power. The backwardness of Russian capitalism did not prevent the upbringing of the most far-sighted proletarian party that ever existed. On the contrary, it only made it possible.

As the selection of the revolutionary class in a revolutionary epoch, the Bolshevik party lived a rich and stormy internal life in the most critical period of its history. Who would have dared, prior to October or in the first years after the revolution, to refer to the "backwardness" of the Russian proletariat in defense of bureaucratism in the party! However, the undoubted rise in the general cultural level of the workers which occurred since the seizure of power, did not lead to the flourishing of party democracy, but on the contrary, to its complete extinction. The references to the stream of workers from the village explain nothing, for this factor has always been in operation and the cultural level of the village since the revolution has risen considerably. Finally, the party is not the class, but its vanguard: it cannot pay for its numerical growth by the lowering of its political level. The Brandlerite defense of plebiscitary bureaucratism, which is based upon a trade union and not a Bolshevik conception of the party, is in reality a self-defense, because in the period of the deepest falls and degradation of Centrism, the Rights were its most reliable prop.

Why Did the Centrist Bureaucracy Triumph?

To explain as a Marxist why the Centrist bureaucracy triumphed and why it was compelled to strangle

the party in order to preserve its victory, one must proceed not from an abstract "lack of culture" of the proletariat, but from the change in the mutual relations of the classes and the change in the moods of each class.

After the heroic straining of forces in the years of revolution and civil war, a period of great hopes and inevitable illusions, the proletariat could not but go through a lengthy period of weariness, of a decline of energy and in part of direct disillusionment in the results of the revolution. By force of the laws of the class struggle, the reaction in the proletariat resulted in a tremendous flow of new hope and confidence in the petty bourgeois strata of the city and village and in the bourgeois elements of the state bureaucracy who gained considerable strength on the basis of the N. E. P. The crushing of the Bulgarian uprising in 1923, the inglorious defeat of the German proletariat in 1923, the crushing of the Esthonian insurrection in 1924, the treacherous liquidation of the general strike in England in 1926, the crushing of the Chinese revolution in 1927, the stabilization of capitalism connected with all these catastrophes—such are the world surroundings of the struggle of the Centrists against the Bolshevik-Leninists. The abuse of the "permanent", that is, in essence, of the international revolution, the rejection of a bold policy of industrialization and collectivization, the reliance upon the kulak, the alliance with the "national" bourgeoisie in the colonies and with the social imperialists in the metropolis—such are the political contents of the bloc of the Centrist bureaucracy with the forces of Thermidor. Supporting itself on the strengthened and emboldened petty bourgeois and bourgeois bureaucracy, exploiting the passivity of the weary and

disoriented proletariat, and the defeats of the revolution the world over, the Centrist apparatus crushed the Left, revolutionary wing of the party in the course of a few years.

The Zig-Zag Course Is the Policy of Bureaucratic Veering Between the Classes

The political zig-zags of the apparatus are not accidental. In them is expressed the adaptation of the bureaucracy to conflicting class forces. The course of 1923-1928, if we leave aside occasional waverings, constituted a semi-capitulation of the bureaucracy to the kulak—at home, and to the world bourgeoisie and its reformist agency—abroad. Having felt the increasing hostility of the proletariat and having seen the bottom of the Thermidorian abyss to the very edge of which they had slid, the Stalinists leaped to the Left. The abruptness of the leap corresponded to the force of the panic which was created in their ranks by the consequences of their own policy, laid bare by the criticism of the Left Opposition. The course of 1928-1931—if we again leave aside the inevitable waverings and backslidings—represents an attempt of the bureaucracy to adapt itself to the proletariat, but without abandoning the principled basis of its policy, or what is most important, its omnipotence. The zig-zags of Stalinism show that bureaucracy is not a class, not an independent historical factor, but a serving force, an executive organ of the classes. The Left zig-zag is evidence that no matter how far the preceding Right course had gone, it nevertheless developed on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But at the same time, the bureau-

cracy is not a passive organ which only refracts the inspirations of the class. Without having that absolute independence, the illusion of which lives in the skulls of many bureaucrats, the ruling apparatus nevertheless enjoys a great relative independence. The bureaucracy is in direct possession of the state power, it raises itself above the classes, puts a powerful stamp upon their development, and even if it cannot itself become the foundation of state power, it can, with its policy, make it extremely easier for the power to be transferred from the hands of one class into the hands of another.

The Policy of Veering Is Incompatible with the Self-Activity of the Proletarian Party

Standing above all problems for the bureaucracy, is the problem of self-preservation. All its turns result *directly* from its striving to retain its independence, its position, its power. But the policy of veering which requires a completely free hand, is incompatible with the presence of a self-active party which is accustomed to control and demands an accounting. From this flows the system of the violent destruction of the party ideology and the conscious sowing of confusion.

The kulak course, the Menshevik-sabotager program of industrialization and collectivization, the bloc with Purcell, Chiang Kai-Shek, La Follette, Raditch, the creation of the Peasants' "International", the slogan of a two-class party—all this was declared to be Leninism. On the contrary, the course of industrialization and collectivization; the demand for party democracy; the slogan of Soviets in China; the strug-

gle against the two-class parties in the name of the party of the proletariat; the exposure of the emptiness and falsehood of the Krestintern [Peasants' International], the Anti-Imperialist League, and other Potemkin villages*—all these were given the name of "Trotskyism".

Beginning with the turn of 1928, the masks were repainted but the masquerade did not cease. The proclamation of an armed uprising and Soviets in China at a time of counter-revolutionary triumph; the adventurist economic tempos in the U. S. S. R. under the administrative whip; the "liquidation of the kulak as a class" within two years; the rejection of the united front with reformists regardless of time and place; the rejection of the slogans of revolutionary democracy for historically backward countries; the proclamation of the "third period" at a time of economic ascent—all this was now called Leninism. On the contrary, the demand for realistic economic plans, adapted to the forces and needs of the workers; the rejection of the program of the liquidation of the kulak on the basis of the peasant inventory; the rejection of the metaphysics of the "third period" in the name of a Marxian analysis of the economic and political processes throughout the world and in each country—all this was now declared to be "counter-revolutionary Trotskyism".

The ideological connection between the two periods of the bureaucratic masquerade remains the theory

* Potemkin was the prime minister under Catherine the Great. Prior to a tour by the czarina of a section of the country, Potemkin would have "model villages" erected along the road so as to demonstrate the excellent conditions under which the Russian peasantry was supposed to be living. Hence the popular phrase: "Potemkin villages".—Ed.

of socialism in one country, the basic charter of the Soviet bureaucracy which it raises over the world proletarian vanguard and which sanctifies in advance all its actions, turns, errors and crimes. The web of party consciousness is created slowly and requires a constant renewal by means of a Marxian evaluation of the road passed, of an analysis of the changes in the situation, of a revolutionary prognosis. Without a tireless, critical internal work, the party inevitably falls into decline. However, the struggle of the bureaucracy for self-preservation excludes an open contrast of today's policy with that of yesterday, that is, the testing of one zig-zag by the other. The less clear the conscience of the ruling faction, the more it is transformed into an order of oracles, who speak an esoteric language and demand an acknowledgment of the infallibility of the elder oracle. The whole history of the party and the revolution is adapted to the needs of bureaucratic self-preservation. One legend is heaped upon the other. The basic truths of Marxism are branded as deviations. Thus, in the process of zig-zagging between classes for the last eight years, the basic web of party consciousness has been ripped apart and torn to pieces more and more. Administrative pogroms did the rest.

The Plebiscitary Régime in the Party

After having conquered and strangled the party, the bureaucracy cannot permit itself the luxury of differences of opinion within its own ranks, so as not to be compelled to appeal to the masses to settle the disputed questions. It needs a standing arbitrator,

a political superior. The selection for the whole apparatus takes place around the "chief". That is how the plebiscitary apparatus régime has come into being.

Bonapartism is one of the forms of the victory of the bourgeoisie over the uprising of the popular masses. To identify the present Soviet régime with the social régime of Bonapartism, as Kautsky does, means consciously to conceal from the workers, in the interests of the bourgeoisie, the difference in class foundations. Notwithstanding this, one can speak with full right of the completed plebiscitary degeneration of the Stalinist apparatus or of the Bonapartist system of administrating the party as one of the pre-conditions of the Bonapartist régime in the country. A new political order does not arise out of nothing. The class which has come to power builds the apparatus of its domination out of the elements that are at hand at the moment of the revolutionary or the counter-revolutionary overthrow. The Soviets led by the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionists were, in Kerensky's day, the last political resource of the bourgeois régime. At the same time, the Soviets, above all in the form of the Bolsheviks, were the crucible of the dictatorship of the proletariat which was in the course of preparation. The present-day Soviet apparatus is a bureaucratic, plebiscitarily distorted form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the same time, however, it is a potential instrument of Bonapartism. Between the present function of the apparatus and its possible function, the blood of civil war would still have to flow. Yet, the victorious counter-revolution would find precisely in the plebiscitary apparatus invaluable elements for the establishment of its domination, just as its very victory would be unthinkable without the passage of decisive sec-

tions of the apparatus to the side of the bourgeoisie. That is why the Stalinist plebiscitary régime has been converted into a main danger for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

3. DANGERS AND POSSIBILITIES OF A COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY UPHEAVAL

The Relationship of Forces Between the Socialist and the Capitalist Tendencies

Through the combined effect of economic successes and administrative measures, the specific gravity of the capitalist elements in economy has been greatly reduced in recent years, especially in industry and trade. The collectivization and the de-kulakization have strongly diminished the exploitive rôle of the rural upper strata in the given period. The relationship of forces between the socialist and the capitalist elements of economy has undoubtedly been shifted to the benefit of the former. To ignore, or even to deny this fact, as the ultra-Leftists or the vulgar Oppositionists do, repeating general phrases about Nepman and kulak, is entirely unworthy of Marxists.

It is no less false, however, to regard the present percentual relationship of forces as assured or, what is worse yet, to measure the degree of the realization of socialism by the specific gravity of state and private economy in the U. S. S. R. The accelerated liquidation of the internal capitalist elements, there also with the methods of administrative dizziness, coincided with the accelerated appearance of the U. S. S. R. on the world market. The question of the

specific gravity of the capitalist elements in the U. S. S. R., therefore, should not be posed independently of the question of the specific gravity of the U. S. S. R. in world economy.

Nepman, middleman, kulak are undoubtedly natural agents of world imperialism; the weakening of the former signifies at the same time the weakening of the latter. Yet, this does not exhaust the question: besides the Nepman there still exists the state official. Lenin recalled at the last convention in which he participated that not infrequently in history did a victorious people, at least its upper stratum, adopt the customs and the creed of the culturally superior people conquered by it, and that analogous processes are also possible in the struggle of classes. The Soviet bureaucracy, which represents an amalgam of the upper stratum of the victorious proletariat with broad strata of the overthrown classes, includes in its make-up a mighty agency of world capital.

E L E M E N T S o f t h e D U A L P O W E R v

Two trials—against the specialist-wreckers and against the Mensheviks—have given an extremely striking picture of the relationship of forces of the classes and the parties in the U. S. S. R. It was irrefutably established by the court that during the years 1923-1928 the bourgeois specialists, in close alliance with the foreign centers of the bourgeoisie, successfully carried through an artificial slackening down of industrialization, counting upon the re-establishment of capitalist relationships. The elements of the dual power in the land of the proletarian dictatorship attained such a weight that the direct agents of the

capitalist restoration, together with their democratic agents, the Mensheviks, could play a leading rôle in all the economic centers of the Soviet republic! How far, on the other hand, had Centrism slipped down in the direction of the bourgeoisie when the official policy of the party for a number of years could serve as the legal cover for the plans and methods of capitalist restoration!

The Left zig-zag of Stalin, an objective evidence of the powerful vitality of the proletarian dictatorship, which turns the bureaucracy around its own axis, in any case created neither a consistent proletarian policy nor a full-blooded régime of the proletarian dictatorship. The elements of the second power contained in the bureaucratic apparatus have not disappeared with the inauguration of the new course, but have changed their color and their arms. They have undoubtedly even become stronger, in so far as the plebiscitary degeneration of the apparatus progressed. The wreckers now invest the tempos with an adventurist scope and thereby prepare dangerous crises. The bureaucrats zealously display the shield of socialism over the collective farms in which the kulaks are hiding. Not only ideological but also organizational tentacles of the counter-revolution have penetrated deeply into the organs of the proletarian dictatorship, assuming a protective coloration all the more easily since the whole life of the official party rests upon lies and falsification. The elements of the second power are all the more dangerous the less the suppressed proletarian vanguard has the possibility of uncovering them in time and of purging its ranks of them.

Without the Party, Socialist
Construction Is Not Possible
in the Transitional Epoch

Politics is concentrated economics, and the politics of the dictatorship—the most concentrated of any politics conceivable. The economic plan of perspectives is not a dogma given at the outset, but a working hypothesis. The collective checking up of the plan must take place in the process of its execution, in which the elements of the check are not only bookkeeping figures but also the muscles and the nerves of the workers and the political disposition of the peasants. To feel the way, to check up, to summarize, to generalize all this, can only be done by an active party, acting of its own free will, sure of itself. The Five Year Plan would be inconceivable without the certainty that all the participants in the economic processes, the managements of the factories and trusts, on the one hand, and the factory committees on the other, submit to party discipline, and that the non-party workers do not slip away from the leadership of the nuclei and the factory committees.

Party discipline, however, is completely fused with administrative discipline. The apparatus showed itself—and still shows itself even today—as all-powerful, to the extent that it has the possibility of expending the basic capital of the Bolshevik party. This capital is large, but not unlimited. The overstraining of bureaucratic command reached its highest limits at the moment of the crushing of the Right wing. One can go no further on this road. But by that is also prepared the bursting of administrative discipline.

From the moment when party tradition with some and fear of it with others, cease holding the official party together, and hostile forces break through to the surface, state economy will suddenly feel the full force of the political contradictions. Every trust and every factory will cancel the plans and directives coming from above in order to insure their interests by their own means. Contracts between single factories and the private market, behind the back of the state, will become the rule instead of the exception. The struggle between the factories for working forces, raw materials, sales markets will automatically call forth among the workers the struggle for better working conditions. The plan principle inevitably liquidated in this manner, would not only signify the re-establishment of the internal market but also the disruption of the foreign trade monopoly. The managements of the trusts would quickly approach the position of private owners or agents of foreign capital, to which many of them would be compelled to turn in their struggle for existence. In the village, where the forms of collective farms which are not very capable of offering resistance, would hardly have had time to absorb the small commodity producers, the collapse of the plan principle would precipitously unleash the elements of primitive accumulation. Administrative pressure would be unable to save the situation if only for the fact that the bureaucratic apparatus would be the first victim of the contradictions and centrifugal tendencies pressing outward. Without the spiritual and cementing force of the Communist party, the Soviet State and planned economy would consequently be condemned to collapse.

The Decay of the Official Party Bears with It the Danger of Civil War

The collapse of plebiscitary discipline would not only embrace the party, administrative, economic, trade union and cooperative organs, but also the Red Army and the G. P. U.; under certain conditions, the explosion might begin at this very end. This already shows that the passage of power into the hands of the bourgeoisie could in no case be confined to simple degeneration alone, but would inevitably have to assume the form of an open violent overthrow.

In what political form could this take place? In this respect, only the main tendencies can be revealed. By *Thermidorian* overthrow, the Left Opposition always understood such a shifting of power from the proletariat to the bourgeoisie which is in essence already decisive, but is accomplished formally still within the frame-work of the Soviet system under the banner of one faction of the official party against the other. In contrast to this, the *Bonapartist* overthrow appears as a more open, "riper" form of the bourgeois counter-revolution, carried out against the Soviet system and the Bolshevik party as a whole, in the form of the naked sabre which is raised in the name of bourgeois property. The crushing of the Right wing of the party and its renunciation of its platform, diminish the chances of the first, step-by-step, veiled, that is, the Thermidorian form of the overthrow. The plebiscitary degeneration of the party apparatus undoubtedly increases the chances of the Bonapartist form. However, Thermidor and Bonapartism represent no irreconcilable class types, but are only stages of development of the same type,

in which the living historic process is inexhaustible in the sphere of creating transitional and combined forms. One thing is sure: were the bourgeoisie to dare to pose the question of power openly, the final answer would be given in the mutual testing of class forces in mortal combat.

The Two Camps of the Civil War

In the event that the molecular process of the accumulation of contradictions were to lead to an explosion, the unification of the enemy camp would be accomplished under fire around those political centers which yesterday were still illegal. Centrism, as the commanding faction, together with the administrative apparatus, would immediately fall a victim of political differentiation. The elements of its composition would be divided upon two sides of the barricades. Who would occupy the main place at first in the camp of the counter-revolution; the adventurist-Prætorian elements of the type of Tuchatchevsky, Bluecher, Budenny, downright refuse of the type of Bessedovsky, or still weightier elements of the type of Ramzin and Ossatchi*—that will be determined by the time and the conditions of the passage of the counter-revolution to the offensive. Still the question itself could only be of episodic significance. The Tuchatchevskys and Bessedovskys could serve only as a step for the Ramzins and Ossatchis; these, on their part, will only do as a step for the imperialist dictatorship

* Bluecher, former head of partisan forces in Siberia during the intervention days was "military advisor" to the Chiang Kai-Shek forces during the revolution of 1925-1927. He is at present in command of the Far Eastern forces of the Red Army. Budenny is at the head of the Red cavalry. Ramzin and Ossatchi were the leading defendants in the recent Moscow trial of the specialists charged with a conspiracy of sabotage.—Ed.

which would very soon fling aside both steps, even should it not succeed in leaping over them right away. The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionists would form a bloc with the Prætorian wing of Centrism and cover up the imperialists on the precipitous decline of the revolution as they sought to cover them in 1917 during the sharp ascent.

In the opposing camp, a no less decisive regrouping of forces would take place under the banner of the struggle for the October. The revolutionary elements of the Soviets, the trade unions, the cooperatives, the army, and finally and above all, the advanced workers in the factories, would feel, in the face of the threatening danger, the need to join together closely under clear slogans around the tempered and tested revolutionary cadre which is incapable of capitulation and betrayal. Not only the Centrist faction but also the Right wing of the party would produce not a few revolutionists who would defend the October revolution with arms in hand. But for this they would need a painful internal demarcation, which cannot be carried out without a period of confusion, vacillations and the loss of time. Under these decisive circumstances, the faction of the Bolshevik-Leninists, sharply marked out by its past and steeled in difficult tests, would be called upon to play the rôle of a crystal dipped into a saturated solution. All around the Left Opposition would take place the process of the unification of the revolutionary camp and of the rebirth of the true Communist party. The presence of a Leninist faction would double the chances of the proletariat in the struggle against the forces of the counter-revolutionary overthrow.

4. THE LEFT OPPOSITION AND THE U. S. S. R.

Against National Socialism— For the Permanent Revolution

The democratic tasks of backward Russia could be solved in no other way except on the road of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Having captured power at the head of the peasant masses, the proletariat could not, however, remain standing at the democratic tasks. The democratic revolution was directly interwoven with the first stage of the socialist revolution. But the latter cannot be concluded except in the international arena. The program of the Bolshevik party worked out by Lenin regards the October upheaval as the first stage of the proletarian world revolution, from which it is inseparable. This is also the kernel of the doctrine of the *permanent revolution*.

The extraordinary retardation in the development of the world revolution, which creates gigantic difficulties for the U. S. S. R. and produces singular transitional methods, nevertheless does not change the fundamental perspectives and tasks which flow from the world-embracing character of capitalist economy and from the permanent character of the proletarian world revolution.

The International Left Opposition rejects and condemns categorically the theory of socialism in one country created in 1924 by the epigones as the worst reaction against Marxism, as the principal achievement of the Thermidorian ideology. The irreconcilable combatting of Stalinism (or national socialism), which has found its expression in the program of the

Communist International, is a necessary condition for correct revolutionary strategy, in the questions of the international class struggle as well as in the sphere of the economic tasks of the U. S. S. R.

Régime of Dual Power or Elements of the Dual Power in the Régime of the Proletarian Dictatorship

If we proceed from the incontestable fact that the C. P. S. U. has ceased to be a party, are we not thereby forced to the conclusion that there is no dictatorship of the proletariat in the U. S. S. R., since this is inconceivable without a ruling proletarian party? Such a conclusion, entirely consistent at first sight, is nevertheless a caricature of the reality, and a reactionary caricature, which ignores the creative possibilities of the régime and the hidden reserves of the dictatorship. Even if the party as a party, that is, as an independent organization of the vanguard, does not exist, this does not yet mean that all the elements of the party inherited from the past are liquidated. In the working class, the tradition of the October overthrow is alive and strong; firmly rooted are the habits of class thought; unforgotten in the older generation are the lessons of the revolutionary struggles and the conclusions of Bolshevik strategy; in the masses of the people and especially in the proletariat lives the hatred against the former ruling classes and their parties. All these tendencies in their entirety constitute not only the reserve of the future, but also the living power of today, which preserves the Soviet Union as a workers' state.

Between the creative forces of the revolution and the bureaucracy there prevails a profound antagon-

ism. If the Stalinist apparatus constantly comes to a halt at certain limits, if it finds itself compelled even to turn sharply to the Left, then this occurs above all under the pressure of the amorphous, loose, but still powerful elements of the revolutionary party. The strength of this factor cannot be expressed in figures. At all events, it is today powerful enough to support the structure of the dictatorship of the proletariat. To ignore it means to place oneself completely upon the basis of the bureaucratic manner of thinking and to seek for the party wherever the Stalinist apparatus commands and nowhere else.

The Left Opposition categorically rejects the estimation of the Soviet state not only as a bourgeois or petty bourgeois, but also as a "neutral" state which has remained in some way without class rulers. The presence of *elements* of the dual power in no way signifies the *political equilibrium of the classes*. In evaluating social processes, the establishment of the degree of maturity attained and of the termination is especially important. The moment of the change from quantity to quality has a decisive significance, in politics as well as in other fields. The correct determination of this moment is one of the most important and at the same time most difficult tasks of the revolutionary leadership.

The evaluation of the U. S. S. R. as a state standing between the classes (Urbahns) is theoretically inadequate and politically equivalent to a surrender or a semi-surrender of the strongest position of the world proletariat to the class enemy. The Left Opposition rejects and condemns categorically this standpoint as incompatible with the principles of revolutionary Marxism.

The Path of the Left Opposition in the U. S. S. R. Remains the Path of Reform

The analysis given above of the possibilities and chances of a counter-revolutionary overthrow should in no sense be understood that the present contradictions must *absolutely* lead to the open explosion of the civil war. The social sphere is elastic and—within certain limits—opens up various possibilities, in accordance with the energy and the penetration of the battling forces, with the internal processes depending upon the course of the international class struggle. The duty of the proletarian revolutionist consists under all circumstances of thinking out every situation to the end and also of being prepared for the worst outcome. The Marxian analysis of the possibilities and chances of the Thermidorian-Bonapartist overthrow has nothing in common with pessimism, just as the blindness and bragging of the bureaucracy has nothing in common with revolutionary optimism.

The recognition of the present Soviet State as a workers' state not only signifies that the bourgeoisie can conquer power in no other way than by an armed uprising but also that the proletariat of the U. S. S. R. has not forfeited the possibility of submitting the bureaucracy to it, of reviving the party again and of mending the régime of the dictatorship—without a new revolution, with the methods and on the road of *reform*.

It would be sterile pedantry were one to undertake to calculate in advance the chances of proletarian reform and of the attempts of the bourgeois upheaval. It would be criminal light-heartedness to contend that the former is assured, the latter excluded.

One must be prepared for all possible variants. In order, at the moment of the inevitable collapse of the plebiscitary régime, to assemble and to push ahead the proletarian wing promptly, without letting the class enemy gain time, it is absolutely necessary that the Left Opposition exists as a firm faction and develops, that it analyzes all the changes in the situation, formulates clearly the perspectives of development, raises fighting slogans at the right time and strengthens its connections with the advanced elements of the working class.

The Left Opposition and the Brandlerites

The attitude of the Left Opposition to Centrism determines its attitude to the Right Opposition, which only constitutes an uncompleted bridge from Centrism to the social democracy.

In the Russian question, as well as in all others, the international Right wing leads a parasitic existence, by nourishing itself chiefly upon the criticism of the practical and secondary mistakes of the Comintern, whose opportunist policy it approves in the fundamental questions. The unprincipledness of the Brandlerites shows itself most nakedly and cynically in the questions which are bound up with the fate of the U. S. S. R. In the period of the government's betting on the kulaks the Brandlerites completely supported the official course and demonstrated that no policy other than that of Stalin-Rykov-Bucharin could be carried out. After the turn of 1928, the Brandlerites were reduced to an expectant silence. When the successes of the industrialization, unexpected by them, showed themselves, the Brandlerites uncritically

adopted the program of the "Five Year Plan in four years" and the "liquidation of the kulak as a class". The Right wingers demonstrated their complete inability for a revolutionary orientation and Marxian foresight, coming forward at the same time as the advocates of the Stalinist régime in the U. S. S. R. The characteristic feature of opportunism—to bow before the power of the present day—determines the whole attitude of the Brandlerites to the Stalinists: "We are prepared to acknowledge uncritically everything you do in the U. S. S. R., permit us only to carry out *our* policy in *our* Germany." The position of the Lovestoneites in the United States, of the Right opposition in Czecho-Slovakia, and their related semi-social democratic, semi-Communist groups in other countries, bears a similar character.

The Left Opposition conducts an irreconcilable struggle against the Right wing camp-followers of the Centrists, especially and principally on the basis of the Russian question and at the same time endeavors to liberate from the disintegrating influence of the Brandlerite leaders those worker-revolutionists who were driven into the Right opposition by the zig-zags of Centrism and its worthless régime.

The Principle of the Left Opposition: To Speak Out What Is

The petty bourgeois camp-followers, the "friends" of the Soviet Union, in actuality friends of the Stalinist bureaucracy, including also the officials dependent upon the Comintern in the various countries, light-heartedly close their eyes to the contradictions in the development of the Soviet Union, in order later, at the first serious danger, to turn their backs upon it.

Political and personal conflicts, however, not infrequently push into the ranks of the Left Opposition too, frightened Centrists or, what is still worse, unsatisfied careerists. With the sharpening of the repressions, or contrariwise, at the moment of the success of the official course, these elements turn back to the official ranks as capitulators, where they constitute the chorus of the pariahs. The capitulators of the type of Zinoviev-Piatakof-Radek are only very little distinguished from the Menshevik capitulators of the type, of Groman-Suchanov, or from the bourgeois specialists of the type of Ramzin. With all the distinctions in their points of departure, all three groups now meet in the recognition of the correctness of the present "general line", only to scatter in different directions at the next accentuation of the contradictions.

The Left Opposition feels itself a component part of the army of the proletarian dictatorship and of the world revolution, it approaches the tasks of the Soviet régime not from without but from within, fearlessly tears down the false masks and exposes the real dangers, in order to fight against them with self-sacrifice and to teach others to do the same.

The experience of the whole post-Lenin period bears testimony to the incontestable influence of the Left Opposition upon the course of development of the U. S. S. R. All that was creative in the official course—and has remained creative—was only a belated echo of the ideas and the slogans of the Left Opposition. The half breach of the Right-Center bloc was forced by the pressure of the Bolshevik-Leninists. The Left course of Stalin, springing from the endeavor to undermine the roots of the Left Opposition, ran into the absurdity of the theory and practise of the "third period". The abandonment of this attack of fever,

which led to the downright catastrophe of the Comintern, was once more the consequence of the criticism of the Opposition. The power of this criticism, with the numerical weakness of the Left wing, lies in general where the power of Marxism lies: in the ability to analyze, to foresee and to point out correct roads. The faction of the Bolshevik-Leninists is consequently already today one of the most important factors in the development of the theory and practise of socialist construction in the U. S. S. R. and of the international proletarian revolution.

The Standard of Living of the
Workers and their Rôle in the
State Is the Highest Crite-
rion of Socialist Successes

The proletariat is not only the fundamental productive force, but also the class upon which rests the Soviet system and socialist construction. The dictatorship can have no powers of resistance if its distorted régime leads to the political indifference of the proletariat. The high tempos of industrialization cannot last long if they rest upon an excessive strain which leads to the physical exhaustion of the workers. A constant shortage of the most necessary means of life and a lasting state of alarm under the knout of the administration, endanger the whole socialist construction. "The dying-away of inner party democracy," says the *Platform of the Opposition** of the U. S. S. R., "leads to the dying-away of workers' democracy in general, in the trade unions as well as

* Published in the United States under the title "The Real Situation in Russia", by Leon Trotsky.—Ed.

in all the other non-party mass organizations." Since the publication of the *Platform*, this process has made more ravaging advances. The trade unions have finally been degraded to auxiliary organs of the ruling bureaucracy. A system of administrative pressure has been built up, under the name of shock troops, as if it were a question of a short mountain pass and not of a great historical epoch. In spite of this, the termination of the Five Year Plan will find Soviet economy before a new, still steeper ascent. With the aid of the formula "catching up with and outstripping", the bureaucracy misleads itself in part, but mainly the workers, with regard to the stage attained, and prepares a sharp crisis of disappointment.

The economic plans must be checked up from the point of view of the actual systematic improvement of the material and cultural conditions of the working class in town and country. The trade unions must be brought back to their basic task: of the collective educator, and not of the knout. The proletariat in the U. S. S. R. as well as in the rest of the world must stop being lulled by exaggerations of what has been attained and the minimizing of the tasks and the difficulties. The problem of raising the political independence of the proletariat, and its initiative in all fields, must be put in the foreground of the whole policy. The genuine attainment of this aim is inconceivable without a struggle against the excessive privileges of individual groups and strata, against the extreme inequality of living conditions, and above all—against the enormous prerogatives and favored position of the uncontrolled bureaucracy.

5. CONCLUSIONS

1. The economic successes of the U. S. S. R., which have made a way for themselves in spite of the long-lasting alliance between Centrists, Right wingers, Mensheviks and wreckers in the field of planning, represent the greatest triumph of the socialist methods of economy and a powerful factor of the world revolution.

2. To defend the U. S. S. R., as the main fortress of the world proletariat, against all the assaults of world imperialism and of internal counter-revolution, is the most important duty of every class-conscious worker.

3. The crises in the economic development of the U. S. S. R. spring from the capitalist and pre-capitalist contradictions inherited from the past, as well as from the contradiction between the international character of modern productive forces and the national character of socialist construction in the U. S. S. R.

4. Built upon the lack of understanding of the latter contradiction, the theory of socialism in one country in turn appears as the source of practical mistakes, which provoke crises or deepen them.

5. The strength of the Soviet bureaucracy has unfolded on the basis of the abrupt decline in the political activity of the Soviet proletariat after a number of years of the highest exertion of forces, upon a series of defeats of the international revolution, upon the stabilization of capitalism and the strengthening of the international social democracy.

6. Socialist construction, under the conditions of class contradictions at home and of capitalist encir-

clement abroad, demands a virile, farsighted, active party as the fundamental political pre-condition for planned economy and class manœuvring.

7. Having reached power with the direct support of social forces hostile to the October and after the crushing of the revolutionary internationalist wing of the party, the Centrist bureaucracy could nevertheless only maintain its domination further by measures of the suppression of party control, election and the public opinion of the working class.

8. Now that the Centrist bureaucracy has strangled the party, that is, has remained without eyes and ears, it moves along gropingly and determines its path under the direct pushes of the classes, oscillating between opportunism and adventurism.

* * *

9. The course of development has completely confirmed all the essential principles of the *Platform* of the Russian Opposition, in their critical parts as well as in their positive demands.

10. In the last period, the features of the three fundamental currents in the C. P. S. U. and in the Communist International have stood out in relief with particular lucidity: the Marxist-Leninist, the Centrist and the Right. The tendency of ultra-Leftism makes its appearance either as the crowning of one of the zig-zags of Centrism or at the periphery of the Left Opposition.

11. The policy and the régime of the Centrist bureaucracy became the source of the most acute and direct dangers for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The systematic struggle against ruling Centrism is the most essential part of the struggle for the rehabilitation, the strengthening and the development of the first workers' state.

12. The ignoring of the material state and the political disposition of the working class constitutes the most essential feature of the bureaucratic régime which, with the aid of the methods of naked command and administrative pressure, hopes to construct the realm of national socialism.

13. The bureaucratic forcing of the tempos of industrialization and collectivization, based upon a false theoretical position and not checked up by the collective thought of the party, means a relentless accumulation of disproportions and contradictions, especially along the lines of the mutual relations with world economy.

14. The property relations in the U. S. S. R., like the reciprocal political relations of the classes, prove incontestably that the U. S. S. R., in spite of the distortions of the Soviet régime and in spite of the disastrous policy of the Centrist bureaucracy, remains a workers' state.

15. The bourgeoisie could come to power in the U. S. S. R. in no other way than with the aid of a counter-revolutionary upheaval. The proletarian vanguard retains the possibility of putting the bureaucracy in its place, of subordinating it to its control, of insuring the correct policy, and by means of decisive and bold reforms, of regenerating the party, the trade unions and the Soviets.

16. Yet, with the maintenance of the Stalinist régime, the contradictions accumulating within the framework of the official party, especially at the moment of the sharpening of the economic difficulties, must lead inevitably to the political crisis, which may raise the question of power anew in all its scope.

17. For the fate of the Soviet régime, it will be of decisive significance whether the proletarian vanguard

will be in a position to stand up in time, to close its ranks, and to offer resistance to the bloc of the Thermidorian-Bonapartist forces supporting themselves upon world imperialism.

18. The Left Opposition can fulfill its duty towards the proletarian vanguard only by uninterruptedly critical work, by Marxian estimations of the situation, the determination of the correct path for the economic development of the U. S. S. R., the path for the struggle of the world proletariat, by the timely raising of living slogans and by intransigent struggle against the plebiscitary régime which fetters the forces of the working class.

19. The solution of these theoretical and political tasks is conceivable only under the condition that the Russian faction of the Bolsheviki-Leninists strengthens its organizations, penetrates into all the important cells of the official party and other organizations of the working class, and at the same time remains an inseparable part of the international Left Opposition.

* * *

20. One of the most urgent tasks consists of making the experience of the economic construction in the U. S. S. R. the object of an all-sided and free study and of a discussion within the C. P. S. U. and the Communist International.

21. The criteria for the discussion, elaboration and the checking up of the economic programs are: (a) systematic raising of the real wages of the workers; (b) closing of the scissors of industrial and agricultural prices, that is, assuring the *smytchka* [alliance] with the peasantry; (c) closing of the scissors of domestic and world prices, that is, protection of the foreign trade monopoly against the onslaught of cheap prices; (d) raising of the quality of production, to

which the same significance should be attached as to its quantity; (e) stabilization of the domestic purchasing power of the Chervonetz, which together with the principle of planning, will for a long time to come remain a necessary element of economic regulation.

22. The administrative chase after "maximum" tempos must give way to the elaboration of optimum (the most advantageous) tempos which do not guarantee the fulfillment of the command of the day for display purposes, but the constant growth of economy on the basis of the dynamic equilibrium, with a correct distribution of domestic means and a broad, planned utilization of the world market.

23. For this it is necessary above all to abandon the false perspective of a completed, self-sufficient national economic development which flows from the theory of socialism in one country.

24. The problem of the foreign trade of the U. S. S. R. must be put as a key problem in the perspective of a growing connection with world economy.

25. In harmony with this, the question of the economic collaboration of the capitalist countries with the U. S. S. R. should be made one of the timely slogans of all the sections of the Comintern, especially in the period of the world crisis and unemployment.

26. The collectivization of peasant farms should be switched to the track of the actual initiative of the agricultural proletariat and the village poor, and their alliance with the middle peasants. A serious and all-sided re-examination of the experiences of the collective farms must be made the task of the workers and the advanced peasants. The state program of building collective farms must be brought into harmony with the actual results of experience and with the given technical and the total economic resources.

27. The bureaucratic utopia of the "liquidation of the kulak as a class" in two to three years on the basis of the peasants' stocks, should be rejected. A firm policy of the systematic restriction of the exploitive tendencies of the kulaks must be conducted. Towards this end, the inevitable process of differentiation within the collective farms, as well as between them, must be followed attentively, and the collective farms in no case identified with socialist enterprises.

28. Stop being guided in economy by considerations of bureaucratic prestige. No embellishment, no hushing up, no deception. Not to pass off as socialism the present transitional economy of the Soviet Union, which stands very low in the level of its productive forces and very contradictory in its structure.

29. To put an end once and for all to the ruinous practise, unworthy of a revolutionary party, of the Roman Catholic dogma of the infallibility of the leadership.

30. To condemn the theory and practise of Stalinism. To return to the theory of Marx and to the revolutionary methodology of Lenin.

31. To re-establish the party as the organization of the proletarian vanguard.

* * *

Regardless of the greatest economic successes on the one hand, and the extreme weakening of the Comintern on the other, the revolutionary specific gravity of Bolshevism on the world political map is infinitely more significant than the specific gravity of Soviet economy on the world market. While the nationalized and collectivized economy of the U. S. S. R. is raised and developed with all means, the correct perspective must at the same time be retained and it must not be forgotten for a minute that the overthrow

of the world bourgeoisie in the revolutionary struggle is a far more real and immediate task than to "catch up with and outstrip" world economy, without overstepping the boundaries of the U. S. S. R. in doing it.

The present profound crisis of capitalist economy opens up revolutionary possibilities to the proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries. The inevitable rise in the militant activity of the working masses will sharply delineate all the problems of the revolution again, and will tear the ground from under the autocracy of the Centrist bureaucracy. The Left Opposition will enter into the revolutionary period armed with a clear understanding of the road already traversed, of the mistakes already committed, of the new tasks and the perspectives.

The complete and final way out of the internal and external contradictions will be found by the U. S. S. R. in the arena of the victorious revolution of the world proletariat, and only there.

April 4, 1931



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