

To the Y. W. L. Convention

A Statement of the Expelled Communist Youth

It is not difficult to understand that the first stage of the coming third revolution can in a different and greatly abridged form repeat the stages which have already been passed, for instance, an imitation of the "common national front". But will that first stage be sufficient to give the Communist Party a chance to put forward and announce its "April" theses, that is, its program and tactics of the capture of power before the masses?

"The transition to the proletarian dictatorship is possible here (in China), only after a series of preparatory stages (?) only as a result of a whole period of growing over (?) of the bourgeois democratic revolution into the socialist revolution."

In other words all the "stages" that have already been gone through are not taken into account. What has been left behind, the draft program still sees ahead. This is exactly what is meant by dragging behind the tail. It fully opens the gates for new experiments in the spirit of Kuomintang rehearsal. Thus the concealment of the old solocisms inevitably prepares the road for new errors.

If we enter the new uprisings, which will develop at an incomparably more rapid rate than the last one, with a plan of "democratic dictatorship" that has already outlived its usefulness, there can be no doubt that the third revolution will be lost just as the second one.

The second paragraph of the same resolution of the February plenum of the E.C.C.I. says:

"The first way, the broad revolutionary movement of workers and peasants which, in the main proceeded under the slogans, and to a considerable extent under the **UNION LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY** is over. It ended in several centers of the revolutionary movement with **HEAVY DEFEATS** for the workers and peasants, the physical extermination of the Communists and revolutionary cadres of the labor and peasant movement in general." (Our emphasis).

When the "wave" was surging high the E.C. C.I. said that the movement is entirely under the banner and leadership of the Kuomintang which even takes the place of Soviets. It is precisely on that ground that the Communist Party was subordinated to the Kuomintang. But that is exactly why the revolutionary movement ended with "heavy defeats." Now when these defeats have been recognized, an attempt is being made to delete the Kuomintang from the past as if it had not existed, as if the E.C.C.I. had not declared the blue banner its own.

There have been no defeats either in Shanghai or in Wuchang in the past; there were merely transitions of the revolution "into higher phases"—that is what we have been taught. Now the sum total of these transitions is suddenly declared to be "heavy defeats for the workers and peasants". However, in order to mask to some extent this unprecedented political bankruptcy of transitions and evaluations, the concluding paragraph of the resolution says:

"The E. C. C. I. makes it the duty of all sections of the E. C. C. I. to fight against the social democratic and Trotskyist slanders to the effect that the Chinese revolution has been liquidated (?)".

In the first paragraph of the resolution we were told that Trotskyism was the idea of PERMANENT revolution, that is, a revolution which is now growing over from its bourgeois to the socialist phase: from the last paragraph we learn that according to the "Trotskyists", "the Chinese revolution has been liquidated." How can a "liquidated" revolution be a PERMANENT revolution?

Only complete and reckless irresponsibility permits of such contradictions which eat up all revolutionary thought at its roots.

If we are to understand by "liquidation" of the revolution the fact that the labor and peasant offensive has been set back and drowned in blood, that the masses are in a state of retreat, that before another onslaught there must be, apart from many other things, a molecular process at work among the masses which requires a certain period of time the length of which cannot be determined beforehand, if "liquidation" is to be understood in this way, it does not in any way differ from the "heavy defeats" which the E.C.C.I. has at last been compelled to recognize. Or are we to understand li-

By L. D. Trotsky

quidation literally, i. e., actual elimination of the Chinese revolution, that is, the very possibility and inevitability of its revival on a new plane? One can speak of such a perspective seriously only in two cases—if China would be doomed to dismemberment and complete ruin, for which there is not the slightest reason to think, or if the Chinese bourgeoisie would prove capable to solve the basic problems of Chinese life in its own non-revolutionary way. Is it not this last variant that the theoreticians of the "Alliance of Four Classes", who forced the Communist Party under the heel of the bourgeoisie, ascribe to us now?

The strength of Marxism lies in its ability to foretell. In this instance the Opposition can point to an absolute confirmation of their prognosis by history. At first concerning the Kuomintang as a whole, then concerning the left Kuomintang and the Wuchang Government, and finally, concerning the "deposit" on the third revolution, that is the Canton insurrection. What other confirmation can there be of one's theoretical correctness?

The very same opportunist line which by the policy of capitulation to the bourgeoisie, has already brought the revolution at its first two phases, the "heaviest defeat" "grew over" in the third phase, into a policy of adventurous attacks on the bourgeoisie, and made the defeat final.

If the leadership had hurried yesterday to leap across the defeats which it had brought about it would first of all have explained to the Communist Party of China that victory is not gained in one sweep, that on the road to an armed insurrection there is still a period of intense, untiring, and unparalleled struggle for political influence on the workers and peasants ahead.

On September 17, 1927 we said to the presidium of the E.C.C.I.:

"Today's papers report that the revolutionary army has taken Swatow. The armies of Ho Lun and Ye Tin have been marching already a few weeks. **Pravda** calls these armies revolutionary armies. But the question is what prospects does the movement of the revolutionary army which captured Swatow raise before the Chinese revolution? What are the slogans of the movement? What is its program? What should be its organizational forms? What has become of the slogan of Soviets, which **Pravda** suddenly advanced for a July?"

Without first organizing the Communist Party against the Kuomintang, in its entirety, without agitation among the masses for Soviets and a Soviet Government, without an independent mobilization of the masses under the slogan of agrarian revolution and national emancipation, without the creation, broadening and strengthening of the Soviets of workers, soldiers, and peasants deputies in the localities, the rising of Ho Lun and Ye Tin, let alone their opportunist policy, could not fail to be an isolated adventure, a pseudo-Communist Makhno feat, which could not but clash against its own isolation, and it has clashed.

The Canton insurrection was a broader and deeper rehearsal of Ho Lun's and Ye Tin's adventure, only with immeasurably greater tragic consequences.

The February resolution of the E.C.C.I. combats certain putschist tendencies in the Communist Party of China, that is, tendencies in favor of sporadic action. It does not say, however, that these tendencies are a reaction to the entire opportunist policy of 1925-27, and an unavoidable consequence of the purely military commanding given from above to "change the step" without appraising all that had been done, without an open reevaluation of the basis of the tactics, without a clear perspective. Ho Lun's march and the Canton insurrection were and had to be outbursts of sporadic action. A real antidote to putschism as well as opportunism can be a clear understanding of the truth that from now on it behoves the Communist Party of China to guide the armed insurrections of the workers and poor peasants, the capture of power and the institution of a revolutionary dictatorship. If it will thoroughly assimilate the understanding of this, it will be little inclined to improvise military attacks on towns or armed

insurrections in traps or to chase humbly after the enemy's banner.

The resolution of the E.C.C.I. condemns itself to impotence by the fact alone that in arguing most abstractly concerning the inadmissibility of skipping through stages and the harmfulness of putschism, it entirely ignores THE GLASS CONTENT of the Canton insurrection and the shoddy lived Soviet regime which it brought into existence. We Oppositionists hold that this insurrection was an adventure of the leaders in an effort to save "their prestige", but it is clear to us that also, an adventure develops according to certain definite laws which are determined by the structure of the social environments. That is why we seek in the Canton insurrection the features of the coming phase of the Chinese revolution. These features fully correspond with our theoretical analysis of the Canton uprising. But how much more imperative is it for the E.C.C.I. which holds that the Canton rising was a correct and proper link in the chain of struggle to give a clear class characterization of the Canton insurrection. However, there is not a word about this in the resolution of the E.C.C.I. although the Plenum met immediately after the Canton events. Is this not the most convincing proof that the present leadership of the Comintern, because it pursues a false policy, is compelled to play on alleged errors of the Canton insurrection of 1927, the meaning of which fully upsets the scheme of revolutions in the East which is outlined in the draft program?

The Communist Opposition of the Canadian Party led by comrade Maurice Spector has just issued a four-page leaflet on the situation in the Soviet Union and the Communists in connection with the deportation of comrade L. D. Trotsky. The leaflet, which is published simultaneously in English, Jewish and Ukrainian, appeals to the workers of Canada, particularly the Communists, to defend the Soviet Union against world capitalism and the Stalin regime, to support the Bolshevik Opposition and to protest against the deportation of comrade Trotsky. Thousands of copies of the leaflet have been distributed in the important centers of Canada.

WITH AN
Introduction by James P. Cannon

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Our expulsion from the Young Workers League, perpetrated by the Party bureaucracy and its counterpart in the League, took place because we announced our solidarity with the International Leninist Opposition and our intention to struggle for the line represented by it.

We view the campaign against the Leninist Opposition as the sharpest danger confronting the Comintern since such a struggle has had the effect—it could have no other—of strengthening the Right wing everywhere. The united attack "against the Left" (Stalin) by the Right and Center groups has only served to reinforce the Right-Centrist policies of the Comintern, and make more severe the difficulties of the Soviet Union. The Stalin faction, unable to solve these difficulties of the Soviet Union, on the basis of correct Bolshevik policy, has resorted to expulsions, imprisonments, exile and deportation as its "solution." The policy of the Opposition has been to maintain the foundations of Marxism-Leninism against all attacks. It has fought against all odds to uphold the revolutionary character of the Soviet Union and the Comintern. The crisis in which these find themselves today can only be solved on the basis of the correct political line of the Leninist Opposition.

The Opposition has conducted an energetic struggle against: (a) the revisionist theory of "building a complete socialist society in one country" (Stalin); (b) against the opportunist position of the Comintern in the Anglo-Russian Committee and their failure to break with the British trade union fakers following their open betrayal of the General Strike; (c) against the menshevik line of the E. C. C. I. in the Chinese Revolution, where an alliance was made with the national bourgeoisie in which the interests of the workers and peasants were sacrificed; (d) for a clear and determined struggle against the constantly increasing Kulak and Nepman danger; (e) for the establishment of Party Democracy on the basis of Lenin's resolution at the 10th Russian Party Congress, and against the bureaucratic régime, the means through which alien classes are exerting pressure on the Party and the Soviet apparatus.

These wrong policies of the Comintern leadership are reflected in the Young Communist International. Instead of being in the foreground in the struggle against opportunism, the Y. C. I. has been transferred into a rubber stamp which endorses the position of the Stalin faction on every occasion. The sharp decline in League membership throughout the world, and particularly in Germany, China and the United States, plus a noticeable weakening of the recruiting power of the Leagues, is testimony to the false line followed by the Y. C. I. in recent years. A woeful passivity, indifference and stagnation characterizes some of the largest sections of the Communist Youth.

The situation in the American League merits the deepest attention of the entire movement. The League, reorganized legally in 1922, grew steadily until 1925, under the leadership which has now been expelled because of their adherence to the Opposition (Shachtman, Aberg, Carlson, Edwards, Mass, etc.) In that period, free from faction struggle until the latter part of it when it was introduced by the Lovestone group, League units were organized in every part of the country. The third convention found a League with a member of more than 3,000. The **Young Worker** had been changed from a monthly magazine to a militant weekly newspaper, issued regularly. The influence, activity and ideological level of the League was on the increase.

The mechanical reorganization of the League's leadership, during which the leadership selected by the overwhelming majority of the membership was removed by the representatives of the C. I., and agents of the Lovestone faction put in their place, marked

the beginning of the decline of the organization. The League was thrown into a factional crisis from which the leadership has been unable to extract it to this very day. Incompetent and bureaucratic, divorced from the proletarian youth and regarding them with the superciliousness of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, the Zam-Herberg-Darcy (Lovestone) leadership of the League led the organization along the downward curve of development at a steady and hardly interrupted pace. This leadership, transferring the opportunism of their Party faction directly into the League, has been guilty of numerous crimes against the revolutionary youth movement.

Instead of unifying the split ranks of the League, the present leadership has led it from one factional crisis into another. Instead of increasing the membership of the League, it has driven away workers so that the League membership today is considerably below 2,000. Instead of proletarianizing the League, the percentage of intellectuals and students is today higher than previously, as even the Y. C. I. must admit. Instead of strengthening the press, it has been forced to retreat to a monthly paper—that is, back to where the League was in 1922-23. Despite all the boasting and self-praise, the League is today as organizationally chaotic as it was in its worst days, and the nucleus reorganization remains on paper. Shop campaigns are non-existent and trade union work is a formality in which a handful of functionaries participate. The anti-militarist work swings from bourgeois pacifism to the wild "leftism" of military training, uniforms, and demands—in the present situation!—for a workers' militia. The parliamentary activity of the League can probably best be characterized by the fact that the 1928 Election Number of the Young Worker did not appear until some time after Hoover's election! The level of understanding of the membership is at low ebb, and the political education of the young Communists is confined chiefly to cramming the falsifications of Stalinist revisionism down the throats of the membership.

The outstanding and incontrovertible fact is that, in spite of the far more favorable objective conditions, the struggles, and the experiences the League has enjoyed in the last four years over the previous four, the League today is weak, uninfluential, stagnant and torn by factionalism. That is the balance sheet of the leadership of the League which has been instrumental in expelling many of the best and most capable comrades from the organization for their support to the revolutionary line of the Opposition.

The opportunities for growth have been many and frequent. The effects of rationalization and generally increased exploitation of the youth, the growing militarization of the country with its threat of imperialist war to the workers, the growing resistance of the workers expressed in the struggles in the coal, clothing, textile and other industries—all of these show that a fertile field for agitation and recruiting was open to the League. These can still be taken advantage of if a turn is made by the League members.

The struggle of the League Opposition was hampered in the past by the confusion and capitulationist ideology of a section of its leaders (Williamson, Harvey, and for a time, Kaplan). Attempting to make a mechanical separation of the struggle within the Party from that in the League, they weakly surrendered the principle struggle on one occasion after another. Done in "the interests of unity" it actually resulted in the further entrenchment of the Lovestone group in the League and the intensification of the factional situation. The futility of their "struggle" and their hopeless confusion and political cowardice has been fre-

quently demonstrated. The revolutionary youth must reject both the corrupt, dilletante Lovestone group in the League and the capitulationist minority. The latter, standing as it does on the platform of the Stalin faction, is waging a fight that is devoid of principal content. Its accession to leadership in the League would signify a victory for Stalinism, but not a victory for the 'proletarian' revolutionary current in the Communist movement.

The differences existing in the League cannot be separated from those in the Party, those in the Party are vitally connected with the struggle in the whole International. The difficulties in the International cannot be solved on the basis of a bloc between the Right (Bucharin-Tomsky-Rykov) and the Center (Stalin) but only by the victory of the Leninist Opposition led by comrade Trotsky. To this victory we have devoted our efforts.

The comrades of the expelled Opposition have been active members of the League for many years, engaged in work in many spheres of League activity. The expelled comrades are proletarians who have in many cases played a leading part in the work of building the movement. The first condition for the unification of the League and Party is the immediate reinstatement of all the expelled Communists with full rights of discussion and clarification.

The Platform of the Opposition, sent to the Sixth Convention of the Party, correctly says: "The main task of the League members is to fight relentlessly for the line of revolutionary principles now being defended by the Leninist Opposition. An additional pre-requisite is the eradication of all corrupt petty-bourgeois tendencies in the League, of opportunist following in the path of the Party faction regime, of 'smart-Aleckism', cynicism, and playing with the working class movement."

We stand on the line of the International Opposition and the Platform of the Communist Opposition in the United States, as the expression of the correct revolutionary course to be followed on an international and American scale. The League as a whole must adopt this line. We are determined to carry on the struggle for its victory.

SIGNED: Albert Glotzer, Mike Zalisko (Chicago); Joe Angelo (Springfield, Ill.); Gerry Allard (Christopher, Ill.); Martha Burns (Gary); Sam Curtis, Martin Payer, Charles Mahler, E. Carlson (St. Louis); Ruth Reynolds (Detroit); Carl Cowd, Sarah Avrin (Minneapolis); B. Morgenstern, Phil Lankin, Leon Goodman, Nathan Shanker, Joe Lesack (Philadelphia); Mac Kudler, Irving Speirczen, Joseph Fox, Harold Robins, Joseph Friedman, George Clark, John Justin, Sam Watts, Leon Dennenberg, Harry Stone, Louis Stone, Paul Green, Jean Tishman, Ben Gross, Kari Hall, (New York); Bob Green (Wilmingon).

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