

:-: What is the «Permanent Revolution»? :-:

By L. D. Trotsky

These these constitute a brief statement of contents of a large pamphlet which is being prepared by me for publication under the same title. The questions to which the pamphlet is dedicated, are inseparably bound up with the foundations of the program of the Comintern and consequently with the future platform of the International Opposition. I make these theses public as material for the elaboration of the theoretical section of the platform. The pamphlet, I hope, will shortly appear in numerous languages. —L. T.

1. The theory of the permanent revolution now demands the greatest attention of every Marxist, for the course of the ideological and class struggle has finally drawn this question out of the field of reminiscences over the old differences of opinion among Russian Marxists and converted it into a question of the character, the internal connections and the methods of the international revolution as a whole.

2. With regard to the countries with a backward bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their democratic and national liberative tasks is only conceivable through the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leader of the subjugated nations, primarily of their peasant masses.

3. Not only the agrarian, but also the national question, assigned to the peasantry, the overwhelming majority of the population of the backward countries, an important place in the democratic revolution. Without an alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry, the tasks of the democratic revolution cannot be solved, yes, not even seriously posed. But the alliance of these two classes can be realized in no other way than through an intransigent struggle against the influence of the national liberal bourgeoisie.

4. No matter how the first episodic stages of the revolution may be in the individual countries, the realization of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political direction of the proletarian vanguard, organized in the Communist Party. This in turn means that the victory of the democratic revolution is only conceivable through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and solves the tasks of the democratic revolution.

5. The old slogan of Bolshevism—"The Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry" expresses precisely the above characterized relation of the proletariat, the peasantry and the liberal bourgeoisie. This is demonstrated by the experience of October. But the old formula of Lenin does not solve in advance the problem of what the mutual relations between the proletariat and the peasantry inside of the revolutionary bloc will be. In other words, the formula has unknown algebraic quantities which have to make way for precise arithmetical quantities in the process of historical experience. This latter showed, and under circumstance that exclude every other interpretation, that no matter how big the revolutionary role of the peasantry may be, it can nevertheless not be an independent role and even less a leading one. The peasant follows either the worker or the bourgeois. This means that the "Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry" is only conceivable as a Dictatorship of the Proletariat that leads the peasant masses behind it.

6. A Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry, as a regime that is distinguished from the Dictatorship of the Proletariat by its class content, would be realized only in case an independent revolutionary Party could be constituted which expresses the interests of the peasants and in general of petty-bourgeois democracy—a Party that is capable of conquering power with this or that aid of the proletariat and of determining its revolutionary program. As modern history teaches and especially the history of Russia in the last 25 years—an insurmountable obstacle on the road to the creation of a peasants party is the economic and political dependence of the petty-bourgeoisie and its deep internal differentiation, thanks to which the upper sections of the petty-bourgeoisie (peasantry) go with the big bourgeoisie in all decisive cases, especially in war and in revolution, and the lower sections—with the proletariat, while the intermediary section has the choice between the two extreme poles. Between the Kerenskiade and the Bolshevik power, between the Kuo-Min-Tang and the

Dictatorship of the Proletariat there can lie nothing and there lies nothing, that is, no democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants.

7. The endeavor of the Comintern to foist upon the Eastern countries the slogan of the Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry, finally and long ago exhausted by history, can have only a reactionary significance. In so far as this slogan is counterposed to the slogan of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, it contributes to the dissolution of the Proletariat into the petty-bourgeois masses and in this manner creates better conditions for the hegemony of the national bourgeoisie and consequently for the collapse of the democratic revolution. The introduction of this slogan into the program of the Comintern is a direct betrayal of Marxism and of the October traditions of Bolshevism.

8. The dictatorship of the Proletariat which rises to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly placed before tasks that are bound up with a deep incision into the right of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution rises over immediately into the Socialist, and thereby becomes a permanent revolution.

9. The conquest of power of the proletariat does not end the revolution, but only opens it. Socialist construction is only conceivable on the foundation of the class struggle, on a national and international scale. This struggle, under the conditions of an overwhelming predominance of capitalist relationships on the world arena, will inevitably lead to outbreaks, internal, that is, civil wars, and external, that is, revolutionary wars. Therein lies the permanent character of the Socialist revolution as such, independent of whether it is a question of a backward country which only yesterday had its democratic overthrow, or an old capitalist country, which already has behind it a long epoch of democracy and parliamentarism.

10. The completion of the Socialist revolution within national limits is unthinkable. One of the main reasons for the crisis in bourgeois society is the fact that the productive forces created by it overflow the boundaries of the national state. From this follow, on the one hand, imperialist wars, and on the other hand, the utopia of the bourgeois United States of Europe. The Socialist revolution commences on the national arena, is developed further on the inter-state and finally on the world arena. Thus the Socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in the new and broader sense of this word; it attains completion only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet.

11. By the above outlined schema of the development of the world revolution, the question of the countries that are "mature" or "immature" for Socialism in the spirit of that pedantic, lifeless, classification by the present program of the Comintern, is eliminated. Insofar as capitalism has created the world market, the division of labor and productive forces throughout the world, it has also prepared world economy for socialist reconstruction.

The various countries will go through this process in varying tempos. Backward countries can, under certain conditions, arrive at the dictatorship of the proletariat sooner, but they come later than the latter to Socialism.

A backward colonial or semi-colonial country whose proletariat is insufficiently prepared to unite the peasantry and conquer power is thereby incapable of carrying its democratic overthrow to its conclusion. On the contrary, in a country where the proletariat has power in its hands as the result of the democratic revolution, the further fate of the dictatorship and socialism is not only and not so much dependent in the final analysis upon the national productive forces, as it is upon the development of the international socialist revolution.

12. The theory of Socialism in one country which rose on the yeast of the reaction against October is the only theory

that consistently and to the very end opposes the theory of the Permanent Revolution.

The attempt of the epigones under the blows of our criticism to confine the application of the theory of Socialism in one country to Russia alone, because of its special qualities (its extensiveness and its natural resources) does not improve but only worsens the matter. The splitting off from the international position always leads to a national doctrine of salvation, that is, to the recognition of the special prerogatives and peculiarities for one's own country, which would permit it to play a role that other countries cannot attain.

The world division of labor, the dependence of Soviet industry on foreign technique, the dependence of the productive forces of the advanced countries of Europe on Asiatic raw materials, etc., etc. make the construction of a socialist society in any single country impossible.

13. The theory of Stalin-Bucharin not only sets up the democratic revolution quite mechanically against the socialist revolution, contrary to the experiences of the Russian revolution, but also tears the national revolution from the international path.

This theory sets the revolution in the backward countries the task of establishing an unrealizable regime of the democratic dictatorship; this regime it sets up against the dictatorship of the proletariat way it introduces illusions and fictions into politics, paralyzes the struggle for power of the proletariat in the East, and hampers the victory of the colonial revolution.

The very seizure of power by the proletariat signifies, from the standpoint of the epigones theory, the completion of the rev-

olution (to "nine-tenths", according to Stalin's formula) and the opening of the epoch of national reform. The theory of the Kulak growing into socialism and the theory of the "neutralization" of the world bourgeoisie are consequently inseparable from the theory of socialism in one country. They stand and fall together.

Through the theory of national socialism, the Communist International is degraded to a weapon of assistance which is necessary for the struggle against a military intervention. The present policy of the Comintern, its regime, and the selection of its leading personalities, correspond entirely to the debasement of the Communist International to an assisting troop which is not designed to solve independent tasks.

14. The program of the Comintern created by Bucharin is thoroughly eclectic. It makes the hopeless attempt to reconcile the theory of Socialism in one country with Marxist Internationalism, which is however, inseparable from the permanent character of the world revolution. The struggle of the Left Communist Opposition for a correct policy and a healthy regime in the Communist International is inseparably combined with a struggle for a Marxist program. The question of the program in turn is inseparable from the question of the two mutually exclusive theories: the theory of permanent revolution and the theory of socialism in one country. The problem of the permanent revolution has long ago rooted out the episodic differences between Lenin and Trotsky, which were quite exhausted by history. The struggle is for the basic ideas of Marx and Lenin on the one side and the eclectics of the Centrists on the other.

Constantinople, November 30, 1929

Opposition Serves the Bolshevik Revolution

"Up to the very last moment Blumkin carried through work of the utmost importance for the Soviet Union. How could he do this while adhering to the Opposition? This is explainable from the nature of his work, which was of an entirely individual character. Blumkin had little, if anything, to do with the Communist nuclei, and no possibility of participating in Party discussions. But this does not mean that he hid his thoughts. On the contrary, Blumkin had told Menjinsky and Trilisser, the former chiefs of the foreign department of the G. P. U., that his sympathies were with the Opposition, but that naturally, like any other Oppositionist he was absolutely prepared to carry out his important tasks for the October revolution. Menjinsky and Trilisser considered Blumkin to be irreplaceable, which was true. They left him to his tasks which he always carried out.

Blumkin did visit me at Constantinople. I have already mentioned the fact that Blumkin had slight connections with my secretarial work. In particular, he had prepared one of my military works (I mention this in the preface of that work). Blumkin came to me in Constantinople in order to ascertain my analysis of the situation and in order to assure himself that he ought to remain in the service of the government which was deporting, banishing and imprisoning those comrades who were of the same mind as himself. I replied, naturally, that he was doing his revolutionary duty—not towards the Stalin regime, which had usurped the rights of the Party, but towards the October Revolution.

There has, perhaps, been quoted to you, from one of Yaroslavsky's articles, an allegation concerning my conversation with a visitor last summer and to whom I had predicted the inevitable and imminent collapse of the Soviet government. The miserable sycophant lies, that goes without saying. But on comparing certain facts and dates, I am certain that this referred to my conversation with Blumkin. As for his question concerning the possibility of reconciling his work and his adherence to the Opposition, I told him among other things, that my exile as well as the imprisonment of other comrades did not change our fundamental line; that in the moment of danger the Oppositionists would be in the most advanced posts, that in the difficult hours Stalin would be forced to call upon them even as Tseretelli appealed to the Bol-

sheviks for aid against Kornilov. In that connection I added: "If only it is not too late." Apparently, Blumkin, after his arrest disclosed the nature of his interview in order to show the attitude and state of mind of the Opposition: it must not be forgotten that I had been exiled because of the accusation that I was preparing an armed conflict against the Soviet power!

Through Blumkin I had sent an informative letter to Moscow for our friends, based upon the same ideas that I had set forth in a series of published articles: the Stalin repression against us does not yet signify a change in the class character of the State, but only prepares and makes more easy that change; our course remains, as in the past, that of reform and not that of revolution; the implacable struggle for our ideas must be based on the perspective of a long delay."

—L. TROTSKY

(Excerpts from letter of January 5th, 1930 at Prinkipo, Turkey).

QUARTER MILLION JOBLESS IN N. C.

RALEIGH, N. C.—(FP)—250,000 are jobless in North Carolina, leading industrial state of the south, according to Comm. F. D. Grist of the state department of labor and industry. Unemployment in Raleigh is double last year's.

Hunger, prevalent in the broken farm districts of eastern North Carolina, is creeping into the farms and small cities that dot the region. Tenants and farm laborers, driven from the land, congregate in these communities, while the crop failure causes curtailment of employment in the urban establishments, and the slowing up of new construction.

In Goldsboro scores of Negroes are being fed in jimcrow soup kitchens. In Goldsboro two thirds of the destitute are Negroes. In some places schools are feeding children at least once a day.

Edward C Lindgren, former member of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party, will speak before the New York Branch of the Communist League (Opposition) on Tuesday, March 4th, 1930 at 8 p. m. at the Militant Hall, 25 Third Ave. Room 4. His subject is: What is Wrong with the Communist Party?