The third volume of comrade Trotsky’s collected works covers all of 1917 and is divided into two separate parts: a specially written article, serving as an introduction and providing a general overview of ‘October’, and the *Collected Works* themselves covering the 1917 period. The two parts of the book are bound by an unbreakable internal link. The introduction endeavours to provide a scheme of October; it provides, or at least it was supposed to provide, according to the author’s intentions, strategic lessons to those parties which have not yet accomplished their own October. The *Collected Works* are supposed to show, substantiate, corroborate, and affirm what is in the introduction. Comrade Trotsky is absolutely correct in stating that October must be studied. He is absolutely correct that the October Revolution has not yet found its expression in print. It is undoubtedly true that even the raw materials on the history of October ‘have yet to be published’. By publishing his own collected works, comrade Trotsky has set himself the task of filling this gap. Of course, in light of this approach, the question of what is presented in the collection of comrade Trotsky’s works, and the manner in which it is presented, acquires enormous historical interest. The intention here is to provide a historical outline of ‘October’, and a compact body of documents on the history of ‘October’. In this context it is clear that the documents should be published whilst observing all the standards of historical scholarship, they must withstand historical criticism and satisfy all the demands that are placed on historical documentation. The editors of Trotsky’s collected works apparently understood this themselves because they not only collected different materials from Trotsky’s pen into a single volume, but also furnished all the printed materials with commentaries explaining and

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3 Trotsky, Document 1, p. 86.
supplementing the printed materials. At first glance, they have observed the protocol for publishing documents. But in order to properly assess the historical value of the published works, it is necessary to classify precisely and clearly those documents which are printed in the book. One section of the *Works* includes individual pamphlets, articles from newspapers and journals, speeches delivered by Trotsky, and what might be termed official papers, declarations and resolutions from various organisations and, finally, letters. The publishers did not ask themselves, primarily, what historical value all the published materials possessed.

If the articles and pamphlets are a historically authentic documentary record and accurately reflect the viewpoint of the author, then given the fact that many of the works are compiled from speeches, one must ask first of all how accurately and how faithfully they have been preserved.

In the editors’ introduction, the compilers themselves point out ‘that there is scarcely a single speech which was preserved in stenographic notes’. These two [sic] comments should already oblige us to take a critical stance towards the speeches included in the volume. What criteria guided the compilers in their selection of one or another edition of a speech, how did they reconstruct a sound and historically reliable text of the speeches? That comrade Trotsky’s speeches, reprinted in the press for a variety of political purposes, differ sharply from one another, is evident from just one example in this volume taken from Trotsky’s speech at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Petrograd Soviet on the question of Kronstadt and which is reproduced in sharply different forms in *Izvestiia* and *Novaia zhizn’* (pp. 51–2, *Sobr. soch.*). Neither the introduction nor the notes contain any kind of indication why the publishers gave preference to one or another speech; only in one example, while reproducing a speech on the question of the war delivered by comrade Trotsky to the Combined Meeting of the Social-Democratic Members of the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets, do the editors provide the note, in comrade Trotsky’s own words, that the ‘speech had obviously been retouched [retushirovan]’ – although this note relates to 1924. The remaining speeches have no critical apparatus at all.

In relation to the third group of documents – resolutions and official papers, being for the most part the formulation of the official position of the party, it would be interesting, and quite necessary for any historical evaluation of Trotsky’s activity, to establish in the notes comrade Trotsky’s role as their

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4 Trotsky 1924d, p. lxx.
5 Trotsky 1924l, pp. 51–52.
6 Trotsky 1924e, p. 400, n. 111.