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## The Results of the Plenary Session of the E. C. C. I.

**Report given at the Plenum of the Moscow Committee of the C. P. S. U. on 4. June 1927.**

By N. I. Bucharin.

We append the Stenographic Protocol of Comrade Bucharin's Speech, with some abbreviations. Ed.

Comrades!

The Plenary Session of the ECCI. just ended, although it has been formally an ordinary regular plenum of the ECCI., is no less important, will prove indeed to be perhaps of even greater importance, than the sessions of the Enlarged Executive. This greater importance arises from the circumstance that the work of the Plenum has been done in the midst of a most extraordinary international situation — extraordinary for a number of reasons.

First of all, it was during the session of the Plenum that the rupture of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the British Empire took place. This in itself was an event fully exposing the extreme acuteness of the international situation.

Further, the session has coincided with a new phase in the development of the Chinese revolution, and with this with a new phase in the history of the world. These two events alone suffice to give this Plenary Session, whose main task it has been to deal with these events, a position of unique importance in the history of the development of the Communist movement and in the history of the struggles of the Communist International.

The third factor imparting special importance to this session has been the attitude adopted by the Opposition. It need not be said that I do not think of ranking the attitude of the Opposition in a position of importance to be compared with the great historical events just mentioned. But it is none the less necessary that attention should be drawn to this attitude, the more that the Opposition has never before expressed itself in such a form, in such a tone, or with such purport. Never before has the Opposition taken a stand so brusque, so anti-Party, and at the same

time so "decided", as at the Plenum of the Executive Committee which we have just concluded.

There were three important questions on the agenda. The question of the fight against the danger of war and against war as likely to arise out of the present international situation; the Chinese question; the English question. In the course of the session a fourth question arose: that of the judgment to be formed on the attitude of the Opposition.

## On the War against War.

As point of departure we take the incontestable fact that in China a capitalist intervention is going forward against the forces of the Chinese revolution; we base our conclusions for the most part on the assumption — which has already almost become an axiom, or will presently become one — that the British Government is working systematically, not only to surround the Soviet Union on all sides, but for the preparation of actual war on the Soviet Union. The problems which the Executive Committee of the Comintern set itself the task of solving at this session are the result of the peculiarity of the present international situation, which differs greatly from the situation in 1914, the period which brought us to the threshold of the "great" imperialist war. The tasks confronting us at the present time differ correspondingly from those faced by the organisations of the revolutionary proletariat in 1914. A large number of the problems, slogans, and various tactical tasks, with which we have to occupy ourselves at the present juncture, are bound to differ greatly from the problems, slogans, and tasks falling to the Bolsheviks during the first world war.

The main difference between the events now impending and the events of the year 1914 consists of the fact that this time it is not a question of conflicts among the imperialist powers themselves — although such conflicts are in themselves not unlikely — but above all of an attack made by the imperialist states against the Soviet Union on the one hand, and against the Chinese revolution on the other. The existence of a Union of proletarian republics, the existence — at the same time and under the great influence of this Union — of the great Chinese national struggle for emancipation, which has already been able to adopt state forms to a certain extent, and which possesses its organised state centre, — the existence of these two mighty historical facts has naturally caused certain questions to be raised by the Comintern, and has influenced its answers.

At the beginning of my report I stated that the existence of the Soviet Republics and of the Chinese revolution changes not only the objective situation, but the whole course of events, and with this the method dealing with the tasks of the proletariat. It need scarcely be said that in the case of a war between imperialist states, it is highly probable that the majority of the working people would take sides with their own government, would once more attempt to solve the question of which side had attacked first, and so forth. But the fact of the Chinese revolution, and of the existence of a Union of Socialist Republics, especially in view of the peace policy which has been pursued, and will continue to be pursued, by this Union of Socialist Republics, are likely to alter the probability of this prognosis a little. For it is easily comprehensible that the greater part of the workers would lend themselves with very heavy hearts to an attack on the Union of Socialist Republics — if they can be induced to take part in such an attack at all.

The bourgeois governments will find it increasingly difficult to throw their hirelings and their armed forces against the proletarian republics and their national revolutionary allies in China.

What are the decisions come to by the ECCI. in the question of fighting methods? The ECCI. has decided that the slogan of the general strike, the slogan of insurrection, and the slogan of the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war, are all slogans for the orientation of our Party, and that our main task lies in the preparation for the realisation of these slogans. It is impossible to prophesy when these slogans will emerge from the agitative and propagandist stage into the stage leading immediately to an actual insurrection or strike, when we pass from the propaganda of the general strike or the insurrection to their actualisation. It is perhaps possible to prophesy with a certain amount of certainty that this actualisation will not be possible in the overwhelming majority of states immediately after the beginning of the war. But even today we must face the fact that it may be possible in isolated cases, even if

these are exceptional; there can be no doubt that this possibility exists.

The exact moment at which the agitative and propagandist slogans merge into slogans of immediate action will be determined by the situation itself, by the arising of a revolutionary situation, by the strength of the Communist Party, by the degree of fermentation among the masses, by the trends of feeling among the leading strata — in a word, by a number of objective and subjective premises. These slogans will merge into slogans of immediate action as soon as the proletariat is offered a chance of their realisation.

## 1. Fighting Methods. General Strike and Insurrection.

I now pass on to the question of fighting methods. When this question is raised, two extremely important documents are generally referred to. Firstly, the resolution passed by the Basle Congress of the II. International, with the well-known amendment to that resolution, proposed by Comrades Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg at Stuttgart and incorporated in the Basle Resolution, and stating that in the case of war it will be necessary: "to make full use of the economic and political crisis caused by the war for the purpose of arousing the people, and accelerating the overthrow of the rule of capital" (Lenin, Complete Works, vol. 13). Secondly, reference is made to one of the last documents dealing precisely with the question of the fight against war — the often quoted instructions issued by Comrade Lenin to our delegation to the congress of trade union, co-operative, pacifist, and other organisations, held at the Hague.

In these instructions Lenin first advances the thesis that we must combat with our utmost energies the foolish and senseless idea that it is possible to "reply" to war with a general strike or a revolution; that in reality the majority of the workers will take sides with their bourgeois government during the first days of a war; that it is of the utmost importance to expose the foolishness of the standpoint of those who imagine themselves in possession of a universal remedy against the "evil" of war; that we must unmask the opportunists, the semi-pacifists, the pacifists, etc., who fancy that they "know" how to fight against war; that we must contend determinedly against the empty phrase of a "reply" to war by means of a general strike or a revolution. These theses are the main import of the instructions drawn up by Comrade Lenin.

Whilst our Commission was working, various interpretations were brought forward with reference to the connection between these instructions of Lenin's and the Basle Resolution (it must not be forgotten that the formula of the Basle Manifesto was taken from a document which had already been accepted at the Stuttgart Congress. The original wording of the amendment referred directly to revolutionary action, that is to strike and insurrection). The Basle Resolution makes mention of the Paris Commune and of the revolution of 1905, in which the general strike and insurrection formed the "leading forms" of the struggle. The slogan of the general strike and of the armed insurrection was here indirectly presented as a slogan determining our action during preparation for war on the part of the bourgeoisie, and further during the war itself. But on the other hand the Hague instructions state that the phrases on "replying" to a war by revolution are nonsensical; that we have to obey the dictates of common sense, and face the fact that at the beginning of a war the majority of the working people take sides with their bourgeois fatherland.

Various shades of opinion have arisen during the course of our work in the Commission, and we have come to various decisions upon them. One of these may be formulated as follows: The slogans of the general strike and of armed insurrection must stand, without reservation, as rules of action for the Communist Party, both during the period of preparation for war on the part of imperialist states, and during the war itself. Another standpoint: The point of main importance is precisely the exposure of the absurdity of the standpoint that a war can be "replied" to by a general strike, revolution, or insurrection.

What is the right answer to this question? First of all, it is absurd to confront one document with another in this case; it is absurd to confront a document with the demands of the mass struggles of the communards and the revolutionists of 1905, with the "instructions" given by Lenin to the Hague Delegation, dealing with the necessity of forming a careful

and attentive judgment of the position, free from all illusions, during the first days or a war.

We must by no means interpret Comrade Lenin's instructions to the Hague Delegation to be a condemnation of the slogans of the general strike and of insurrection as fighting methods against war danger and war. The sole correct interpretation of Comrade Lenin's instructions is to realise that they were directed against the mere phrase, the empty phrase, of general strike, revolution, and armed insurrection, as "reply" to war, etc. Lenin said no word against these slogans themselves. All that Lenin did was to fight with the utmost political energy against mere phrases, against the empty phrases of reformism.

We know very well that a large number of Social Democratic Congresses, a large number of Trade Union Congresses, and a large number of the leaders of Social Democratic parties, have repeatedly declared their intention of "replying" to war with a general strike. In the same manner a considerable number of the heroes of the so-called "revolutionary" syndicalism have preached the general strike as the salvation from all evil. But all the same there is no sign to be observed, either in one camp or the other, of systematic preliminary preparation, carried on steadily from day to day, for the actuality of the fight against war.

It need not be emphasised that if anyone were to issue the slogan of revolution and insurrection as "reply" to a war, the single and isolated action of this proclamation would be the vainest of boasts, an utter deception of the masses, unless those issuing the slogan had previously carried through a systematic course of preparation for the organisation of the general strike, the organisation of insurrection, and the organisation of revolution, in accordance with an accurate Marxian analysis of the objective situation.

The point decisive for Lenin — and it must be decisive for the standpoint adopted by the Communist Party — was the orientation of our Party in such manner that our first consideration, our most urgent, important, decisive, and fundamental task, the innermost core of our problem — is to be the proper preparation for the war against war.

This preparation involves the creation of an illegal organisation, it involves work amongst soldiers and sailors, energetic work in the trade unions, the systematic exposure of socialist and opportunist lies, the systematic propaganda of Bolshevik ideas in the struggle against war, and the exertion of every effort for the mobilisation of every possible agitative and propagandist activity, legal and illegal, military and civilian, for the fight against the danger of war. In this manner the question can and must be treated. Those who cry for the general strike as reply to war danger are mere talkers, if not actual betrayers. Those who declare that the working class will "reply" to war by revolution, are mere dealers in words. It is utter nonsense to imagine revolution to be one isolated action, a "reply". To promise such a "reply", without a basis of previous work of the intensest nature, is to deceive the workers.

This is the purport of the instructions given by Comrade Lenin to our delegation. The "Hague" instructions do not contain the slightest contradiction of the Basle instructions. These two documents must not be confronted as if one cancelled the other. On the contrary, one gives orientation on certain slogans and fighting methods, whilst the other shows the pivot upon which the whole struggle turns, in order that these slogans may not exist on paper only, but become working slogans leading to corresponding political results.

## 2. The Central Slogans in the Fight against War Danger and War.

This is the first problem discussed by the Plenum, in its connection with the preparation for war. The second problem is the question of the leading slogan for the Communist Party at the present juncture, under the present given circumstances. An interesting discussion arose sight the question appears perfectly simple, but the course of the discussion showed it to be more complicated, under existing conditions, than in the situation obtaining before the outbreak of the imperialist war. We have to deal with a series of unique situations. First of all, actual war has not yet broken out in Europe, nor has it even actually broken out against the Soviet Union; the main fact is the attack upon the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union represents a factor of extraordinary political importance, and upon its flag the slogan of peace is written.

Let us recall to our memories the manner in which the Bolsheviks dealt with the question of a central slogan at the beginning of the imperialist war, and what differences of opinion existed at that time. The differences of opinion dividing the Bolsheviks from all other ideologies were here very far-reaching indeed. Those of our opponents tending most to the "Left", including Comrade Trotsky, advanced the slogan of peace as the central unifying slogan, whilst our party and its Central Committee were opposed to the slogan of peace as central slogan, substituting for this the slogan of civil war, the slogan of the metamorphosis of imperialist war into civil war. Here the Party did not advance this slogan as one running parallel to the slogan of peace, not as a slogan compatible with the slogan of peace, but as a slogan excluding the slogan of peace. At that time we contended against all our opponents, including the group "Our Word", headed by Comrade Trotsky. They advanced the slogan of peace. We advanced the slogan of peace, the slogan of civil war. We regarded this slogan of civil war as the mightiest weapon in the fight against pacifist illusions, including those illusions prevalent in the "left" groups, and claiming to represent a "revolutionary internationalist" standpoint.

Can we, in the present situation, refrain from a recognition of the slogan of peace, at a time when the Soviet Republics, the state organisations of the proletariat, are defending this watchword with their utmost powers, at a time when this watchword actually represents the real and vital interests of this greatest and most important stronghold of the international proletarian movement? And finally, it must not be forgotten that war has not yet broken out in Europe, that an armed attack has not yet been actually made on the Soviet Union, although preparations being made for it with feverish energy.

These are some of the considerations which show how complicated the situation has become. On the surface it would appear to be simplest to solve the question as follows: Since there is no war at the present moment, since it is impossible to that the slogans of the proletarian state should contradict the slogans of the Communist Parties, since there is no doubt that enormous masses of the people would support the slogan of peace, and since it is just here that the connection lies between the line of the proletarian republics and the slogans of the broad masses, then the slogan of peace should be made the central slogan for all Communist Parties. It would appear as this method of dealing with the question would be most suitable at the given moment. And yet this is not so.

How should we approach the question of the central slogan for all Communist Parties, for the whole Communist International? In order to give an adequate answer to this question, we must find out the hardest knot in the present situation. The knottiest problem of the moment is in the relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union, and in the attitude taken by the imperialist front towards the Chinese revolution. The driving mechanism actuating all these international entanglements, all the multifarious conflicts, blockades, armed raids, etc., is to be found at the present time in China. The development of the Chinese revolution is the dynamic force throwing out of balance everything upon which our Soviet Union was depending for its pause for breath. The decided advance of constructive socialism in the Soviet Union coincides with a rapid development of the Chinese revolution, a development threatening to overthrow capitalist stabilisation. It is in China and the Soviet Union that the knot of international relations is drawn the tightest.

The Chinese Communist Party is exposed to the direct fire of its antagonists. Can we then put forward the slogan of peace as the leading slogan for the Chinese Communist Party? At the present moment the Chinese Communist Party is faced with an emergency demanding a powerful fighting spirit, an offensive spirit, I might almost say, the strongest possible military revolutionary spirit. Should the Chinese Communist Party, the left Kuomintang, the corresponding military organisations, etc., support the slogan of peace, this would be tantamount to a slogan of peace with the traitor Chang Kai-shek, a slogan of peace with the imperialists, etc. And this at a moment when the military struggle against the feudal regime and the imperialists is a constituent of the revolution still in the initial process of its development.

Should we proclaim the slogan of peace as central slogan, we should thus find ourselves in the position of advancing a slogan supposed to be suitable for all Communist Parties, and especially for the Chinese Communist Party in its present

capacity as outpost, and yet having the actual effect of dispersing the forces of one of the most important of the Communist Parties. But the whole political situation demands that precisely this Party should not cry for: "Peace with the feudal lords!", "Peace with Chang Tso Lin!", "Peace with Chang Kai-shek", "Peace with the imperialists!", but rather that it pursues precisely the opposite course, and exerts its utmost efforts to intensify its struggles against these counter-revolutionary forces.

The Chinese Communist Party, at the present political juncture, is not merely one of the Sections of the Comintern, but a Section upon which a political duty of the utmost importance has fallen, a Section which bears upon its shoulders an enormous burden of political responsibility. This Party is under the fire of the enemy, and holds at the moment a place of honour in the field of international revolution.

It goes without saying that a large number of other arguments could be brought forward against the slogan of peace, in so far as it is necessary to contend against pacifism, etc. After somewhat comprehensive debates in the commission we held it to be necessary to accept, as central and general slogan, the **slogan of the defence of the Russian and Chinese revolution**. Everything is included in this slogan: war against war, the transformation of the imperialist war against us into a civil war, the struggle for peace, action taken by the Chinese Communist Party under the slogan of the formation of a front against the imperialists, against Chang Kai-shek, against the feudal lords, etc., etc. Every action for the promotion of the revolutionary struggle can be classified under the heading of this slogan.

These are the most important considerations arising out of the second problem. As you will see, the peculiarity of the decision come to in this question, and the peculiarity of the slogan, which is by no means a simple repetition of the slogans of 1914, arise out of the special peculiarities of the given international situation.

### 3. Defence and Attack. Defence of Fatherland.

A considerable number of other problems have had to be revised in the same manner. You will all certainly remember that one of the most decisive blows which we dealt against the social patriots was the blow against their "theory" of the defensive and offensive wars of the imperialist states.

At the beginning of a war every single imperialist state involved asserts that it has been "attacked". The social chauvinists of the different countries have based their policy on the "analysis" of this question, the question of who has "attacked" and who "defends". Our Bolshevist standpoint on the matter has been that this whole definition of the question is nonsense, since in an imperialist war there is neither defence nor attack — every side is attacking. The object of the attack is the colonial countries. Among the imperialist states themselves any attempts to differentiate the "guilty" parties attacking from the innocent who are merely "defending themselves", is completely absurd.

It is obvious that the existence of the Soviet Union, and of such a factor as that formed by the Chinese revolution, at once set aside any such general definition of the question. For here it is not a question of two imperialist parties, but of state organisations representing different classes.

In our conflict with Great Britain we cannot but maintain the fact that Great Britain has attacked us. We cannot define the situation otherwise, for the truth is that the attack has been made upon us by Great Britain. The policy pursued by the Soviet Union is a true peace policy. Our "attack", if we may thus express ourselves, has consisted mainly of our economic uplift. But this falls under quite another category.

The standpoint to be adopted in the question of defence of fatherland is even more altered by the latest events. We could not countenance a defence of fatherland among the "great powers" of the first imperialist war, since these powers were imperialist, but in the proletarian republics the situation is entirely reversed, and the defence of the fatherland is the first duty of the proletarian parties. Where in the capitalist countries the Communists have been right in adopting the defeatist standpoint, in the Soviet Union our proletarian fatherland must find the fullest support from all sides. There we must reject all "defence of fatherland", here it must be our first thought. This train of thought is rightly applied to the proletarian republics.

But it is equally right when applied to such a government, to such a state organisation, as that represented by the national revolutionary state in China, fighting against imperialism.

Lenin differed from many in dealing with perfect clearness with this question of the defence of fatherland. Whilst condemning with the utmost severity the social patriotic defenders of imperialist fatherlands, Lenin never dealt with the question in such a manner as to assert that if a fatherland is not a proletarian one, there is no reason to defend it. Lenin was very far from such a simplification of the question. He designated the formula of "defence of fatherland" as vulgar and Philistine, as a justification of war, and considered that it had no other meaning whatever.

When we hear of the British defence of the mother country, for instance, this is nothing more than the current expression used to justify a war carried on by the British imperialist government. When we speak of the defence of our fatherland, the question is the justification of a war carried on by us. Lenin did not state that every war is an evil solely because it is a war. War is an evil, and it must be combatted when it is carried on by imperialist states; but we can and must support a war, not only when the working class is in power and is defending its state; a war may be supported and justified when it is a national and progressive national emancipation war against imperialists, even when the proletariat is not yet its leader. We Communists must therefore stand unconditionally for the support of such a war as that being waged in China for the defence of the Chinese fatherland, for the Chinese revolution.

### 4. Alliances with Bourgeois States. The Slogan of Fraternisation and of Joining Revolutionary Armies.

The question of the possibility of forming alliances with bourgeois states must be discussed. This question has already been raised at one of the Comintern Congresses, during the debate on the programme. Should such a combination really come to pass that some bourgeois state, under some unlooked for circumstances, and during mighty upheavals, should really take sides with the Soviet Union against the imperialists, then it would be the duty of the Communist Parties to aid the anti-imperialist war being waged by such a state. Should for instance one of the Eastern states, not belonging to the imperialist coalition, be desirous of entering into an alliance with the Soviet Union during a great conflict between Great Britain and the Soviet Union, a conflict into which the whole of Europe would be involved, and the proletarian state had the right, from the Communist standpoint, to enter into this alliance, then the Communists would be bound to aid this alliance.

Here we should not be dealing with an imperialist state, but with a state fighting against the imperialists and on the side of the Soviet Union; this would not simply be a bourgeois state as such, but a bourgeois state directing its fire against the imperialist regime. Such a state would not be a constituent of the imperialist coalition, but would inevitably, apart from its own volition, as consequence of the objective condition, play the rôle of a kind of appendage of an anti-imperialist coalition headed by the proletarian republic. One passage from Lenin's writing contains a direct reference to a revolutionary alliance of India, China, and Persia, without any assumption of the existence of a proletarian dictatorship in these countries. You will therefore realise that this question too has its place on our agenda.

I must pass over a number of other questions of lesser significance, and shall turn to a slogan which appears at the first glance to require no alterations conditioned by the development of present events. The elementary and specifically Bolshevist slogan of fraternisation. This slogan was of far-reaching significance for us for our fight against war during the years of the first great international massacre.

Whilst the Executive Committee was working, we asked ourselves whether it would be necessary to undertake any alterations in this slogan as result of the present situation. Can we proclaim this slogan under all and every circumstance, as we could in the years between 1915 and 1918? We came to the conclusion that the present situation demands certain corrections in this slogan. We applied the experience gained in our own civil war. The slogan of "fraternisation in the trenches" played a rôle of enormous importance when the armies of the imperialists, the Czarist army, or Kerensky's army, fought against the imperialist coalition headed by Germany. But when the Red Army was fighting against Yudenitsch, against Koltchak etc. did we then

proclaim the slogan of fraternisation? No, we did not proclaim it. This is a plain fact which we can all remember.

How did it happen that the slogan of "fraternisation" played so great a part during the imperialist war, but vanished as soon as the Red Army was formed, and this Red Army fought against our antagonists? We came to the conclusion that the slogan of fraternisation is a slogan implying the disorganisation of both parties thus fraternising, and when two imperialist armies confront one another, the slogan of fraternisation, in so far as it is actually realised, shakes both sides. This being the case, it is clearly comprehensible why we did not proclaim this slogan after we had our own revolutionary army fighting against the enemy. This slogan is a two edged sword, and those fraternising on our side must be really firm in their convictions if the slogan of fraternisation, and the process of fraternisation itself, is not to shake our own revolutionary discipline.

In this question we have adopted the standpoint that in the case of a conflict between two imperialist opponents on the one side, and, let us say, of a proletarian army and a national revolutionary army on the other, our slogan must be a slogan calling upon the soldiers of the hostile forces to come over to us, not a slogan of fraternisation, but a slogan calling upon the others to join us. This does not exclude the process of fraternisation, but it must be very differently organised. We must not induce the whole of our forces to creep into the trenches, but must have our special propagandists, who must be scattered about among the camps of the enemy, and undermine the counter-revolutionary discipline of the enemies of revolution.

Thus the present situation, the existence of the proletarian Soviet state, of the national revolutionary organisation in China, etc., forces us to undertake certain corrections of even such an elementary slogan as that of fraternisation, a slogan apparently perfectly clear and unequivocal.

## The Fight against War and against the Opposition.

In connection with the war question I must deal with the "platform" of our Opposition with respect to this question. The general estimate of the international situation laid before the Plenum of the E. C. C. by the Opposition concludes that at the present time we are weaker than we were before. The comrades of the Opposition have cited a number of defeats: the defeat in Bulgaria, in Esthonia, the defeat in Germany in 1923, the defeat of Chang Kai-shek's change of front in China, etc. The final result and the final balance is to be summed up in the conclusion that we are weaker than before.

I am of the opinion that in the first place this estimate is entirely wrong. There is of course no thought of denying that there have been defeats, severe defeats. But it is entirely useless to attempt to place these defeats to the account of the so-called "opportunist" majority of the Central Committee, since a large number of these defeats coincided with the culminating point of the leading rôle played by Comrade Zinoviev in the Comintern, and of the fairly important part taken in the Political Bureau of the C. C. of the C. P. S. U. by those comrades who are no longer members of this Bureau. I am however not desirous of drawing attention to these matters. I only wish to point out the incorrectness of drawing such wholesale conclusions as the statement that we are weaker at the present time than formerly. There has been a certain regrouping of forces in Europe of late. This phenomenon has received due consideration in the thesis on the "partial stabilisation of capitalism". The present period is characterised by a temporary firmer footing of European capitalism, especially of central European capitalism.

The utterances denying the partial stabilisation of capitalism are pure nonsense. The economics of European capitalism have become stronger, especially the economics of German capitalism. Enormous amounts of capital have been invested in industry. The fact of an economic uplift is further confirmed by the literary data at our disposal, by the index figures, and by the reports of comrades coming from this country. What will happen later is another question. It is probable that the limited capacity of the home markets will lead to a mighty collapse after the lapse of a certain time, but it is possible that the curve of development may continue to rise for the time being. There is no doubt whatever that German capitalism has a securer footing than before; and there is as little doubt that there is a simultaneous political consoli-

disation of the forces of German capitalism, a co-operation among the agrarians and industrialists belonging to every wing, a firmer establishment of the Fascist organisations, a consolidation of these organisations and their united front, accomplished in the united front in combination with the present German government.

The assertions that Polish capitalism is falling rapidly into decay, are not true by any means. On the contrary, we see that Polish capitalism is passing through a period of incontestable temporary consolidation, both politically and economically. This is based on a number of causes. In the first place, the Polish bourgeoisie was helped by the British strike, and then by a large number of loans and investments, especially from American capitalists.

There is thus no possibility of throwing doubts on the regrouping of forces in the direction of a stabilisation of capitalism, and a consolidation and firmer establishment of its political positions in Central Europe. And there is as little doubt that Zinoviev was in error when he lately stated that the stabilisation had already disappeared.

The greatest peculiarity of the present situation is however the fact that that inequality in the development of capitalism, referred to at the VII. Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee, has become more conspicuous than before. The mansynedness, diversity, and inconsistency in the development of the various departments of the world's economics have found even clearer expression. And though on the one hand we must admit the advancing consolidation of European continental capitalism, on the other hand we observe with equal clearness the rising tempest of the Chinese revolution, which is sweeping through the whole system of international relations in our present state of society, shaking them to their foundations.

When we take into account all these facts of present day development, and when we duly estimate the immensity of the Chinese revolution and its consequences, and the growing power of the Soviet Union, then we can scarcely arrive at the conclusion "that we have become weaker". It is true that our antagonist has become stronger (this we admit when we recognise the "partial stabilisation"). But a general comparison of forces does not show him to have gained any advantage. The formula of our having "become weaker" does not express the actual state of affairs.

The general estimate laid before us by the Opposition is therefore wrong.

Now to the "definite proposals" made us by the Opposition. It must first be observed that all these proposals have been accompanied by unheard of attacks on the C. C. of our Party and on the Comintern. We have never before heard such utterances as these, so rude and insulting, so entirely adventurous, not even during the inner Party and Comintern discussion of the last few years. And yet Comrades Trotzky and Vuyovitch, who have represented the Opposition in the Plenum of the Executive Committee, have literally not brought forward one single definite proposition, not one single word, with respect to the problems which I have touched upon here. And this although I questioned Comrade Trotzky most urgently, in my speech, to deal with the most important questions concerning the preparations being made for war.

During the imperialist war Comrade Trotzky was opposed to the defeat slogan, — is he conscious, or is he not conscious, of the error committed by him in the years between 1914 and 1917? Is he conscious of having been in error in rejecting the defeat slogan, and even the slogan of "the conversion of imperialist war into civil war"? Is he conscious of this, or does he acknowledge being in the wrong in advancing the peace slogan as our central slogan?

In asking these questions I am not referring to past times. We are concerned with burning questions of the moment. It is an open secret that we are moving rapidly towards an epoch which will put an end to our "pause for breath", and are entering on a period involving wars and attacks upon the Soviet Union. We do not know when the storm will break over our heads, but we know that it is approaching, dark and threatening. And now consider carefully! If we take this estimate of our situation seriously, then we must be ideologically prepared for it; fully prepared for it, prepared to hundred per cent. Is it possible to take it less seriously? It is only right to speak of one hundred per cent. We are not dealing with a mere bagatelle; we have to adopt either one definite



standpoint, or another; we have to adopt one central slogan, or another. Our decision is of immediate practical importance, and not merely of practical importance for some secondary matter, but for a question of **principle**, laying down the actual **line of orientation** for our Communist Parties.

Have such problems as that of "defeatism", of the peace slogan, of civil war, etc., lost anything of their acuteness? Can we simply pass them by?

Does not the most elementary political conscientiousness demand that Comrade Trotzky either **acknowledges** that he has been in error in these cardinal questions, or that he is in **open** opposition to Lenin? Is it so difficult to understand that an attempt to **avoid** this question at the present time would show utter lack of principle?

And yet, in spite of the open challenge made to Comrade Trotzky, he has uttered no word on all these matters, and we are still in the dark as to what he thinks about "defeatism" and about all his former errors. According to Comrade Trotzky's conceptions, Bolshevism was "re-equipped" as early as the spring of 1917, and, having become "Trotzkyfied", it drew all its weapons from Trotzky's arsenal. Perhaps Comrade Trotzky advances similar pretensions with regard to the war questions?

Here a definite answer is required. But this definite answer has not been given us.

More than this. We have been given no answer whatever, either definite or indefinite. And this in spite of the unusual energy shown by the comrades of the Opposition, who have let off innumerable quantities of essays, speeches, declarations, explanations, "unheld" speeches, etc. etc. for the benefit of the Plenum. They have placed on this occasion on record documents to the extent of about 500 pages. But in all this voluminous written matter no room has been found for the most important questions of all, no room for a reply to the most fundamental problems, no room for a spark of courage to acknowledge opportunist errors.

In place of this we find Comrade Trotzky touching upon one question only: the question of the Anglo-Russian Committee. To Trotzky this appears to be the sole question worthy of attention, and his reply to it is all he accomplishes in connection with the war preparations! And these are the comrades who pretend to political farsightedness! I too must however devote a few words to this question. Every one of us is able to understand that among the enormous arsenal of defensive weapons at the disposal of the international labour movement, the Anglo-Russian Committee is only one among many. There are other weapons too; there is the Comintern, there is the Red International of Labour Unions, there are about 60 Communist Parties, there is the C. P. S. U., there is the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Soviet Union, there is the Chinese revolution, etc. etc. All these weapons must be mobilised against the danger of war.

But our comrades of the Opposition ignore all these factors with the sole exception of the Anglo-Russian Committee, and have concentrated on this one question the whole of their eloquence, their temperament, their "indignation", their slanders, and the rest of virtues, with the object of persuading our foreign comrades that the C. P. S. U. has been acting the part of a traitor to the proletariat. It must also be observed that the tone adopted by the Opposition, and by Comrade Trotzky, at this meeting, has been extremely strange. Every word, and every second printed line, contains accusations of "treachery", of "unfaithfulness", of "crime", etc., hurled against the C. C. of our Party and against the Comintern. This has aroused, and is bound to arouse, the greatest indignation among our comrades from abroad. And if a certain amount of sympathy was felt at first, among especially softhearted comrades, for the comrades of the Opposition who have been "pushed aside" and "humiliated", this sympathy was speedily destroyed, and Trotzky aroused general indignation against himself.

This you may see from the resolutions passed on the attitude taken by the Opposition. The comrades of the Opposition advanced an urgent demand that the **Anglo-Russian Committee should be dissolved**. We replied that we must not delude ourselves that the British section of the Anglo-Russian Committee would help much during or before a war, but that in the given historical situation, under the given circumstances, it is better to avoid a rupture, since such a rupture would have made an extremely unfavourable impression in view of the various other "ruptures" which we have to record. The Op-

position repeated what they said long ago, merely using stronger expressions: You are co-operating with the scoundrels who betrayed the General Strike, etc., and therefore you too are traitors to the working class!

The arguments brought forward here by the Opposition differ solely from their former arguments in being more "definite", more "decided", and more violent in their attacks on the leaders of our Party and on the Comintern. And yet it is obvious that the problem is not solved by designating both the "Left" and the Right leaders of the General Council as opportunists, reformists, scabs, servants of imperialism, etc. These are sacred and entirely elementary truths. The question is, whether it would have been right to dissolve the Anglo-Russian Committee in the midst of an extremely difficult international situation. We were of the opinion that the situation obliged us to make a number of concessions. This did not by any means signify that our trade unions abandoned their right to criticise. The interview with comrade Tomsy, shortly after the Berlin Conference, showed this plainly enough.

These were the considerations (and not illusory considerations expecting active help) which led to our approval of the tactics pursued by the All-Russian Central Trade Union Council. This does not exclude the possibility that the leaders of the General Council may be induced by our criticism to dissolve the Anglo-Russian Committee themselves. This is not impossible. Our criticism is perfectly necessary. And the English workers will be fully able to realise that our action forces the traitorous leaders to **unmask their own treachery**, whether they name themselves right or "Left".

Finally, two further "proposals" were made by the Opposition in connection with the war danger. Both of these proposals are simply ridiculous. One of them was brought forward by Comrade Vuyovitch, with Trotzky's approval, the other by both Vuyovitch and Trotzky, and is repeated in their speeches, proclamations, etc. The first proposal is that **under the given circumstances, and in view of the war danger, our orientation should be in the direction of the anarcho-syndicalist workers**. The second proposal is that the group around Maslow, Ruth Fischer, etc., should be readmitted into the Comintern and into the German Party.

A few words must first be devoted to the present "anarcho-syndicalists". The anarcho-syndicalists count a total of 2½. For the most part these are "leaders" without an army. No great anarcho-syndicalist organisation exists anywhere, with the exception of the American "I. W. W.". It is characteristic that all anarcho-syndicalist organisations still existing in Europe are violently opposed to the Soviet Union, their ideology not differing in the very slightest degree from the **Menshevist-social revolutionary ideology**. They hold the standpoint that the Bolsheviks have been guilty of threefold treason against international revolution, that our dictatorship is an oligarchy, that our dictatorship is not of the proletariat; they agitate against the Soviet Union with the most despicable methods, etc. And these are the allies to whom Trotzky and Vuyovitch would have us apply, that they may "defend" us! Complete and absolute nonsense!

We have not the slightest leaning towards an "orientation" in the direction of that counter-revolutionary petty bourgeoisie which is doing its utmost, from day to day, to compete with the leaders of the Social Democrats in the choice of the dirtiest weapons to be used against us. It must be remembered that these elements are not backed up by the masses. This is the rub. In 1914 Trotzky ran accidentally against a few anarcho-syndicalists, and stuck there for a time. But now it is no longer 1914. Many regroupings have taken place since then. We have surely no need to light a lantern and go seeking for a handful of anarcho-syndicalists to protect the Soviet Union in an emergency against the imperialists.

Comrades, the idea is perfectly ridiculous, complete nonsense. And it is especially ridiculous at the present moment, when our chief task is to win over the average worker, especially the European average worker, who is, regrettably enough, still in the clutches of the Social Democratic parties and of the Amsterdam International. The problem of winning over the average worker was first raised at the time of the III. Congress of the Comintern, held with the aid of Lenin's authority, and this problem still confronts us today, more urgently than ever. To create a diversion with respect to this problem would mean substituting Lenin's slogan, demanding the conquest of

the masses, by a slogan calling for the "conquest" of a few counter-revolutionary leaders.

As to Maslow, the proposal with regard to him and his group has aroused extreme indignation among the members of the Executive Committee. You will no doubt recollect that the declaration of repentance made by the Opposition on 6. October, and expressly stated by Comrade Zinoviev to be "meant seriously", one point was the assurance that the Opposition entirely gives up every connection with the group expelled from the Comintern, the names of Urbahns, Maslow, and others being given. I must here relate a few details on the position of these excluded members. They have their own newspaper, they have already converted this paper into a weekly, and are taking steps towards issuing it daily; they are taking steps towards the formation of a **party of their own**. There is no doubt whatever that they are in receipt of help from our **Opposition**, from whom they receive material about our Party life, even to reports on the sessions of the Political Bureau, and information on occurrences in this Bureau.

Steering their course in accordance with the political wind, they direct their attack at times directly against the Soviet Union itself, whilst at other times they adopt a milder tone towards the Union, and direct their efforts to violent attacks on our Party and the Comintern. On one occasion, for instance, they wrote that Stalin does not differ in the least from Noske (Disturbance). I do not understand why you are surprised at that, it is nothing new (A voice: "It is new to us"). Then I am pleased to have been able to inform you of it. (Laughter.)

Their newspaper, which has become the organ of our "**Opposition**" at the present time, dishes up every morsel of gossip or slander in circulation against our Party and the Comintern. These good people will presently arrive at a slogan of "Soviets without Communists". They have already published an article on war in which they state that, unless the present leaders of the Comintern change their political and organisatory course **radically** at the last moment, they will play the same rôle as the leaders of the **Second International** at the beginning of the great war. ("The Flag of Communism", No. 12.)

This writes the Maslow pardoned by Hindenburg's Government, the Maslow who disgraced himself at his trial, about the Parties of the Comintern, and that at time when the Chinese Communists are being strangled, when the French Communists are being thrown into prison, when the Italian comrades are perishing in their dungeons, when the German Communists are organising hundreds of thousands of workers in the struggle against war, when an incredible agitation is being carried on against the Soviet Union, when the whole capitalist world is conspiring together **against the Comintern!** And these **hostile elements** (who seek to provoke us further by dubbing themselves "orthodox Marxists", "Leninists" etc.) are proposed to us as saviours of the German Party.

Our policy in preparing for war, in all that concerns inner Party questions, must consist of ensuring the strength and unity of inner relations in the Party, and of steering a definite course towards **winning over the broad masses of the Social Democratic workers**.

Our Parties are well aware that they will be plunged into situations in which their lives will be literally at stake if they are to remain true to the Comintern, and to protect with their own bodies the socialist fatherland of the proletariat against the attack of the imperialists. But instead of demanding that our **ranks stand closer together than ever**, instead of demanding the expulsion of apostates and the winning over of the broad masses, the Opposition proposes that we admit any offal into our Party, the various types of anarcho-syndicalists, the more than suspicious Maslow, the "disciplined" Ruth Fischer, etc., and meanwhile we may forget the Social Democratic **workers** for the present. We are not in agreement in any single point with this standpoint; **not a single comrade** has said a word in favour of these "measures", with the exception of Comrade Vuyovitch, whose fractional interests make him Trotsky's supporter in all these attacks, sallies, and proposals. Not one single member of the Plenum is agreed with the readmission of Maslow and his group, or with the idea of turning our backs on the broad masses and starting on a search for a few syndicalists to help us to defend the Soviet Union.

(To be continued.)