

An Open Letter to the Members of the C. P. S. U. (b)

(Concluded from the Last Issue)

A French proverb says that one must know how to fall back sometimes in order the better to leap. That is the condition in which the leadership of the Soviet state, as well as the leadership of the Communist International finds itself at present.

Both are driven by their own adventurism to the depths of an impasse. Placing its "prestige" above the interests of the world revolution, the Centrist bureaucracy draws ever more the noose around the neck of the Party. In matters of tactics, the first task is the following: to beat a retreat by abandoning the positions of adventurism. The retreat is inevitable in any case. It must therefore be carried out as soon as possible and in the best possible order.

Put an end to the "complete" collectivization replacing it with a careful selection based on a real freedom of self-determination.

Bring the Kolkhoz (the farm collectives) into harmony with real resources.

Put an end to the policy of merely administrative abolition of the kulaks. To bridle the exploiting tendencies of the kulak will remain a necessary policy yet for many years. The fundamental policy with regard to the kulak holdings must consist in a rigid contractual system of coercion (i. e., a contract with the government organizations obliging the kulak to furnish certain products at fixed prices).

Put an end to the shock brigade methods of collectivization. Re-evaluate the question of the tempo of industrialization in the light of experience taking into account the necessity of raising the standard of living of the masses.

Frankly raise the question of the quality of production, its importance being as great for the consumer as for the producer.

Put an end to inflation by establishing a rigid financial discipline by means of cutting down exaggerated plans.

Give up the "ideal" of a closed economy. Work out a new variant of the plans based on as extensive a collaboration as possible with regard to the world market.

Supported on the growing unemployment in a number of countries, develop an important international campaign having as its basis concrete economic proposals in the direction of economic collaboration with the Soviet Union. Organize an offensive of the working masses under this slogan, particularly of the unemployed, against the social democratic government in Germany and against the "labor" government in England.

It is necessary to stop looking upon the Communist International as an auxiliary apparatus for the struggle against the dangers of intervention. It is a question no longer of occasional demonstrations against war but of a struggle against imperialism, for the world revolution. It is necessary to develop a real struggle in the capitalist countries to win the masses taking into account the real state of the economic and political processes in each country.

An end must be put to the falsification of facts consisting in the (verbal) transformation of specific economic conflicts or unimportant demonstrations into so-called revolutionary struggles.

Stop the fabrication of statistical data in the service of pre-established schemes. Drive out ignominiously all "tailorism" the lying and deception of the masses.

Give up the scholasticism of the "third period"!

Put an end to the adventurist policy of "red days"!

Condemn the theory of "social-fascism" which renders the greatest services to the social democracy!

Return to the Leninist policy of the united front!

The loss of influence over the youth is one of the most menacing symptoms of the abyss which is opening up before the Communist International and the masses. Never yet has bitter, dried-up, self-interested and conceited bureaucratism been able to find its way into the hearts of the younger generations. What is needed is not commandments of officialdom but sensitive and tactful leadership on the part of the Party.

One must leave to the proletariat

By L. D. TROTSKY

youth the possibility of developing its own initiative, of judging, of discussing, of committing mistakes and correcting them:—in the absence of such pre-requisites there is the danger of a fatal rupture between the successive revolutionary generations.

Above all, it is necessary to alter the policy of the Communist International in the East.

The organization of peasant guerilla warfare in China while the workers' movement in the proletarian centres continues to vegetate, is to throw dust in the eyes—it is the sure road to the destruction of the Communist Party.

It is necessary to stop playing with the fire of adventurism. The Chinese Communist Party must be armed with the slogans of revolutionary democracy to aid it in the mobilization of the great masses in city and country.

The weakness of the Hindu proletariat at a time when a profound revolutionary crisis is developing in the heart of an enormous colonial country is explained by the long reign of the reactionary theory

and practise of the "Workers and Peasants" Party (Stalin).

The cowardly, half-way abandonment of this theory is not enough. It must be pitilessly condemned as the worst example of political treachery which has compromised for a long time the proletarian forces of Japan, India, Indonesia, and other countries of the East.

With no less decision must there be a repudiation of the slogan of the "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants" which is only a reactionary cover for a policy of the Kuomintang kind, that is to say, for the hegemony and dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in the national revolution.

The program of the Communist International adopted at the Sixth Congress is entirely eclectic. It gives an incorrect conception of the world situation. It is built up on a concoction of internationalism and of national-socialism. It gives a Menshevik characterization of the colonial revolutions and of the role that the liberal bourgeoisie plays in them. It is impotent

Barred from Union Activity for «Trotskyism»

Editor of the Militant:

Your issue of May 17 carried a brief article from comrade Plarinos, describing the May Day demonstration in this city. Brief though his article was, it was adequate to cause his rejection as a member of the Metal Workers Industrial League; the League which ironically claims to be interested in the organization of the unorganized.

Plarinos, who has many years standing in the revolutionary movement, did not participate in the May Day demonstration for the purpose of seeing its faults. He went into it with revolutionary enthusiasm; with the desire of doing his part to make it a success; and to challenge the Steel Barons. But despite his fidelity and enthusiasm he could not avoid seeing the conspicuous blunders of the leadership.

In his "May Day in Youngstown" article comrade Plarinos said, "Thousands of workers and business men gathered on the streets to see our parade." He might have added that the only workers on hand that day were the unemployed.

The "Mass Political Strike"

The party call for a "mass political strike" was a complete failure. How could it be otherwise? While the great majority of the workers were unemployed and were walking from place to place in search of anything they could find, they would be willing to work under almost any conditions, just for "coffee and—". The workers who had a job looked upon themselves as the favored recipients, as the chosen children of their particular deity. While it is quite true that the great majority of the mill workers, employed and unemployed, are sore at the bosses and hostile at the Company, yet few know anything of the international revolutionary movement and still less of the Third International.

In fact, I don't think the mill workers who have a job would respond to any strike call at the present time. But if they were called on to organize with the intention of ultimately striking for better conditions, higher wages and so forth, they might at least understand it. But the call for a "mass political strike" of unorganized workers during an industrial depression is of course beyond the comprehension of these non-class conscious workers. It is easy enough to see why the mill workers who had jobs paid no attention to the call for a mass political strike. The call reached deaf ears as any one with any sense might easily anticipate.

The slogan of a mass political strike at this time and place is like sowing seed on barren rocks. The seed not only will not grow but it will die. This serious slogan has been abused so much by the phrasemongers and half-baked intellectuals who look on themselves as the fountains of working class knowledge that it has become meaningless. No one, not even those who write it, any longer take it seriously. But of course this is the "Third Period" so we cannot be surprised at anything.

For quite some time this year the

Youngstown workers were honored by the presence of a combination organizer. He was here to build up everything. The Party, the T. U. U. L., the I. L. D. the M. W. I. L. and what not. He spoke at the Public Square and the thing he succeeded most in doing was in keeping the crowd moving. No one would stop to listen to him. Such organizers who cannot speak and do not know what they are trying to say do much more harm than good.

Barred from Union for Opposition Views

The Metal Workers Industrial League is supposed to be an organization of metal workers irrespective of their political views, their race, creed or color. They pretend to be extremely anxious to organize the unorganized, but it is obvious that they are out to organize no one but the bona fide followers of Stalin. The application of comrade Denis Plarinos has been rejected because he sent the Militant a truthful synopsis of the May Day demonstration in addition to the fact that he is a reader of the Militant. So it seems that readers of the Daily Worker exclusively are eligible to join the M. W. I. L. which pretends to be an organization of metal workers! Only the faithful disciples of Stalin will be organized, although these disciples do not number more than one percent of the workers. It is quite safe to say that nine out of every ten of the mill workers have never heard of Stalin.

The great majority of mill workers who read any newspaper at all read the capitalist sheets. They do not read them on account of their editorial policy or political views. They read them for the latest news of baseball, football, horse-racing, etc. But, yet they read the capitalist papers and not the Daily Worker. Are they to be ignored and pushed off the map by the heresy-hunting M. W. I. L.? Are they not to be organized to fight the steel barons unless they are born again or unless they wake up some morning and by some cablegram magic find themselves ardent admirers of Stalin and diligent students of the Third Period?

It is easy to foresee the end of this so-called Metal Workers Industrial League. Its sectarianism will choke it, lead it to decay and finally to the scrap heap of oblivion, unless it is taken over by the militant workers who will fight the steel barons by forming a united front of all steel workers irrespective of their political views or of what newspaper they read.

The mill workers can be organized on an industrial basis only. But they cannot be drawn into an organization which spends its time talking of the Russian situation, the Third Period, etc. These workers believe in organizing to fight the steel barons. Asking them to fight the battles of Stalin is sheer folly.

Organization will yet come but not through our present Communist leadership which insists on substituting wishes for facts and which believes the rank and file are to be merely drilled by the Party bureaucracy.

—CHARLIE BRYNE

and sterile in the sphere of transitional demands. It defends the erroneous slogan of "democratic dictatorship". It combines the scholasticism of Bucharin with the empiricism of Stalin and gives a theoretical elucidation of all the aberrations of Centrism.

It is necessary to construct a program worthy of the theory of Marx and the revolutionary school of Lenin.

One cannot find a way out of the present contradictions without crises and struggles. A favorable change in the relation of forces on a world scale, that is to say some striking success of the revolution would constitute an important and even decisive factor in the domestic affairs of the Soviet Union. But it is impossible to construct a policy on the expectation of some miraculous salvation "in the shortest possible interval". Certainly there will be no scarcity of economic and revolutionary crises in the coming period, especially in Europe and Asia. But this will not be enough to solve the problem. The defeats we suffered after the war taught us that without a party powerful and sure of itself, in full enjoyment of the confidence of the masses, victory is impossible. Well, on this very decisive point, the balance of the post-Lenin period shows a marked deficit.

That is why it is necessary to be able to foresee that the situation internally and internationally heralds a coming period full of prolonged and grave difficulties which will have their political repercussion. The suppressed questions, the hidden doubts, the heavy discontent of the masses will come to the surface. The whole question is to understand whether they will explode tumultuously, taking the Party by surprise or if the latter will be able to muster sufficient forces in itself at the supreme moment to become a new Party (or rather the old party again) in determining its role in regard to the laboring masses. The key to the future is to be found in this alternative.

To effect the retreat which has become necessary, to renew its strategic arsenal without too great damage and without losing its sense of perspective—this is only given to a party that clearly understands its goal and knows its strength.

This demands a collective criticism of the whole experience of the Party in the post-Lenin period. The fraud and lies of "self-criticism" must give place to internal democracy within the Party. A general examination of the general line—not in its application but in its direction—this is the way to commence.

Only the Left Opposition is in the present circumstances capable of condemning and explaining fearlessly all that is going on in the country and the Party to the extent that it is the result of the whole preceding course of developments. As long as this has not been understood it is of no avail to talk of some "general line"—whatever that is.

At the present moment the Left Opposition is more than ever a necessity for the Party. The crimes of the Stalinist apparatus must be put an end to and the Opposition returned to its rights within the Party. This we will once more say to the Sixteenth Congress.

The mission of the Opposition at the present time can be formulated as follows: to increase tenfold its efforts to aid the Party despite all obstacles to overcome the profound crisis which is manifesting itself internally, before there should develop in all its amplitude the crisis of the revolution.

Just as in the years of the imperialist slaughter little uncompromising groups and even isolated revolutionary individuals personified in themselves alone proletarian internationalism, so the Left Opposition, small in numbers and persecuted, is the guardian of the spirit of the revolutionary party. Neither the oppression of rulers nor the treachery of the feeble and exhausted, will shake us out of our determination.

Against bureaucratism! Against opportunism! Against adventurism!

For the October Revolution!

For the regeneration of the Russian Communist Party and the Communist International on the basis of Leninism!

For the International Proletarian Revolution!

Prinkipo, March 23, 1930. — L.D. TROTSKY