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## A Misleading Description of the "German October".

By O. W. Kuusinen.

"During the second half of last year we had here (in Germany) a classic demonstration of how the opportunity of a uniquely revolutionary situation of world historical significance may be missed." (Trotzky, September 1924, in his "Lessons of October".)

"If the (German) Party had proclaimed insurrection in October last year, as proposed by the Berlin comrades, it would now be lying prone with a broken neck." (From the draft of theses, by Trotzky and Radek, January 1924.)

Both in September 1923 and in January 1924, I had much opportunity, in my capacity as secretary, to take part in the commissions on the German question appointed by the Executive of the Comintern; I am thus not only familiar with the standpoint of the Executive as a whole, but also with the standpoint of the separate leading comrades, with regard to the events in Germany in October. I was thus exceedingly astonished to see the light in which these events are viewed by Trotzky in the preface to his book: "1917" ("The Lessons of October"). I was much surprised that such recent events—really not lying in any remonte past—can be so misrepresented. As the facts are not yet generally known, we must oppose comrade Trotzky's description by a statement of the actual position.

### The Accusation.

Comrade Trotzky devotes his "Lessons of October" to the exposition and delineation of the following theme: The experiences of the Russian October and the experiences of many European countries, especially the experience—as he expresses it—"of the German October which did not take place", all go to show one and the same thing. In Germany, authoritative comrades in our own ranks opposed the insurrection at the decisive moment. In Russia, thanks to the pressure exercised by comrade Lenin, and thanks to the cooperation of comrade Trotzky, the insurrection was set in action and the victory won. But in the "German October" the insurrection was not begun, although in comrade's Trotzky's opinion every pre-requisite for revolution was given, with the exception of far-seeing and energetic leaders.

The existence of this revolutionary situation was not recognised in time, and no comrade arose and put pressure upon the Central, striving to prevent the insurrection. For this reason we had neither insurrection nor seizure of power. The German October did not take place, we gained nothing more than "a classic example of how the opportunity of a uniquely revolutionary situation of world historical significance may be missed".

This drama of the German October was played for comrade Trotzky against the background of the history of the Russian October. He describes in detail the energy with which he himself took action in 1917, and in even greater detail the manner in which various other comrades attempted to "retreat before the battle". These comrades—"opponents of the insurrection"—had extraordinarily overestimated the forces of the enemy only two weeks before the bloodless victory of the Bolsheviki in Petrograd ("even Lenin was of the opinion that the enemy had still considerable forces in Petrograd"). According to comrade Trotzky, the leaders of the German C. P. committed this same error of overestimating the forces of our adversaries in October last year.

"They confidently accepted all figures calculated by the bourgeoisie as to their armed forces, added these carefully to the forces of the police and militia, then rounded up the result to half a million and more, and thus assumed a compact force, armed to the teeth, and fully able to paralyse their endeavours. It is an incontestable fact that the German counter-revolution possessed forces which were better organised and better trained than the whole and half elements of the Kornilov forces. But the active forces of the German revolution were again different from ours. In Germany the proletariat represents the overwhelming majority of the population. In our case the revolutionary question was decided, at least at first, by Petrograd and Moscow. In Germany the insurrection would have had ten mighty strongholds at once. If we take all this into consideration, then the armed forces of the enemy were in reality by no means so dangerous as represented by the statistic calculation, with figures rounded up to numbers beyond the truth." ("Lessons of October." Russian edition, p. XI.)

This is the only place in which comrade Trotzky mentions any difference in the objective premises of the Russian and German Octobers. According to his description, the conditions for the seizure of power in 1923 in Germany were not in the least less favourable than in Russia in 1917:

"It is not possible to imagine conditions more favourable, or more suitable and matured for the seizure of power."

He does not make the very slightest mention, not even a superficial indication, of any reasons, however insignificant, which might justify the retreat at the time of the "German October". No, no, in his opinion the insurrection was the unconditional duty of the Party at this juncture. To him it is a misfortune that during the "German October" the opponents of the insurrection were able to "drag the Party back".

Thus (according to comrade Trotzky) the German revolution fell through. After this defeat the guilty comrades came forward with their "biased calculations", for the purpose of "justifying the policy which had led to defeat". And comrade Trotzky adds:

"It is easy to imagine how history would have been written if those comrades in the C. C. (of the Russian C. P.) who inclined in 1917 to the tactics of retreat before the battle had had their way. The semi-official writers of history would have had no difficulty in maintaining that an insurrection in the year 1917 would have been utter nonsense." (p. XLI.)

Thanks to comrade Trotzky's dramatic art, his representation of the German October conjures up the figure of the one chiefly guilty of the German defeat. It is true that comrade Trotzky does not give his name, but his figure is easily recognisable among the others. Everything that is said of him shows plainly that the figure is not that of a German; the unnamed German accused take a secondary place. The chief of the accused is obviously responsible for the appearance of the Germans in the dock at all.

Why did he not appoint better leaders in the Central of the German Party? Why did he not exercise proper pressure on the German leaders? This was his first duty...

Or, was anything else to be expected of him after the "experiences of October"? What more was to be expected of him in the future?

"Of late"—writes Trotzky—"much has been written and spoken about the necessity of "Bolshevizing" the Comintern. ...What does the Bolshevizing of the Communist Parties mean? It means that these parties are to be so schooled, and their leaders so chosen, that they do not leave the track when their October arrives. This is the true import of Hegel, and of all the wisdom of our books and philosophies." (p. LXIV.)

Thus comrade Trotzky in September 1924.

### Two Different Rôles.

Comrade Trotzky spoke differently to this in January 1924.

At that time the Executive of the Comintern, with the collaboration of leading German comrades representing all three tendencies, had drawn the balance of the unhappy German revolution. It is true that comrade Trotzky did not participate personally in these sessions, but comrade Radek submitted these drafted, according to his official declaration, "by comrades Trotzky and Piatakov, and by me (Radek)".

This thesis draft from the Right minority was rejected by the Executive of the Comintern, and has not been published to this day. In one part of these theses we read:

"The Executive decidedly rejects the demand made by the leaders of the Berlin organisation, to the effect that the retreat made by the Party in October is to be regarded as unjustified and even traitorous. If the Party had proclaimed the insurrection in October, as proposed by the Berlin comrades, it would now be lying prone with a broken neck. The Party committed grave errors during the retreat, and these errors are the object of our present criticism. But the retreat itself corresponded to the objective situation, and is approved by the Executive."

We thus see that in January of this year comrade Trotzky was seriously of the opinion that the **retreat** was right during the German October, and was in accordance with the objective situation. The leaders of the Berlin organisation considered this retreat "entirely unjustified and even traitorous". But comrade Trotzky protested most decidedly against this view of the matter. He demanded together with Radek, Piatakov, and the chairman of the German Party Central, Brandler, that the Executive should approve, the retreat.

How are we to understand this?

In order to understand this, the reader must know that the tactics of "retreat before the battle", proposed by the right wing of the Central of the German C.P. in October 1923, were adopted with the immediate co-operation of comrade Radek. In all essentials comrade Trotzky has always been in agreement with this right wing of the German C.P. (Brandler, etc.); and this was again the case in January after the defeat.

"The experience gained in the European struggles during the last few years, and especially the experience of the German struggle, show us that there are two types of leader who have the tendency to drag the Party back just at the moment when it should leap forward." (p. XIV.)

Comrade Trotzky writes this in September in his book, "The Lessons of October". He stigmatises these "types" most thoroughly, and declares further:

"At decisive moments these two types work hand in hand, and oppose insurrection." (p. LXIV.)

In October 1923 this was really the case in Germany. And three months later—in January—Trotzky expresses the opinion that these "types" had acted perfectly rightly in Germany, that they had taken the course of action which had to be taken, that the objective situation demanded precisely this course of action, and that the Party was bound to make this retreat. An insurrection would have been utter nonsense, and the Party would have broken its neck.

The "types" thus accused naturally submitted their "biased calculation" to the Executive in January "for the purpose of justifying the policy leading to the defeat". The Executive rejected these calculations decisively enough. But comrade Trotzky defended them.

Such was his lack of "boldness", just three months after the German October.

In spite of the "Lessons of October".

And in spite of the main rule for all the revolutions in the world: "Not to leave the track when their own October comes."

This was in January of this year. But by September, as we have seen, comrade Trotzky had assumed quite another rôle. We do not hear a single word about the justification of the retreat, nor is there a trace to be found of the "types". No, now comrade Trotzky appeals for the insurrection, and condemns those opposed to it:

"The decisive turning point is the moment when the Party of the proletariat passes from the stage of preparation, propaganda, organisation, and agitation, to the stage of actual struggle for power, to armed insurrection against the bourgeoisie. Every irresolute, sceptical, opportunist, and pro-capitalist element still remaining in the Party will oppose insurrection at this moment, will seek theoretical formulas for this opposition, and find them among the opponents of the day before, the opportunists." (p. LXIV.)

Thus: Down with the opportunists! Down with the heroes of capitulation! Down with Brandler and the sharers of his views!

A thousand times: Hurrah for insurrection!

But—as someone among the audience might ask diffidently—what about the broken neck?

We have here two distinct views of the German October. Which of them corresponds to the actual truth?

In my opinion, neither of them. Both are wrong.

### Correct and Timely Estimate of the Situation.

In an article written by comrade Trotzky in May ("East and West"), and referred to in the "Lessons of October" (p. 69), he states that "some comrades" (here comrade Zinoviev is chiefly meant) had declared, after the German defeat: "We have overestimated the situation, the revolution is not yet mature." Comrade Trotzky is ironical about this "we" (we = Zinoviev), and declares:

"Our error did not lie in the fact that "we" overestimated the pre-requisites of revolution, but in that "we" underestimated them, and did not recognise at the right moment the necessity of the application of energetic and courageous tactics: the necessity for the struggle to gain the masses for the fight for power."

What do the facts tell us?

Even in the theses drawn up by comrades Trotzky and Radek in January 1924 the following is acknowledged:

"From the very beginning the Comintern and the German C.P. regarded the Ruhr struggles as a period of revolutionary development in Germany"... "The appeal issued by the Leipzig Party Conference of the German C.P., the decisions of the Frankfurt Conference, the resolution passed by the delegation of the German C.P. in the spring conference with the Comintern, all go to prove that both the German C.P. and the Comintern have grasped the fact that the German proletariat stands at a parting of the ways, that, after the Party has carried out its united front tactics, after it has accomplished much patient work among the social democratic masses and among the non-partisan workers, and after it has gathered around it broad masses of the proletariat, it will find itself confronted by the task of not merely winning over the overwhelming majority of the proletariat, but of leading the proletariat into battle as a revolutionary Party working for the concrete aim of seizing political power, and regarding this as the sole means of escape from the situation in which the German people is placed."

These lines are an excellent characterisation of the viewpoint of the Executive. But it is above all the viewpoint represented by comrade Zinoviev's proposals. But as to the viewpoint of the German C.P., this is somewhat embellished by comrades Radek and Trotzky. At that time, during the autumn and winter of 1923, the Central had but a very dim idea of the revolutionary tasks facing the Party.

There was a great deal more clarity contained in various propositions made by the left opposition, but these were rejected by the Party.

If comrade Trotzky had been desirous of describing the matter in strict accordance with actuality, he would have had to express himself somewhat as follows: With reference to the Executive and the Left opposition, these should least of all be exposed to the reproach of not having recognised the necessity for an energetic change of tactics, since they did actually recognise this necessity and exercised pressure upon the German C.P.

Yes, comrade Trotzky may reply, but the pressure exercised by the Executive upon the German Party at that time was not "strong enough". The January theses drawn up by comrades Trotzky and Radek did actually contain this reproach. But they should have made their reproach "at the right time", in the summer or autumn of 1923. If they had done so, it is possible that the Executive would have followed their advice and increased pressure. But three months after October, in January 1924, this wise discovery was a very cheap and entirely useless argument.

The second point of the January theses of comrades Trotzky and Radek, subjected to the criticism of the Comintern, is to be taken more seriously. They assert that the questions relating to the Ruhr struggle were discussed, even in the Enlarged Executive (middle of June 1923) "much more from the standpoint of propaganda than from the standpoint of organisation for an immediate struggle".

The task of organising the immediate struggle with the object of seizing power had not been concretely formulated, it is true, by June. The Executive did not adopt the "October course" until August, two months later.

In June the situation in Germany was still such that no person of any common sense could have thought of regarding the organisation of armed insurrection as the next task. Before such an important step as this can be taken, the existence of symptomatic phenomena proclaiming the rise of a wave of revolution, in however slight degree, is an absolutely imperative preliminary condition. In June no such symptoms were observable.

At the beginning of August an abrupt change took place in Germany. The general situation became revolutionary. Of this we have proof in the mighty mass movement leading to the overthrow of the Cuno government. Had the German C.P. foreseen this movement, it should have entered courageously into the struggle in July, and have taken over the initiative and leadership of the movement. As a matter of fact the German Central issued a courageous proclamation on 12 July, calling upon the proletariat to take part in street demonstrations on Anti-Fascist day (29 July). The government prohibited this demonstration. The Left opposition of the Party demanded "the conquest of the street".

At this time comrades Zinoviev and Bucharin, as also comrade Trotzky, were in Caucasia. The first two informed us, during the discussion already begun on the subject, that they were in favour of the street demonstration. Comrade Radek and I, who were in Moscow, were opposed to it. To us it appeared to be running a useless risk. Comrade Radek, who often evinces a high degree of sensitiveness for changes in the political atmosphere, did not on this occasion feel the approach of something great (nor did I), and therefore we could not see any valid reason for such hazardous action on the part of the German C.P. This was a mistake on our part. The view taken by comrades Zinoviev and Bucharin was expressed in the following words:

"It is only by such methods as the appeal issued on 12 July that the German C.P. can become, in the eyes of the whole of the workers, the generally acknowledged champion and the united centre of the whole proletariat in the struggle against Fascism. Without this, the sad experience suffered by Italy and Bulgaria will be repeated. In the German Central there are more than enough retarding elements, and elements standing for prudence and caution."

To this Radek replied that he regarded this forcing of the struggle in Germany as "steering towards a defeat in July for fear of a repetition of the Bulgarian events" and opposed these

tactics most decidedly. Comrade Trotzky, however, informed us that he had formed no opinion of his own upon the subject, not being sufficiently informed.

The two points of view which had thus been formed among the members of the Executive were communicated to the Central of the C.P. of Germany. In all probability comrade Brandler acted entirely independently of both points of view; in other words, he had probably never taken the idea of a street demonstration seriously for a moment.

Immediately after this the broad mass movement set in. Under the pressure of this movement the Cuno government resigned on 12 August. Comrade Zinoviev, in Caucasia, received only the scanty information provided by the Rosta on this movement: a mighty revolutionary wave is rising.

He raised the alarm.

By 15 August his most important theses: "The situation in Germany and our first tasks" were already prepared. He has scarcely ever written anything better than this. A clearly defined October course runs like a scarlet thread through the whole.

After we had received these theses from Zinoviev from Caucasia, we—Radek and I—realised that in Germany the revolution was knocking at the door. This is the fact of the matter.

The following are a few sentences from the theses:

"The crisis is approaching, decisive events are at the gate. A new and decisive chapter is beginning in the activity of the German C.P., and with this in the whole Comintern. The C.P. of Germany shape its course rapidly and decisively in view of the impending decisive revolutionary crisis.

The crisis is approaching. Enormous interests are at stake. The moment is coming near and nearer in which we shall need courage, courage, and again courage."

Almost at the same time as we received these theses, comrades Zinoviev and Bucharin arrived at Moscow. Comrade Trotzky, too, came back. Zinoviev's theses were acknowledged to be right, and were accepted by the Executive. The representatives of the C.P. of Germany were at once invited to come to Moscow, but the Central replied that its representatives "could not come at present". Although the bel-esprits among the German comrades (not the Left, these had already ceased to be bel-esprits) were already up to the ears in the revolutionary movement, they had no clear idea of the significance and graveness of the movement.

This circumstance is the best proof of the acumen with which comrade Zinoviev grasped the import of the German movement. But comrade Trotzky appears to have forgotten Zinoviev's estimate of the situation, though made "at the right time".

#### In the September Commission.

Comrade Zinoviev defended his standpoint for three weeks. The representatives of the Central of the German C.P. did not appear in Moscow till the middle of September. They had no choice but to acknowledge that the latest events had fully confirmed the diagnosis and revolutionary prognosis made by Zinoviev a month before, although they themselves, the representatives of the German Central, had not grasped this immediately.

Comrade Brandler succumbed to fantastic revolutionary visions. The seizure of power now appeared to him as an easy and certain matter. He greatly exaggerated the readiness to fight and the military preparedness of the German C.P., and rendered it more difficult for the Executive to form a correct idea of the immediate difficulties and requirements of the German movement.

At the September Commission of the Comintern comrade Trotzky declared himself to be in agreement with comrade Zinoviev and other comrades with reference to the general estimate of the situation. But in the question of the workers' Soviets slogan there was a grave difference of opinion. Comrade Zinoviev and other comrades considered it necessary for the German CP not to limit itself to the propaganda of the idea of the Soviets only, but to proceed to the actual formation of workers' councils, especially in districts where the conditions were most favourable for this.

Comrade Trotzky and Brandler protested energetically against this. As the other German comrades shared their opinion, comrade Zinoviev and the others in agreement with him did not deem it possible to insist upon the acceptance of their propositions at all costs. The final decision on this question was thus unanimously accepted by the Commission.

I am not of the opinion that this decision proved to be right. I believe that a most important slogan for the mobilisation and organisation of revolutionary forces was here abandoned.

Comrade Trotzky, in his "Lessons of October" seeks to defend this decision. To me his defence is inadequate, but I think it unnecessary to dwell upon this vexed question within the confines of this article, as such discussion would lead to too many side-tracks. With regard to this point the decision was based upon comrade Trotzky's standpoint and not on comrade Zinoviev's. The articles written by comrade Zinoviev at the time show plainly that he submitted loyally to the decision and wrote accordingly. No person of sound common sense can thus maintain that comrade Zinoviev's proposition could have contributed even in the slightest degree to the defeat of the German revolution.

But enough of that!

An exceedingly strange and unsubstantiated accusation against comrade Zinoviev is contained in the following words of comrade Trotzky's:

"Our error lies in the fact that "we" kept on repeating for weeks the old platitudes about the impossibility of "fixing a definite term for the revolution", resulting in every chance being neglected." ("East and West", p. 59.)

Where was the question discussed "for weeks"?

In the Commission there was not one single day wasted in the discussion of the question of whether it would be possible to fix a certain time for the revolution or not. It is true that, in the course of the debate on questions of greater importance, a similar point was touched upon. The one-sided inclination shown by comrade Trotzky to carry out the revolution strictly according to the almanac appeared to almost all the comrades present as a narrowly organisatory and somewhat un-Marxist manner of dealing with the subject. It is very possible that some comrade expressed this opinion aloud.

Serious differences of opinion arose in the Commission with reference to the "choice of leading persons". Not that comrade Trotzky was anxious to remove any of the opportunist members of the Central. No, he had nothing to say against those members of the Central who, later on in October, retreated before the battle. On the contrary, he wanted to remove from the Central one of the leading forces of the left wing, comrade Ruth Fischer. He proposed that the Executive of the Comintern should retain her in Moscow, so that she could not "disturb" the revolutionary work of the Brandler Central Committee.

Comrade Zinoviev was entirely opposed to this proposal of comrade Trotzky's, and it was with much pains and trouble that he finally succeeded in gaining a weak majority in the Commission for the rejection of this proposition.

I cannot remember for which of the two propositions I voted. It is very possible that I voted for comrade Trotzky's motion. At that time I still regarded comrade Brandler as a steadfast revolutionist. I have no right, personally, to reproach any other comrades for having made mistakes in the question of the selection of members of the German Central. But as comrade Trotzky is anxious to impart instructions to the Executive on the "choice of leading persons", without saying a single word about his own errors, then I cannot but observe that in this respect comrade Trotzky has not set us any very good example.

It is possible to agree with him when he says, referring to the German Central:

"To ignore such lessons (as that of last year. O. K.), and to fail to draw from them the necessary conclusions with regard to the choice of persons, signifies to invite inevitable defeat." (p. LXIII.)

But here it must not be forgotten to add the really instructive episode of Ruth Fischer, in the September Commission.

No differences of opinion arose in the Commission on the other questions submitted, many of them of great practical importance.

The sister Parties of the most important neighbouring countries were mobilised by the Executive and prepared, as far as possible, for the possibilities of the German revolution.

### The German October as it was in Reality.

Events in Germany took a different course to that desired by us. The revolutionary proletariat suffered a severe defeat. The causes of this defeat lay partly in the objective difficulties of the situation, partly in the deficient leadership of the Party.

It cannot be maintained that the estimate of the situation, as made by the Executive in August and September, was wrong in any essential. Nothing of the kind! The possibility of victory really existed. It is true that in September (but not in August) this possibility was overestimated. The elementary mass movement ebbed more rapidly than we had foreseen. The social democrats proved in many respects to be even stronger pillars of

capitalism than we had concluded from the words of our German comrades. The representatives of the German CP in the German commission exaggerated the communist strength.

It is naturally a fantastic exaggeration when comrade Trotzky writes in "East and West" (p. 120):

"With regard to all the prerequisites of revolution, we were in the most favourable position that can be imagined."

No, in September our estimate of the situation was not so exaggeratedly favourable. Comrade Trotzky, in his victorious self-confidence, omits to consider the great difference between the objective prerequisites of the German revolution of 1923 and the Russian of 1917, and forgets the points in which the Russian revolution was more favourably placed, for instance the fact that in Russia we had an armed army of many millions, the overwhelming majority of which stood for the proletarian revolution in the autumn of 1917. We had nothing to compare with this in Germany in 1923, and comrade Trotzky, when writing history, omits such trifles.

The general situation in Germany was however not unfavourable. At the V. Congress, after it was possible to form a clear idea of events, comrade Zinoviev was quite right in saying:

"Should the revolutionary situation of October 1923 be repeated, we should again insist upon the open acknowledgment of the fact that the revolution is knocking at the door... I repeat, should such a situation occur again, then we shall examine the figures, calculate our forces more accurately, but again stake everything upon the card of revolution."

The actually existing possibility of victory was not taken advantage of by the German Party in October. The Party equipped itself for the battle, but did not enter into it. This was the greatest disappointment to us.

The Brandler Central is chiefly to blame. Brandler maintained that the incredible difficulties rendered the retreat inevitable. As we have seen, comrade Trotzky agreed with this assertion by January. And a number of other comrades, including comrade Zinoviev (and the writer of these lines) were at first — in November and December — of the same opinion. As result of the information received chiefly through Radek and the Central of the German C.P. This opinion was partially shaken during the January conference, thanks to the information received from the Left. The Executive was not able to state with certainty in its resolution, whether the retreat had really been unavoidable or not. The Executive declined to accede to the demand of the Right (Radek, Trotzky, Brandler, etc.) and to "approve" the retreat.

But this or that solution of this historical question was no longer of any actual political significance. The leaders of the Party, apart from this or that answer to this question, exposed themselves to the severest criticism in October. The necessity of the retreat itself, had it really been a necessity, could not serve as justification for the utter incompetence evinced by the Central of the German C.P.

In class warfare, as in all warfare, the conditions determine the forms and aims of the strategy employed. Attacks and retreats are decided by the conditions of the struggle. But whatever these conditions, and however unfavourable they may be, they can never be such as to justify passivity in a revolution. Capitulation is not a form of fighting. It is a renunciation of the fight.

Comrade Zinoviev's speech at the V. World Congress contained the following words:

"We do not reproach Brandler for not having won a victory. No. We are fully aware that defeats are often met with in war. We reproach him with something quite different; we do not ask him: why are you not victorious; we ask him: why did you not fight, why did you not do your utmost to gain the victory?"

The Central of the German C.P. did not fight; it capitulated without fighting.

It need not be said that Brandler's actions were not based on any conscious, that is, treacherous reasoning. No; if comrade Trotzky's present assertions (with regard to the alleged brilliant prospects of victory and the absolute impossibility of allowing the retreat) were really in accordance with the facts, then we could only conclude that Brandler and all his co-workers were traitors. But in reality this is not the case. Brandler and his adherents are incontestably communists, but they are communists who have committed a number of opportunist errors. They wanted to fight, but went "off the tracks". In Saxony they played at being minister, instead of bringing the masses into the streets. They "prepared themselves" for revolution, but did

nothing to develop the revolutionary forces of the masses. They even issued directions that all mass action should be abstained from until the "decisive struggle". These directions were carried out everywhere, with the exception of Hamburg. And this was all. The fears and warnings expressed by comrade Zinoviev in summer last year, with respect to the possibility of a repetition of the Bulgarian events in Germany, were thus substantiated. In his August theses he gave a special warning against precisely the mistake which had such disastrous results in October.

"It is impossible to save up powder until the decisive moment.

It would be doctrinary theory, and a gigantic political error to postpone all action until the decisive struggle."

But the German Central took precisely the wrong road. It committed precisely the "gigantic political error" against which the Executive had issued an equivocal and decided warning.

### When the Left Hand does not Know what the Right is Doing.

It is scarcely necessary to state that after the October experience fundamental changes took place in the Central of the German C.P. In January the Executive undertook an energetic renewal of this Central. The right wing was removed.

Later, in May, comrade Trotzky wrote:

"It is proper that the German C.P. has fundamentally reformed its leading organ."

We take note of this delayed acknowledgement. But it would have been better if comrade Trotzky had lent his support to this reform earlier, in January. But at that time he was opposed to it. In the draft of theses by comrades Trotzky and Radek, already referred to, we read that the "demand for a reform in the Central implies a panic, threatening the very existence of the Party."

Comrade Trotzky thus supported the German Right until the last minute, whilst the Executive, and above all comrade Zinoviev, combatted the Right. We had a similar example in the September Commission in the Ruth Fischer case.

But the readers of the "Lessons of October" receive an exactly contrary impression. Thus for instance comrade Trotzky writes as follows with reference to the importance of the "choice of leading persons":

"Here ample experience was gained through that German October which failed to take place. The choice of leaders must be made from the viewpoint of revolutionary action. In Germany there were sufficient opportunities of testing the leading Party members in moments of immediate struggle." (p. LXIII.)

This is true, and it is just for this reason that Right leaders have frequently been excluded from the German Central (Levi, Friesland, Geyer, etc.). These have later proved to be renegades. On the other hand, the Executive has frequently supplemented the Party Central by representatives of the Left. But this has not been done on any single occasion on the initiative of comrade Trotzky. The initiative has generally been comrade Zinoviev's, and has generally encountered resistance on the part of comrade Trotzky.

This is no accidental phenomenon. When the Russian debate has been discussed in the sections of the Comintern, the few adherents of comrade Trotzky have generally belonged to the extreme Right wing of the Party. And this cannot be regarded as pure accident.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the Russian questions, or on the international questions now belonging more to the past. It is however worth while to devote some attention to the prospects of the international situation as seen by comrade Trotzky. In face of all the facts of the present moment, of all the proofs to the contrary, he still speaks of a continued democratic pacifist "era". This proves the strength of his trend towards the Right.

But this is not the whole truth. No one can understand Trotzky who sees in him nothing more than an ordinary opportunist. Comrade Trotzky is not a one-handed man. He has a right hand and a left hand. We already had the opportunity of seeing him in two rôles in his interpretation of the "German October".

And with comrade Trotzky this does not happen by accident; it is a general rule. In actual practice he always represents two different "types" so to speak. One type deviates to the right, the other to the left. A superficial observer might conclude that comrade Trotzky vacillates constantly between the two types. But this only appears to be the case. Comrade

Trotzky is not a vacillating man. He generally adopts a definite—but wrong—course.

In reality the case is this: In his actions he deviates towards the Right, but he describes these actions in Left, very Left, terms. The Right type is the type of the man of action who speaks little, who does his work and says nothing about it. The Left type is a man anxious to play a prominent public rôle, a man who talks a great deal and does very little, and knows little about work except to... describe it. But the descriptions given by the Left type differ entirely from the work actually done by the Right type.

Comrade Trotzky is not simply an ordinary opportunist. He possesses a finely developed sense of the aesthetic. He feels the aesthetic defects of the external form of opportunist policy. The external forms of politics please him more and more in proportion to their deviation to the Left. In art this may be very good, even excellent, and the Bible praises those whose right hand knoweth not what their left hand doeth; but in politics every inconsistency between form and contents, between description and actuality, between theory and practice, is invariably detrimental.

This is most clearly evidenced by the question of the German October. Comrade Trotzky, in his "Lessons of October" states that nobody "has attempted to give any other argumentation" of the events in Germany than the argumentation afforded by his May article and his speech of June.

Pardon me, comrade Trotzky, but this is an error. The Comintern made the attempt. The German C.P. made it also. A number of articles were published. The attempt led to the holding of a number of speeches and the passing of a number of resolutions in various countries. The E.C.C.I. even published a number of pamphlets on the subject: "The Lessons of the German Events."

It is to be regretted that comrade Trotzky did not take the trouble to acquaint himself with at least a part of these works and with the ample supply of facts and material which they afford, before he built up his new scheme. Had he done this, he would not have so misrepresented matters. By May he had entirely forgotten the actuality of the past year (and even of January 1924). It would seem that the comparatively advantageous results of the election had the effect of making him regard the situation of the year before as having been most favourable. And he entirely reversed the direction taken by his imagination.

Trotzky is however no master of the tactical and strategic mathematics of Leninism. Here it is the C.C. of the Russian C.P. which is seated firmly in the saddle, and not he. Frequently he views a situation with amazing oneness. In politics he often permits himself to be influenced by feelings, or is led astray from the straight path by externals, by personal antipathy or sympathy for instance. This was never the case with Lenin, and should never occur in any member of Lenin's Party.

Thus he permitted himself to be led astray by the criticism of the October defeat, and made use of this defeat as the basis for a charge against the chairman of the Comintern.

This is the evil tendency of his interpretation of historical events. He himself denies that he possesses any such tendency, but it is perfectly obvious to others. All this is not particularly "aesthetic". Trotzky himself says: "this would be too lamentable". Yes, it is lamentable and false.

This tendency of Trotzky's is not only directed against certain persons, but involves a politically detrimental trend towards the Right. In attacking the person of comrade Zinoviev, he strikes an indirect blow against the leadership of the Communist International and against the line taken by its Executive. This flank attack is condemned in advance to utter defeat. The line pursued by the Executive was and is right. The course pursued by comrade Trotzky was and is such that events prove him to have no right to assume the rôle of infallible judge.

### Two Words about the Civil War in Finland.

In conclusion, a few words about the lessons taught by events in Finland. In comrade Trotzky's preface we find the following:

"In the year 1917 the course of events in Finland was as follows: The revolutionary movement developed under exceedingly favourable conditions, under the protection and with the immediate military support of revolutionary Russia. But in the Finnish Party the majority of the leaders proved to be social democrats, and these led the revolution to defeat." (p. XL.)

This is not entirely correct.

It is true that in 1917 we in Finland actually missed an opportunity offered by the favourable revolutionary situation during the general strike, in the first place because we were social democrats at that time, and in the second place because we were almost entirely without weapons. It is however not true that at that time our revolution had the protection and immediate military support of revolutionary Russia. Our general strike took place at exactly the same time as the street fighting in Moscow for the seizure of power. At that time red Petrograd was not in a position to afford us any help. As to the garrisons and fleets still in Finland at that time, the men were partly on our side, but so sick of war that we could not expect them—especially in a foreign country—to come to our help.

Trotsky might say to us: "You have gone off the rails", and we should not protest against this judgment. We said this ourselves in 1918, by which time we were able to subject ourselves to a severe self-criticism.

But we learnt something from the experience, and that with considerable rapidity. Two months later we took up the fight again.

This time we were able to claim the protection and military support of revolutionary Russia. But in March the Finnish White Guards were reinforced by German soldiery, and this decided the fate of the conflict. Our workers' front could not hold out against regular German troops.

This was the main cause of our defeat.

No doubt there was a second cause as well: that we did not fight so well as we might have fought. But at that time we were not communists, but social democrats, and we were almost entirely lacking in Bolshevik experience. But whether our Party fought well or badly, at least it **fought**.

Thus the German comrades need not take it as a self-praise on our part if I have blamed them for capitulating with-

out a struggle six years after the Russian revolution, and after the experience won during four years of Bolshevik leadership in the Comintern.

We Finnish communists have no reason to praise ourselves, but we have as little reason to fear the smoke from the powder of October.

I forgot to mention a third cause of the defeat of our revolution in 1918: this was the well known theatrical gesture made by comrade Trotsky at the first peace negotiations with the representatives of the German government at Brest Litovsk (January/February). The peace conditions proposed at that time by the German government were much more favourable than those dictated later, both for Soviet Russia and for the Finnish workers' government. Before comrade Trotsky left for Brest Litovsk for the last time (at the end of January), comrade Lenin told him that he should sign the peace treaty at once on receipt of the German ultimatum. Comrade Zinoviev, as comrade Trotsky himself testifies, declared that "we only worsen the peace conditions by further delay, and must therefore sign at once". (Minutes of the VII. Party Conference, p. 79.)

Had peace come about between Germany and Russia at that time, then it is highly probable that the German government would have sent no troops to Finland. This conclusion of ours is based upon the memoirs of German generals, published after the war.

But on 10. February comrade Trotsky refused to accept the conditions of peace offered by the Germans. A valuable month passed before the peace treaty was accepted, and during this time Soviet Russia was obliged to abandon Reval and other cities at our (Finland's) back to the Germans. And during the same time the German troops struck their blow at us.

Oh, if Lenin had only succeeded in exercising the needful pressure at the right time!

## Comrades Brandler and Thalheimer on Comrade Trotsky's Attack.

The "Rote Fahne" of 13. November 1924 published an article with the title: "What is Trotskyism?", and containing the assertion that "Brandler's adherents are all Trotskyists". This assertion has given rise to such an amount of phrase-slitting that we can no longer preserve silence, since silence, in view of the intensified discussion headed by Trotsky, might be taken as agreement at the present juncture. We should thus like to deal somewhat in detail with the very superficial "historical exposition" of Leninism and Trotskyism given by the "Rote Fahne". The assertion that all Brandler's adherents are Trotskyists gives the impression that the writer of the article has proofs of this assertion. We consider it necessary to explain our attitude towards Trotsky and "Trotskyism" on the basis of the following facts:

When Trotsky adopted a conciliatory attitude between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in the years 1909-1913, comrade Brandler, when lecturing in Switzerland on the Russian revolution, spoke against Trotsky's slogan of "permanent revolution", against the conciliators, and in favour of Lenin's standpoint. The stand taken by Brandler against the liquidators, and his fight against them, are well known to all who have not just become "Leninists" now in 1924, and who are informed regarding the Left radical movement in Germany. The present editors of the "Rote Fahne" must know very well—and if not they, then Ruth Fischer, Scholem, and Maslov must know it—that at the time of the differences of opinion with Trotsky preceding the introduction of the New Economic Policy, the "Brandlerists", above all Brandler and Thalheimer, opposed Trotsky's views, and defended the standpoint of the C.C. of the Russian C.P. and of Lenin.

At that time, those comrades who now proclaim themselves as 100% Leninists, and daily emphasise their allegiance to and agreement with the C.C. of the C.P. of Russia, were, though not Trotskyists, still in connection with the Russian labour opposition. With reference to the German October, the writers of the "Rote Fahne" article, or at least Ruth Fischer and Scholem, are bound to know that at the conference held in September in Moscow, Brandler had great differences of opinion with Trotsky. The article which Trotsky published on this question afterwards was an almost literal repetition of the arguments which he had used against Brandler. Even at that time

Trotsky's arguments were based upon a complete lack of comprehension of the objective situation.

In the question of the Russian opposition, we Brandlerists expressed ourselves as decidedly against it in all practical questions, and did this at the January conference in Moscow, earlier than the Left, which was still irresolute at that time, like various comrades of the "Centre". Comrade Thalheimer also opposed the Russian opposition in an introductory article published in the January number of the "International". This article was written in December 1923, shortly before Brandler's journey to Moscow. We declined at that time, and still decline, to compete with certain members of the German C.P. Central in their line of attack upon Trotsky. We did not need to do so at that time, and we need not do so now, for we were the first in the International (with the exception of Russia) to state our attitude in the matter, in the first place in the above-named issue of the "International", and in the second place by our rejection of the Radek-Trotsky-Piatkov resolution on the German question.

When judging the question of the German October of 1923, comrade Trotsky immediately assured towards us an attitude in which he took it for granted that the German October of 1923 represented an exact parallel to the Russian October of 1917, and that victory would have been certain had the old C.C. of the German C.P., co-operating with the Executive Committee of the Communist International, grasped the situation in time and taken the same measures as those adopted by Lenin in October. Trotsky's attitude with regard to the question of October is essentially the same as that of Maslov, Ruth Fischer, and Scholem, who stigmatised us as "traitors" to the revolution, and who, thanks to this "betrayal", and thanks to the "radical" trade union tactics, sowed confusion and panic in the Party, and thus seized upon its leadership.

In the question of the German October we rejected comrade Trotsky's standpoint with the utmost decision, and we continue to reject it, the more so that every fresh characterisation of the situation given by comrade Trotsky wanders further and further from the reality. The official article published in the "Pravda" on 2. November, dealing with Trotsky's book ("1917"), adopts the same attitude towards the "missed revolution" as we have invariably held against the German Left and the "Centre" comrades, and against comrade Trotsky as well.



from the time of the conference at Chemnitz on 21. October 1923. This somewhat delayed acceptance of our standpoint in this question is by no means a cause of unmixed joy to us, for if everything which has now been said on this question had been said before, immediately and decidedly, the Party would have been spared much detriment and loss suffered since that time.

In the trade union question our standpoint was fortunately sooner accepted than with regard to the German October. We are at the same time firmly convinced that the course of events will lead to an inevitable correction, on the basis of facts, of the policy pursued and to be pursued by the German C.P. in Germany.

And finally, with reference to the present rôle played by the opposition in the Russian C.P., headed by comrade Trotzky, we feel ourselves obliged—not so much because of the widespread misrepresentation of our standpoint with regard to Trotzkyism, as in the interest of the Soviet Union and of the Communist International—to make a clear statement of our point of view.

The great danger of this opposition consists of the fact that it is bound to become, whether it wants to or not, the centre into which all petty bourgeois currents will flow, all currents striving to alter the character of the proletarian dictatorship in a petty bourgeois direction, to undermine the foundations of the proletarian dictatorship, and finally to liquidate the hegemony of the proletariat which is decisive for the revolution. These tendencies are dangerous for the Russian C.P. and for the Communist International, for they bear within them the seeds of weakening and disintegration, and even of schism from within. These currents become especially dangerous at a time when the relations between the peasantry and the working class are complicated by economic problems, and the Party is confronted with difficult tasks.

Therefore we believe that every Section of the Communist International should support the Russian C.P. in its efforts to liquidate the opposition.

Moscow, 20. November 1924.

Heinrich Brandler.

August Thalheimer.

## Note by the Editor of the "Pravda".

The declaration made by comrades Thalheimer and Brandler may be divided into two parts: 1. The drawing of a definite and fairly decisive dividing line between the writers and the present attitude of comrade Trotzky in opposition to the Bolshevik C.C. of the R.C.P. 2. The attempt to utilise the "opportunity" to settle with the Bolshevik C.C. of the German C.P. The first is doubtless praiseworthy and a step forwards. The second deserves no praise whatever.

It is not correct that the article appearing in the "Pravda" on 2. November 1924 deals with comrade Trotzky's book from the same point of view, as regards the question of the German October, as Brandler and Thalheimer. The "Pravda" article states that one of the reasons why the Party could not begin the insurrection in October 1923 was the errors of the Right committed by comrade Brandler and his friends. But comrades Brandler and Thalheimer "forget" the words emphasised by us, and declare that precisely we were "equally agreed" that the Party could not begin the insurrection!

It need not be said that we are much pleased that comrades Thalheimer and Brandler now take such a decisive stand for Leninism. But we recommend them to remember those golden words of Karl Liebknecht's: "The enemy is within our own country." Every one of us must fight above all against deviations to the Right in our own country and in our own Party. It is only if we do this that we are real Bolsheviks.

Comrades Brandler and Thalheimer, having taken this first step, must now take a second. They must abandon their opportunist errors in Germany and admit that the German Communist Party and its present Central are right; recognise that the lines laid down by the V. Congress of the Communist International are right. Then we shall be able to welcome their standpoint without any reservation whatever.

# The German Trotzkyists and Comrade Trotzky's Attitude.

## A Reply to the Declaration of Comrades Brandler and Thalheimer.

By Ottomar Geschke.

At the very moment when the Communist Party of Germany is exposed to the concentrated attacks of reaction, of the bourgeois block, of social democracy, of the police, of the law, and of the employers, two former leaders of the Party aim a sharp blow at it. With this they prepare a general offensive against the German C.P., to be organised immediately after the election, simultaneously with the general offensive of the bourgeoisie.

Comrades Brandler and Thalheimer declare (in the "Pravda" of 29. November) that they feel themselves obliged to make a clear statement as to their standpoint with regard to comrade Trotzky's attitude. But their explanation is mainly directed, not against comrade Trotzky, but against an article published in the Berlin "Rote Fahne", in which the attacks made by comrade Trotzky on the C.C. of the Russian C.P. are disapproved, then against the Communist Party of Germany, against its leading Party organ, against the Central, and against the leading comrades of the Political Bureau of the German C.P. Their disapproval of these comrades is not merely expressed in incidental remarks, but in sharp attacks, in part of a personal nature, but for the greater part of a political character. They declare that the "course of events will lead to an inevitable correction, on the basis of facts, of the policy pursued and to be pursued by the German C.P. in Germany".

They consider this correction as something necessary, and thus declare the political line pursued by the Communist Party of Germany to be false and open to their attacks.

This attack on the part of Brandler and Thalheimer is nothing new. As these comrades are not backed up by any part of the organisations of the German Party, whether local group, sub-district, or district, and as all the leading organs and organi-

sations of the Party have rejected their political standpoint as Menshevik and their views as damaging to the Party, there is no reason for us to attach particular importance to their attack. At the present time the German Party and its leaders are already subject to attacks enough, more than they have ever been in their whole history since the Noske days. But since Brandler and Thalheimer have published their declaration in the Russia Party press, and have thus carried the matter on to international ground and as they have at the same time twisted and falsified the standpoint of the Left leaders of the German Party into Trotzkyism, I feel it to be my duty, as member of the German C.P. and representative of the Central of the German C.P. in the E.C.C.I., to make a reply to their declaration.

Four questions must be answered in explanation of the Brandler "declaration": Brandler's attacks upon the German Party; the object of the present action of the Brandlerists; their relations to comrade Trotzky and to Trotzkyism; and finally, the struggle being carried on by the German C.P. against the various shades of international Trotzkyism.

### The Fresh Attacks of the Brandlerists.

Where our organisations have occupied themselves of late with comrades Brandler and Thalheimer, they have not adopted any attitude of support towards them, but have expressed the severest condemnation of the actions taken by Brandler and Thalheimer before the Frankfurt Party Conference, and of their fractional activity since this conference. Above all it must be emphasised that Brandler and Thalheimer speak on their own behalf only, not on behalf of anyone else.

What do they say?

In the first place they maintain that they are not Trotzkyists and never have been. This assertion, which they are un-

able to support by any political argument, will be dealt with below.

In the second place they maintain that the leading comrades of the German Central did not become Leninists "until 1924".

They, the Brandlerists, had "defended the standpoint of the R.C.P. and of Lenin" **against** comrades Ruth Fischer, Scholem, and Maslov. These leaders of the German Party "though not Trozkyists" at that time, had nevertheless been in "connection with the Russian labour opposition".

They further maintain that comrades Maslov, Ruth Fischer, and Scholem, and with them the whole Party, had taken up a wholly wrong attitude towards the events of the German October, and that through this wrong attitude and through their trade union policy they had consciously "sowed panic and confusion in the Party, and thus seized upon its leadership".

The views held by the Brandlerists in the trade union question have "always" been right, those held by the German Party and its leaders have been wrong. With these and other less important assertions the Brandlerists conduct their attack upon the German C.P.

The assertion that the leaders of the German Party did not become Leninists until 1924 is based upon nothing whatever. And indeed it is difficult to substantiate untruths. In so far as it is possible to speak of Leninism in view of the immaturity and relative inexperience of the German Party up to the V. World Congress, the present leaders of the German Party, who were not merely a collection of separate individuals until October 1924, but a firm body of fighters called into being by years of struggle against the stratum of opportunist leaders in the German C.P., have invariably defended the Bolshevik standpoint in all important contentions against the social democratic theory and practice of the Right wing of the Party. As early as the Heidelberg Party Conference of 1919 comrade Maslov contended against the provocative expulsion of valuable, if misled, labour elements, by Levi, Thalheimer, etc. After the Party leaders had failed so lamentably in the Kapp putsch, the Left wing criticised them from the standpoint of Bolshevism. In 1922 and 1923, and especially at the Leipzig Party Conference, the Left defended the Leninian line taken by the IV. World Congress of the C.I., against the Menshevism of the Brandlerists. This political line pursued by the Left was consolidated and strengthened by severe struggles during the whole of 1923, from the beginning of the Ruhr occupation until October. Doubtless the German Left was not born as perfect Leninist; the necessary prerequisites for this did not exist in Germany for many years. The German Left had to undergo the infantile diseases, the inevitable weaknesses and straying from the right path, which the West European proletariat has to undergo and overcome on its road to Bolshevism. But the Left developed from year to year and from struggle to struggle, aiming at Leninism with ever increasing consciousness and determination, whilst the Right elements among the leaders of the German C.P., from the renegade group around Paul Levi to the Menshevist group around Brandler and Thalheimer, have developed proportionately towards the contrary of Bolshevism, towards a banal social democratic policy. On no occasion, and on no question, have the Brandlerists ever defended Leninism against the Left.

Since the Brandlerists cannot bring any proofs for their assertion, they attempt to "supplement" it by a second assertion. They declare that the present leaders of the German Party were "in connection" with the "labour opposition", that is, with an anti-Bolshevist counter-revolutionary group whose standpoint was most rigorously condemned by the Russian C.P. But again not the slightest attempt is made to prove this assertion. It is nothing more nor less than pure mendacity, and compares with nothing else than the fighting methods adopted in general by the Mensheviks against the leaders of the German Communist Party. There is no doubt whatever but that the Central of the German C.P. will call Brandler and Thalheimer to account for this assertion. And there is as little doubt but that Brandler and Thalheimer have made this assertion for the sole purpose of "substantiating" their untruth about lack of Leninism by a still greater untruth, and at the same time of misleading the Russian communists and sowing discord between the Communist Parties of Russia and Germany. Only two examples exist of a "united front" between leaders of the German C.P. with the parties of our enemies, against our own Party. One is Paul Levi's espionage for social democracy, and the second is the Brandler case, for at the conference held in October 1923 at Chemnitz Brandler co-operated consciously with the

social democratic minister Graupe to mislead the communist functionaries and to prevent the general strike.

In trade union politics the Central of the German C.P. has invariably applied the principle of Bolshevik self-criticism, and has candidly admitted that the Party has been guilty of certain errors, explicable by the anti-reformist feeling among the revolutionary workers of Germany. Comrade Maslov in particular, writing from prison, made special mention of these errors in his articles on the campaign for international trade union unity, after the V. World Congress. But neither the Party nor the C.I. has ever defended the opinion that the Brandler trade union policy is justified by these errors. It is precisely the Brandler trade union policy which has not consisted of preventing the withdrawal of members from the unions, but has actually **furthered** withdrawals by the opportunist application of the united front tactics, by a vacillating attitude, and by false compacts with social democracy and with reformist trade union bureaucracy. Even in the autumn of last year Brandler still played with the idea of trade union schism. The grave mistakes committed in the formation and enlargement of the independent unions are to be laid to **his** account. It was **his** group which reproached comrade Maslov for fighting too energetically for the unconditional unity of the trade unions.

There is no need to spend words on what the Brandlerists have to say on the "Lessons of October" in Germany. All they bring forward is the defence of their old social democratic standpoint, something which has ceased to exist for the Bolsheviks since the decisions of the German Party Conference and the decisions of the World Congress. The assertion that the leaders of the German Party consciously caused a "panic in the Party", and then "seized power" with the aid of this panic, is only of interest in so far as it throws light upon the intentions of the Brandlerists.

What are these intentions?

#### The Object of the Brandler Attacks.

The object of the fresh Brandler attacks upon the German C.P. may be immediately recognised by their political background. The difficulties into which the German proletariat and its Communist Party were plunged after the October defeat are obvious to everyone. The October defeat was followed, as logical necessity, by an understanding between the German bourgeoisie and the imperialist world powers. The Dawes Plan is being ruthlessly executed, to the disadvantage of the German working class. Social democracy helps to confuse the workers with pacifist and democratic illusions. The police aid in the exercise of White Terror against thousands of revolutionary workers. In the midst of this the Reichstag elections take place. Although the Party is secure of retaining its **core** of millions of German industrial workers, of gaining an even firmer hold upon them than before, of steeling and Bolshevising them, still it will lose at this election the masses of petty-bourgeois hangers-on and vacillating workers who followed the Party before the Dawes Plan was formed. Delusions and terror will lessen our numbers. Social democracy, as constituent of the white bourgeois bloc, is fighting against the Communists. The Communists are to be isolated, driven into illegality, and exterminated. In this difficult position our Party can only hope to emerge victorious from the fight if it keeps its two most powerful weapons sharp and bright. These weapons are the internal unity of the Party and the full support of the Comintern.

Brandler and Thalheimer grasp the situation as clearly as we do. But Brandler and Thalheimer, who capitulated to the bourgeoisie without a struggle in October, have only learnt one thing from this experience, and that is that they will not capitulate—to the Communist Party and its leaders. They want to force these leaders to submission. They are aware that it is not possible for them to do this by means of Party work in the organisations, among the members. It is only possible for them to weaken the leadership from behind, by means of hindering the Bolshevisation of the Party. This is the object of their present action.

The Brandlerists are aware that in the immediate future, as is always the case after a defeat, the irresolute and unreliable elements in the Party may easily be frightened by bourgeois Terror or may succumb to bourgeois illusions. Under certain circumstances these strata—like the Russian liquidators after 1905—may prove receptive of ideas implying retrogression in our revolutionary struggle, a repetition of the Brandlerist "united front" with the ruling social democrats, a renunciation of revolutionary class warfare and the methods of Bolshevism. Brandler is speculating upon these strata.



The Party, with its core of hundreds of thousands of German communists, will speedily overcome these tendencies. But it is precisely these tendencies which Brandler is endeavouring to organise for a struggle against the Central of the German C.P. He wishes to form a fraction of them, to give them a platform. Brandler is weak and impotent because the Communist Party is internally united and firm. But Brandler might become strong with the aid of the influence of social democratic delusions and the White Terror. Already we find comrades, made cowards by the Terror, endeavouring to "clear" themselves in the law courts of the bourgeoisie by declaring that they are not adherents of the Left Party leaders, but off the Right. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the object of the Brandler offensive is to gather together all such elements against the Party.

Another object aimed at by the Brandlerists, and this time a fully conscious one, is the sowing of distrust, misunderstandings, and difficulties between the German Party and its sister Parties, the Sections of the Comintern, and especially the R.C.P. The present attitude adopted towards Trotzky obviously serves this object. And this object, bound to be counter-revolutionary in its effects, is again served by the untruth about the "connection between the German Left and the labour opposition".

The protest against Trotzkyism is not the Bolshevik reason, but the Menshevik pretext, of the declaration made by Brandler and Thalheimer.

### The German Trotzkyists and Trotzkyism.

With the greatest unanimity the R.C.P. has repulsed the attacks made by comrade Trotzky on Leninism and on the Bolshevik leaders of the Party. It has not permitted itself to be blinded by the circumstance that comrade Trotzky leads the struggle against Leninism under Lenin's flag. There are some Trotzkyists who maintain that this unanimity on the part of the R.C.P. is not due to the Bolshevik firmness of the Party members, or to the faith felt—even by the youngest strata of these members—in the Leninist C.C., but has been brought about by "pressure on the part of the state apparatus". But we German communists see that our Bolshevik Central does not merely receive no support from the "state apparatus", but is on the contrary persecuted, accused, and imprisoned.

In spite of this, the German C.P. has defended its C.C. against the Brandlerists with a unanimity equal to that shown by the Russian C.P. against the Trotzkyists. In bourgeois Germany the "state apparatus" works exclusively against the Bolshevik Party leaders, and partially for the Brandler opposition. Of late it has become customary, in the German courts of class justice, to regard it as unfavourable evidence against an accused communist when the spies and the "Vorwärts" designate him as "Left" or "extreme", whilst confessed adherence to Brandlerism, to "moderate tactics" is counted as "extenuating circumstance", precisely as was the case at the time of the Levites! Thus we are no believers in the legend of the state apparatus. We openly state our opinion that Brandler's fresh offensive against the German C.P. may reckon upon receiving joyful support from the German capitalist state apparatus.

The German C.P. is devoting much serious attention to the mental and political import of the struggle between Leninism and Trotzkyism. This it is obliged to do, since comrade Trotzky—in the veiled form to which we are accustomed in his controversial writings—attacks the leaders of the German C.P., and above all the present leaders of the Comintern, who possess the unbounded confidence of our Party, who in part belong to our Party, and whom our Party will defend at any price against any attack. Comrade Trotzky expresses his views on the German October. And this in a sense which we hear from him for the first time. Hitherto we have only known that at the January conference of the Enlarged Executive he cooperated with Radek and Piatakov to support Brandler's Menshevik policy, that he condemned the German Left, approved the October retreat, and denied the Bolshevik lessons to be learnt from this retreat.

We are amazed to hear such "Left" tones issuing so suddenly from the lips of comrade Trotzky, after being accustomed to hear so many motions in favour of Brandler and against the German Left from this source. Comrade Trotzky is suddenly speaking "Left" than the German left. We have never maintained that October 1923 represented a "classically revolutionary situation" comparable only with the Russian October, but have on the contrary invariably opposed Brandler's ridiculous and misleading exaggerations by a sober estimate of the class forces as existing in October 1923, and have come to the conclusion

that the struggle had to be entered into, the struggle for the seizure of power. We consider it entirely anti-Leninist to declare that this "classic" October represented an opportunity completely "missed", and never likely to occur again. On the contrary, we are convinced that **the consequences of the Dawes plan, and the Bolshevisation of our Party, will bring about a new German October within a brief period, and that this time the German C.P. will not "miss" the opportunity.**

The cause of the German defeat in October 1923 was not the faulty "choice of leaders" (a faultiness for which comrades Trotzky and Radek are chiefly to blame, for they continually supported the Right). The mere change of leadership will not prevent a second October defeat in the future. The causes lie deeper.

The main lesson to be drawn from the defeated German October, and from the victorious Russian October—despite all comrade Trotzky's assertions to the contrary—is the lesson of the rôle played by the Bolshevik Party in the proletarian struggle, the lesson of the decisive significance of this Party as the sole leader in this struggle, of its hegemony, of the necessity of its inexorable and unceasing struggle against every form of Menshevism and Trotzkyism.

The German Party has learnt this lesson from the October of 1923. Comrade Trotzky, by his contention against the German Left, and by his support of the Brandler group, has aided us to learn this lesson with the great rapidity and thoroughness. So thoroughly has the German Party learnt this lesson that it has been able, on this occasion, to differentiate at the first glance between the "Left" phraseology of Trotzky's latest attack and the Right actions and facts behind it.

The German Party has learnt, partly from its own experience and partly from the results of the Russian Party discussion, to recognise this strategy of Left words and Right deeds. In a word, it has learnt that Trotzkyism is not merely to be combated as a foreign "Russian" phenomenon, but as an international fighting form of Menshevism, touching German interests and those of all countries.

Comrade Stalin was right in stating the three leading characteristics of Trotzkyism to be: the Left phrase of "permanent revolution", the Right action of the bloc with Menshevism, and the criticism of the Bolshevik Party leaders.

The defeat suffered in the German October was due to the fact that the Brandler group, despite all their "Left" phraseology, accomplished nothing more than the "Right" action of cowardly capitulation at the decisive moment. **The errors of the German October were essentially Trotzkyist errors.** We must now set the question:

### How was Trotzkyism Brought to Bear on the German October?

Brandler and his friends have always been heroes of Left phraseology. At that time they made a parade of fiery prospects, of German translations of the "permanent revolution", in order to distract the criticism of the Left from their opportunism.

They pursued these tactics—in agreement with Radek—during the months of preparation preceding October. When the strike broke out among the Ruhr workers in May, followed shortly afterwards by the strike of the Silesian miners, they issued sounding appeals and then suppressed the strikes. When the workers took steps against the Fascists, they wrote: "Place every tenth Fascist against the wall"—and cancelled the street demonstrations on Anti-Fascist day. When partial fights began in various parts of Germany in October itself, they "prohibited" the continuation of these fights—in precisely the same manner as the reformist trade union leaders—with the "tactical" slogan of: "The insurrection begins next week." But when the moment of the insurrection arrived—they prevented it. This was the catastrophe of revolutionary phraseology which—on Trotzky's lines—wants to dispense with the connecting links of the struggle for power, the partial fights for power. This was the end of the "permanent revolution": nothing more nor less than **permanent capitulation.** This was the Brandlerist Trotzkyism of the German October.

Brandler and his friends have made themselves famous by their affiliation to the Left social democrats. They fought in Berlin, Hamburg, and in the Ruhr area against the Left, against the Bolshevik workers of their own Party, as if they had been their enemies. They inveighed against them as "Blanquists" and "sectarians". But they went through thick and thin with Menshevism, with the "Left" social democrats. They held the German social democratic party to be an "honourable labour party", which we might "win over". In 1912 Trotzkyism created the August bloc; the Zeigner government was created by Saxon Trotzkyism. Trotzky's bloc with the Mensheviks in 1912

and Brandler's BLOC with the Mensheviks in 1918 are the result of one and the same policy against Lenin and against Leninism! This too was the Trotskyism of the German October.

During the years of struggle among the political tendencies in the German C.P., the Brandlerists resorted again and again to the weapon of discrediting, slandering, and combatting the leaders of our Left, as these became Bolsheviks. They selected their terminology from the ancient political lexicon beloved of all opportunists: "adventurers", "intelligentsia", "people without traditions". They did this before October, and during and after October. They pursue the same line more persistently than ever in their present "declaration". The more Bolshevik our Party becomes, with the greater zeal does Brandler wield the weapon of discrediting, precisely as Trotsky has wielded it in the Russian C.P. In this Brandler is again Trotskyist.

Have Brandler and Thalheimer recognised their errors? Not in one single point. In their latest declaration they not only preserve silence as to their errors, but continue to assert that they have always been on the right path. They do not draw back by one step from their own Trotskyism.

Then why this declaration "against Trotsky"?

We have already shown that the real object of this declaration is the general offensive against the German C.P. and its leaders.

But why has just this declaration against Trotsky been made to serve as pretext for this offensive?

In this Brandler and Thalheimer are again Trotskyists. Here again they confirm Lenin's expression that the most conspicuous principle of Trotskyism is its complete lack of principle—whether with regard to itself or on an international scale!

Comrade Trotsky combats Leninism under the banner of Lenin.

The German Trotskyists Brandler and Thalheimer are combatting their Bolshevik Party leaders under the banner of withdrawal from Trotskyism.

From what are the Brandlerists "withdrawing"?

It is difficult to ascertain. Such political argumentation as is to be found in their declaration is not directed against comrade Trotsky, with the exception of an insignificant closing paragraph, but against the German Party.

With one exception: they draw back from Trotsky's Left phrase on the "classic" October situation, in order to give the simultaneous impression that the reply made by the "Pravda" against Trotsky adopts the same attitude towards the question of the German October as Brandler and Thalheimer.

The "Pravda" has already unmasked this piece of "strategic" art. The Brandlerists have failed to hide behind the Russian Party in this question.

Brandler and Thalheimer desert one of comrade Trotsky's Left phrases, but only for the purpose of maintaining the collective Right policy of Trotskyism.

More than this: they continue to carry on this policy actively. Their declaration demonstrates this in itself.

In what sense does their declaration proclaim a "correction" of the German C.P.? In the sense of the Brandler policy. What does this signify? An alliance with social democracy, Menshevik block tactics, disavowal of the Bolshevik rôle played by our Party: genuine Trotskyism.

Their declaration contains a pointed attempt at discrediting the Bolshevik leaders of the German C.P. This is genuine Trotskyism.

We must not let ourselves be deceived by this apparent "declaration against Trotsky" into believing that the attacks made by Trotsky and Brandler are not both parts of the same policy, partial struggles belonging to one and the same general offensive against the Bolshevik leaders of the Russian and German Communist Parties and of the Comintern. In questions concerning the Comintern Brandler and Trotsky have acted jointly. The January theses issued by Trotsky defended Brandler all along the line. Brandler, after his return from the January

conference at Moscow, supported the internal Party programme and the economic programme of comrade Trotsky. And today Brandler shares comrade Trotsky's "pacifist" pessimistic views on the revolution, and his hate towards the new Left elements among the leaders of the West European Communist Parties.

The existence of this common international Right wing of the Comintern has been acknowledged for the first time in a recent article by comrade Kreibich. Kreibich places himself in line with comrades Trotsky and Brandler. He defends both as one unit. The scarcely veiled import of his article is: Away with Zinoviev and the Russian C.C., away with the present leaders of the Comintern and of the Central of the German C.P., designated Kreibich in Thalheimer's words as a collection of "blank pages".

Well, the pages of the Right wing of the Comintern are already so fully inscribed that there will presently be no space left for adding anything communistic.

A consideration of the above throws a clear light on the political character of the Brandler declaration: **The declaration is an attempt on the part of a section of the weak but extremely energetic international Right wing of the Comintern to use the pretext of withdrawal from Trotskyism for the actual purpose of strengthening and spreading Trotskyism.**

### The Reply of the German Party.

The above enables us to state in brief outlines the reply of the German C.P. to the Brandler provocation. The German C.P. perfectly comprehends and penetrates the intentions of the Brandlerists. The present leaders of the German C.P., precisely as in the case of the first discussion in the Russian C.P., opposed comrade Trotsky from the first moment of his fresh attack, without a moment's hesitation. The Central of the German C.P. rejected and condemned Trotsky's "Lessons of October" in a unanimous resolution.

The German Party will discuss no more with Brandler and Thalheimer, for there is no one in the German Party who will care to do so. The fresh demagogic and anti-Party attacks of the German Trotskyists will be replied to by the Party with Bolshevik candour and ruthlessness.

Brandler and Thalheimer are in Moscow today, as refugees from Germany. It is of no importance to the German C.P. if Brandler and Thalheimer fly from the German C.P. and from the Comintern. Paul Levi did the same in the moment of terror following the March defeat. And there will be some who follow the same path in the period of terror following the December election of 1924.

Every time that a new stratum of apostates leaves the Party, the Party feels their loss less.

The German C.P. is fully conscious that in the present situation the slogan which will enable it to overcome loss and reaction, terror and delusions, to steel its ranks and win over the masses of the workers, is:

### Through Bolshevisation to the Masses!

And this means, among many other things, the combatting of Trotskyism until its extermination.

## To Our Readers!

Address of the Inprecorr.

We regret that in the last number or so of the Inprecorr. the address of the editorial Offices etc., as well as the name and address of the responsible editor, were wrongly given. Owing to pressure of work caused by the issue of special numbers we were compelled to have the English edition of the Inprecorr. printed at another printers, and the latter took these obsolete particulars from an old number.

**The present address of the Inprecorr. and the name and address of the responsible editor are as given on the first and last pages respectively of this issue.**