

The Draft Program of the Comintern

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE

2. STAGES OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION.

The first stage of the Kuomintang was the period of domination of the national bourgeoisie under the apologetic banner of an "Alliance of Four Classes". The second period, after the Chiang Kai-shek coup d'Etat was an experiment of parallel and "independent" domination of the Chinese Kerensky. While the Russian Populists, together with the Mensheviks, lent to their short-lived "dictatorship" the form of an open dual power, the Chinese "revolutionary democracy" did not reach that stage. And inasmuch as history in general does not work to order, there is nothing left for us but to understand that there is not and that there will not be any other "democratic dictatorship" except the Kuomintang dictatorship of 1925. This remains equally true regardless of the fact as to whether the semi-unification of China accomplished by the Kuomintang will be maintained in the coming period or whether the country will again be broken to pieces. But precisely when the class dialectics of the revolution, having spent all its resources, put on the order of the day the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, with the numberless millions of oppressed and downtrodden of town and country on its side, the E.C.C.I. advanced the slogan of a democratic dictatorship (that is, bourgeois democracy) of the workers and peasants. The reply to this was the Canton insurrection which, with all its prematurity, with all the adventurism of its leaders, lifted the curtain over a new stage, or, more correctly, over the coming THIRD Chinese revolution.

Trying to insure themselves against the sins of the past, the leaders terrifically forced the trend of events at the end of last year and brought about the Canton miscarriage. However, even a miscarriage can teach us a good deal concerning the organism of the mother and the process of birth. The tremendous theoretical and even decisive significance of the Canton events for the fundamental problems of the Chinese Revolution is precisely due to the fact that we have received here, which happens so rarely in history and politics, an EXPERIMENT ON A GIGANTIC SCALE, ALMOST AS MADE IN A LABORATORY. We paid for it dearly, but that makes it the more imperative for us to digest the lessons.

One of the fighting slogans of the Canton insurrection, as Pravda No. 31 relates, was the watchword "Down with the Kuomintang". The Kuomintang banners and signs were torn and trampled upon. But it was already after the "betrayal" of Chiang Kai-shek and after the "betrayal" of Wang Chin-wei that the E.C.C.I. pompously declared: "We will not give up the Kuomintang banners." The workers of Canton forbade the Kuomintang Party, DECLARING ALL OF ITS TENDENCIES ILLEGAL. This means that to solve the basic national tasks, not only the big bourgeoisie but also the small bourgeoisie failed to advance a political power, a Party, a fraction, in conjunction with which the proletariat party might be able to solve the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution. The key to the position lies in the fact that the task of leading the movement of the poor peasants fell already entirely on the shoulders of the proletariat and the Communist Party directly and the approach to a real solution of the revolutionary tasks necessitated the concentration of all forces in the hands of the proletariat.

As to the short-lived Canton Soviet Government, the Pravda reports:

"In the interests of the workers, the decrees of the Canton Soviet proclaimed... workers' control of industry through the factory committees, the nationalization of big industry, transport and the banks." Then, measures are mentioned such as the "confiscation of all dwellings of the big bourgeoisie for the benefit of the laborers..."

Thus the Canton workers were in power and the government was actually in the hands of the Communist Party. The program of the new government was not only to confiscate the feudal lands inasmuch as such exist in Kwantung in general; not only to establish workers' control of industry; but also to nationalize big industry, the banks and transport, and to confiscate the bourgeois dwellings and all property for the benefit of the laborers. The question arose, if such are the methods of a bourgeois revolution what should the proletarian revolution in China look like? Notwith-

A CRITICISM OF FUNDAMENTALS

By L. D. TROTSKY

standing the fact that the instructions of the E. C. C. I. said nothing about the proletarian dictatorship and Socialist measures, notwithstanding the fact that Canton when compared with Shanghai, Hankow and other industrial centers of the country, has more of a petty-bourgeois character, the revolutionary upheaval effected against the Kuomintang led automatically to the proletarian dictatorship which, at its very first steps, found itself compelled by the entire situation to take more radical measures than those with which the October Revolution began. And this fact, notwithstanding its external paradoxical character is quite a normal outcome of the social relations of China as well as of the whole development of the revolution.

Large and middle scale land ownership is most closely intertwined with urban, including foreign capital. There is no land owning caste in China in opposition to the bourgeoisie. The most widespread, generally-hated exploiter in the village is the wealthy peasant, the usurer, the agent of urban bank capital. The agrarian revolution has therefore just as much of an anti-feudal as it has of an anti-bourgeois character in China. The first stage of our October revolution in which the wealthy peasant marched hand in hand with the middle and poor peasant and frequently in the lead against the landlord will not, or as much as will not, take place in China. The agrarian revolution there will be from the very beginning, and also later on, an uprising not only against the few landlords and bureaucrats, but also against the wealthy peasants and usurers. If in Russia the poor peasant committees acted only in the second stage of the October revolution, in the middle of 1918, in China they will, in one form or another, appear on the scene as soon as the agrarian movement will revive. The breaking up of the rich peasants will be the first and not the second stage in the Chinese October.

The agrarian revolution, however, is not the only meaning of the present historical struggle in China. The most extreme agrarian revolution, the general division of land, will naturally be supported by the Communist Party to the very end. But in itself this will not be a way out of the economic blind alley. It is now essential for China to have national unity and economic independence, that is, customs autonomy, or more correctly, a monopoly of foreign trade. And this means the EMANCIPATION FROM WORLD IMPERIALISM, for which China remains in perspective the MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF WEALTH, a means of livelihood and as a safety valve against internal explosions of capitalism in Europe today and America tomorrow. This is what determines the gigantic scope and monstrous sharpness of the struggle which faces the masses of China, the more so now when the depth of the stream of the struggle has already been measured and felt by all of its participants.

The enormous role of foreign capitalism in Chinese industry and its custom to rely directly on its own "national" bayonets, makes the program of workers' control in China even less real than it was in Russia. The direct expropriation of the foreign capitalist and later also the Chinese capitalist enterprises, will most likely be made imperative by the struggle, on the morrow after the victorious insurrection.

This objective socio-historical causes of the "October" outcome of the Russian revolution rise before us in China in a still more accentuated form. The bourgeois and proletarian sections of the Chinese people stand up against each other even more distinctly, if this is at all possible, than they did in Russia inasmuch as, on the one hand, the Chinese bourgeoisie is directly connected with foreign imperialism and its military machine and, on the other hand, the Chinese proletariat has from the very beginning established relations with the Comintern and the Soviet Union. Numerically the Chinese peasantry constitutes an even more overwhelming mass than the Russian peasants. But being crushed in the fight between world contradictions, upon the solution of which in one way or another its fate depends, the Chinese peasantry,

is even less capable than the Russian of playing a DOMINANT role. It is no longer a theoretical forecast but a fact tested through and through and from all sides.

These main, and, at the same time, incontrovertible social and political prerequisites of the third Chinese revolution show not only that the formula of a democratic dictatorship has hopelessly outlived its usefulness, but also that the third Chinese revolution, in spite of the extreme backwardness of China or more correctly, because of this great backwardness, as compared with Russia, will not have even its half-year "democratic" period such as the October revolution had (November 1917 to July 1918), but will be compelled from the very beginning, to effect the most decisive shake-up and abolition of bourgeois property in town and country.

True, this perspective does not harmonize with the pedantic and schematic conceptions concerning the inter-relationships between economics and politics. But the responsibility for this disharmony which disturbs the newly adopted prejudice must not be blamed on "Trotskyism" but on the law of UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT. In the given case it is exactly in place.

It would be unwise pedantry to maintain that the Chinese Communist Party, had it pursued a Bolshevik policy in the revolution of 1925-1927 would surely have come to power. But it is pitiful Philistinism to maintain that this possibility was entirely out of the question. The mass movement of workers and peasants was absolutely sufficient for it, as was also the collapse of the ruling classes. The national bourgeoisie sent its Chiang Kai-sheks and Wang Chin-weis to Moscow, and through its Hu Han-mins was knocking at the door of the Comintern; precisely because it was hopelessly weak in face of the revolutionary masses, it realised its weakness and sought to insure itself somehow. Neither the workers nor the peasants would have followed the national bourgeoisie if we ourselves had not urged them to do so. Had the Comintern pursued a more or less correct policy, the outcome of the struggle of the Communist Party for the masses was pre-determined—the Chinese proletariat would have supported the Communists, while the peasants would have supported the revolutionary proletariat.

If, at the beginning of the northern campaign we had begun to organize Soviets in the "liberated" districts (and the masses were instinctively fighting for that) we would have secured the necessary basis and revolutionary sentiment, we would have rallied to our side the agrarian uprisings, we would have built OUR OWN army, we would have undermined the opposing armies and—notwithstanding the youthfulness of the Communist Party of China—it would have been able with proper Comintern guidance, to mature in these stressful years and come to power, if not in the whole of China at once, then at least in a considerable part of China. And chiefly, we would have had a party.

But precisely in the sphere of leadership something absolutely monstrous has occurred—a direct historical catastrophe. The authority of the Soviet Union, the Bolshevik Party and the Comintern came to the support at first of Chiang Kai-shek against an independent policy of the Communist Party and then to the support of Wang Chin-wei as the leader of the agrarian revolution. Having trampled upon the very basis of Lenin's policy and paralyzed the young Communist Party of China, the E.C.C.I. led to a victory of the Chinese Kerenskys over Bolshevism, the Chinese Miliukovs over the Kerenskys and of Japanese and British imperialism over the Chinese Miliukovs.

In this and only in this lies the meaning of what has happened in China in the course of 1925-1927.

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Stalin versus Bucharin!

The New Struggle in the Russian Communist Party

THE instructions sent by the Executive Committee of the Comintern to the American Party containing the "proposal" that Foster be made secretary, had as one of its main objects the separation of Lovestone and his group from the faction in the Russian Communist Party and the International led by Bucharin, Tomsy, Rykov and other leaders of the Right Wing. The threat in Stalin's instructions to replace Lovestone with Foster was successful. The last day of the Party convention here saw the passage of a resolution submitted by Lovestone and Gitlow giving unqualified endorsement to the Stalin faction and raising the demand that Bucharin be removed from his post as chairman of the Communist International. The American Party is thus the first in the International to speak openly on the bitter factional struggle going on now in the "Leninist" Political Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union between the Center (Stalin) and the Right (Bucharin-Rykov-Tomsy).

Trotsky spoke about this more than a year ago, but the existence of this fight was violently denied by the entire international Communist bureaucracy and press. The Opposition was labelled "counter-revolutionary scandal-mongers" for warning the revolutionary workers a year ago of the events that are taking place now. Indeed, up until a week ago, we were denounced as "repeating the slanders of the bourgeois and yellow socialist press" when we warned about the continued splitting course being followed in the Russian Party.

Naturally, the Stalinist press maintains a profound silence as to what is really happening. As was done in the fight against Trotsky and the Opposition, the Stalin clique is lining up the bureaucrats throughout the International for its factional course without the membership of the Parties knowing what in the world it is all about. Only when the deed is accomplished are the Party members told to raise their hands to endorse it—or be expelled. We are now in a position to give our readers authentic details about the fierce struggle now going on in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Since Zinoviev was removed as chairman of the Comintern for supporting Trotsky and the Opposition, the entire International has been taught to sing the praises of his substitute, Bucharin. Now, Stalin has forced Bucharin out of the Comintern and replaced him with a tenth-rate Stalinist faction agent, Molotov. Bucharin has also been kicked out of the editorship of Pravda and his place taken by the spineless Zinoviev who quit the Opposition to gain the favor of Stalin.

The struggle in the Political Bureau is reaching an unheard-of sharpness. Bucharin is circulating a letter sent him by Stalin in which the latter says that they (i. e., Bucharin and Stalin) are the only ones in the Pol-Bureau worth anything; the rest of the members are nonentities.

Stalin, on the other hand, is circulating a report of a conversation between Bucharin and Kameney in which Bucharin refers to Stalin in very flattering terms. In the conversation, Bucharin (and also Sokolnikov) urged Kameney to beware of the attempt of Stalin to "buy off" Kameney and Zinoviev with some post in the Party. Kameney was told that the struggle in the Pol-Bureau has reached an alarming point, that the meetings reek with mutual accusations like "You are a liar!" and so on, Stalin, according to Bucharin, is following a line that will destroy the whole revolution. He is attempting to kick us (the Bucharinites) out of the Moscow and Leningrad Pravda and to remove Uglanov. (This has already been accomplished by Stalin.) Stalin's "self-criticism" is a joke, and it is directed only against Tomsy and Uglanov. Stalin has set the secret police to shadow the Bucharinites and even the telephone wires are tapped!

At the same time, Stalin is following an extreme Right policy outside the Soviet Union: The Comintern has been kicked out of the Kremlin. In the Schacht trial not one of the conspirators was shot (against the vote of Bucharin and others). Tomsy has said: "I, Tomsy, am 30 kilometers more to the Right in international questions than you, Bucharin, but I, Tomsy, am 100 kilometers more to the Left than Stalin."

Kameney cautiously asked Bucharin how strong he was. Bucharin replied that Tomsy, Rykov and Uglanov could be relied upon absolutely. Andreiev is for them, and has been removed from the Urals. Stalin has bought off the Ukraine by with-

drawing Kaganovitch from there. Voroshilov and Kalinin vacillated at the last moment. [This was during the July Plenum of the Central Committee last year.]

Bucharin further reported a shameful incident. Stalin demanded that he and not Bucharin should report on the Program of the Comintern to the Plenum, so that he (Stalin) could appear on the stage as the "great theoretician" of the Comintern! Bucharin denounced Stalin and Molotov—in the telephone conversation—as ignoramuses and illiterates in Marxism.

In other words: Bucharin, one of the leaders of the "United, Leninist, Old-Bolshevik-Guard political Bureau," urged Kameney to join in a bloc to overthrow Stalin, the other leader of the "United, Leninist, Old-Bolshevik-Guard Political Bureau!"

In the meantime, the preparations for the Party Conference at the end of March are going ahead full blast with both factions working feverishly for a majority. In Moscow, since Stalin had succeeded already in removing all the supporters of the Right from official positions, he has already gained a majority, and the Stalinite press is beating the drum for the "healthy, Bolshevik" Moscow organization. In Leningrad and other sections, the Right is in a much stronger position.

The significance of the whole course of affairs lies in the constantly narrowing basis of the leadership of the Russian Party and the Soviet Union. First Trotsky, Radek, Rakovsky, Smilga, Preobrazhensky, Smirnov, Serebriakov and other Opposition fighters were cut off from the Party. Then Zinoviev, Kameney, Lashevitch, and hundreds of the "Leningrad Opposition" were kicked out of the Party and returned only to become the "running dogs" of Stalin. Now the axe is being whetted by Stalin for Bucharin, Rykov, Tomsy and their friends. Where is Stalin going?

Stalin is splitting the Party and undermining the strength of the October Revolution against which Trotsky warned in time!

Let every worker, every Communist worker, stop to think. The path of Stalin is the path leading to degeneration! Stalin is leading the Communist workers blindfolded into a deeper and deeper swamp.

Let every worker read and study the warnings of the Opposition led by the exiled leader of Bolshevism, Trotsky. The Communists will not be led into continued blind, unquestioning support of Stalin's reckless opportunism. Only the Leninist Opposition can unite the Communist movement on the basis of Lenin's teachings!

Where to Buy THE MILITANT

The following is a partial list of newstands, bookstores, and Agents from whom The Militant can be purchased. The Militant is also obtainable from our Opposition Group Secretaries:

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Malden, Mass.: Comrade Dublin, 15 Semmet St.

Roxbury, Mass.: Charles Goldberg's Store, 536 Warren St.

Chelsea, Mass.: Charles Kleinfeld, at Labor Lyceum.

New York City and Brooklyn:

At various newstands around Union Square & 14th St.

& Broadway; Second & Third Aves. on 14th St.; news-

stands in the Bronx, and other stands in New York City

and various stands in Brooklyn. Also, at The Militant,

340 East 19th St., New York City.

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NEW MATERIAL FROM COMRADE TROTSKY

As we go to press with this issue, we have just received from Constantinople, via Berlin, a number of highly important documents written by comrade Trotsky in Alma Ata as soon as he was informed of the ultimatum to cease all political activity or suffer banishment from the Soviet Union. This material will be published in the next issue of The Militant. It contains a brilliant analysis of the motives behind this reactionary act and a revolutionary defiance of the opportunists.

Call for a National Conference of the Opposition

New York, March 13, 1929.

To All Groups of the Communist Opposition. Dear Comrades:

The National Action Committee, at its meeting on March 10th, decided to issue a call for a National Conference of the Opposition to be held in Chicago on Friday, May 17th, 1929. It is estimated that the Conference will be able to finish its work in three days. All groups standing on the Platform of the Opposition will be entitled to send delegates. Each group will be entitled to elect from two to five delegates with voting rights. Additional delegates with consultative votes may also be elected. The voting strength of the various delegations will be determined by the Conference.

Each group must finance its own delegation. The Chicago Group will provide lodging for the delegates.

All groups are recommended to make provisions for the transportation of their delegates by automobile, hiking or similar means involving a minimum of expense.

A complete Agenda for the Conference will be worked out in advance in consultation with local groups. Proposals for the Agenda should be forwarded to the National Office immediately. The following is suggested tentatively:

1. The Situation in Russia.
2. The Crisis in the Communist International.
3. The American Situation and the Tasks of the Opposition.
4. The Trade Union Question.
5. The Organization of the Communist Opposition.
6. Youth Questions.

Discussions of the Agenda should begin in the groups at once and should center primarily on the Draft of our Platform printed in The Militant. All suggestions and proposals of the local groups in regard to the Conference should be sent in at once.

It is proposed to discuss the specific problems of the Canadian movement and of the Communist Youth at the General Conference; but provision will be made also for separate meetings of these delegations.

This historic Conference will turn a new page in the History of American Communism. It will signify the firm consolidation of the vanguard of the movement on a national scale and its ideological and organizational preparation for the struggles ahead. Delegates should be carefully selected from the standpoint of their qualifications, their records in the movement and their firm adherence to the Opposition cause.

Further material on the Conference will appear in The Militant and in subsequent bulletins.

Yours fraternally,
The National Action Committee
By J. P. CANNON.

A NEW PAMPHLET SOON

A new pamphlet by comrade Trotsky is now being printed and will soon be ready for distribution. The title of the pamphlet is "The Falsification of History." It is a detailed exposure of the monstrous fabrications and misrepresentations of the History of the Russian Revolution and the Russian Communist Party which have been disseminated since the death of Lenin by the official Stalin machine. It quotes the testimony of Lenin on his relations with Trotsky and proves unmistakably the close solidarity of Lenin and Trotsky on all the most important questions of the Revolution.