

A Statement of Views on Some Disputed Questions

By ALBERT WEISBORD

4. With the world war and the revolutionary wave that followed its wake, the epoch of imperialism entered a new stage qualitatively different from the one existing before (from 1900 to 1914). Distinctive of this new stage are the following: (a) the proletarian revolution is victorious in the U.S.S.R. (b) Post-war capitalism, with all its force, cannot get back to pre-war stability. The decline of capitalism cannot be stopped. All the attempts at "stabilization" become desperate efforts merely to slacken the tempo of the international revolution. This can be seen by the fact that, during this time, while some revolutionary situations are liquidated by the forces of international capitalism, yet some revolutionary situations cannot be liquidated and new ones constantly and repeatedly arise; concurrently a whole host of other situations begin to take on a revolutionary character. (Germany 1923, Bulgaria 1924, Estonia 1924, China 1925-27, England 1926, Austria 1928, India, China, Indo-China, besides Mexico, Nicaragua, Haiti, Porto Rico, Finland, etc.).

Situation Before and After War

Before the war, neither revolutionary situations nor actual revolutions could have been created by the activity of the socialist, revolutionary parties throughout the world. No matter how well or tirelessly these parties worked the bourgeoisie was too strong, the level of activity of the masses, generally speaking, too low, to cause a given situation to become a revolutionary one. Basically, these revolutionary situations had to develop by themselves from the objective contradictions arising in capitalist society. When, during and after the war, these objective contradictions did cause revolutionary situations to arise, by that time the subjective factor had become so powerful as to be able to mature such revolutionary situations in a number of countries, into actual revolutions. Today imperialism has become so much weaker, today, so close is the situation in a number of countries to a revolutionary one, that it is possible for an international Communist movement, PROVIDED IT HAS A LENINIST POLICY, and especially now when it controls a state backed by 150,000,000 workers and peasants, to develop situations otherwise still non-revolutionary into revolutionary situations, in DIFFERENT countries at DIFFERENT times. (This does not mean that a C.I. can "order" a revolutionary situation in ANY country at ANY time). It is a fact that today, with the correct policy, it is far easier in many countries to disintegrate the capitalist armies, to ruin the prestige of the ruling classes, to expose the petty bourgeoisie, and to activate the masses to an extraordinary degree than before.

Every worker knows that, under some conditions, the activity of a Communist group can "develop" a strike situation, where without this Communist group, no such situation would have been "developed". Today the Communist Party (under some circumstances and with a Leninist policy) can be the decisive force both in stimulating the exploited and oppressed masses with the understanding of the impossibility of living in the old way and in helping to make the ruling class unable to govern as of old. Since the war the old power and might of the ruling classes have been irretrievably broken. Further, the experiences of 1918-23 weigh mightily on the memory of the masses—the ruling classes in many countries were unable to govern once before. Finally, the Soviet Union with its tremendous economic and political weight will be able to throw this weight at times so as to help break the economic and political power of different sections of the international bourgeoisie at critical moments . . .

5. What must be the cornerstone of Communist international strategy is the recognition of this qualitative change in imperialism. Today it is possible to have "sudden" changes to revolutionary situations, "sudden" revolutions. Today there has been raised to hitherto unheard of degree the decisive importance of revolutionary organizations, first as factors maturing ("creating") revolutionary situations and second, as factors changing revolutionary situations to actual revolutions (insurrections).

The fatal error in the Communist "Majority Group" (Lovestone) is that it fails

to see this fundamental feature of the present stage, and to make this feature an integral part of any American analysis.

Errors of Party Leadership

The fatal error of the C.I. and its U.S. "leadership", is that it caricatures and distorts this basic conception, not understanding it and indeed transforming it into a theory justifying putchism, making of the party a sect more and more isolated from the masses, more and more stifled by an absolutely sterile bureaucratic machine. The official C.P. "leaders" in the United States fail to see that an insurrection can come only after the development of a revolutionary situation and fail to understand that to develop this revolutionary situation

(NOTE: We print here the essential sections of a speech delivered by comrade Albert Weisbord at the recent plenum of the Lovestone group. The National Committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition) has decided to publish the speech in the Militant. The second and last part of it will appear in the next issue of the paper, at which time the National Committee will append a statement of its views on the document of comrade Weisbord. The latter, as most readers are aware, was expelled from the Party a while ago for divergent views, and joined neither the Left nor the Right Opposition. The document below represents his views on the problems of the movement arrived at after a period of study and consideration.—Ed.)

one must follow a Leninist line of mass work, united front, work in reactionary unions, profound economic analysis, the understanding of the true relationship of American to international capitalist society, and the peculiarities of capitalist America; and that an end must be put to guesswork, phrase-mongering, to the fakery and lying in the leadership, to the theory of "fascism" and "social-fascism" to the bureaucracy and violence, to the Trotsky deportations and Blumkin murders, an end to the theory of socialism in one country, to Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee affairs, and Chiang Kai Shek mergers, etc. . . .

7. Secondly, an analysis of the present situation shows that the contradictions are sharpening and the tempo of international revolution is rising (that is, the "partial and temporary stabilization" of capitalism is becoming weaker than before). The original position of the Communist "Majority" Group is here too unsound; while on the other hand, the very putchist distortion of this by the official Party leadership tends to hinder the process of the cracking of "stabilization" now taking place and to weaken the revolutionary forces. Far from stimulating the masses, the false policy of the C.I. actually acts as a brake on the masses.

Section B. 8. The situation in America exposes in even clearer light the errors of the different Communist groups. The American section of Lozovsky-Stalin apparatus-men has never yet given up its "apex theory" and all that follows logically from it—namely, that American capitalism is on the decline, has reached its basic crisis with a general deep-going and widespread radicalization of the masses. To this has now been added the special twist that all members of the A.F. of L. are now full blown fascists and that all those expelled by the Stalin machine at once become secret police agents for the boss. To some extent the "Communist League (Opposition)" in America has limped uncritically after the Party (without, however, the added special twists). Though this opposition group gave up the "apex theory" yet it did so without having thoroughly exposed the errors inherent in it. And even today it still talks of "growing radicalization", "deep-going process of radicalization" quite uncritically.

On the other hand, the "Majority" Group merely sees in fact "deep discontent". With this group the present economic crisis is IN ESSENCE a mere cyclical one, (it seems as if latterly a section of the Party too is violently swinging to the point of view) and the dogmatic statement is made, with no appreciation of its rashness, that not only will American capitalism weather the present economic storm, but that it

will rise to new peaks only to fall to new lows.

The true situation is that with the qualitative changes of post war imperialism, with the weakening of world "stabilization", with the sharpening of the inner and outer contradictions of American capitalism, there can be no "mere cyclical crisis", no "mere discontent" but what we have to reckon with is a tenseness of relations, a restiveness of the masses which can enable a Communist Party WITH THE CORRECT POLICY to lead masses into such activity as to radicalize the masses. There is great POTENTIALITY NOT ACTUALITY of masses becoming radicalized generally and relatively quickly. But the foolish policy of the party only drives the masses further away from radicalization.

The American Crisis

9. The dogmatic statements—1. That American capitalism will weather the present economic crisis and 2. That it will rise to new peaks, utterly fails to take into account the international situation. It may be that due above all to the criminal policies of the C.I., this eventuality MAY OCCUR, but it is impossible to state so now as the sole solution. The "Majority" group fails IN REALITY to see that the economic crisis in the United States means economic crisis in many countries (for this group does not make such a view a VITAL part of its living work in America); that in some of these countries such a crisis if prolonged will lead to a real revolutionary situation, that a revolution breaking out in Europe may not only deepen the American crisis but will usher in a new and higher stage of the world revolution. Is such an alternative (or a number of similar alternatives which result in the ushering of a world crisis) impossible? Quite the contrary! For Communists, the whole perspective for the United States must constantly and intimately be permeated with this view . . .

11. Only by a Leninist policy are the Communists enabled to radicalize the masses in the United States. This policy means "To the Masses", mass work in all its forms, formation of independent mass organizations where possible and necessary, the united front, work in reactionary trade unions and similar bodies, Labor Party, etc. To accomplish such mass work it is necessary to Leninize the Party, namely to base the Party on the most exploited sections of the masses, to wipe out the bureaucracy (the liars and fakers) in the Party, to demand as an absolute condition and prerequisite to leadership 1. The tested ability to carry out mass work in a Communist manner. 2. The liquidation of the mountain of vulgar Marxism and syndicalist-liberal conceptions and a real study of the basic works of the founders of Communism. 3. Profound honesty, integrity and courage.

To all this the present "theories" of "Fascism" and "Social-Fascism" give a death blow. These "theories" wiping out as they do all the Marxian-Leninist distinctions between fascism and regular bourgeois democracy mean 1. The reactionary unions are to be destroyed from now on, the workers in the A.F. of L. being hopeless fascists, enemies of the working class. 2. The socialist and progressive workers being "social-fascists" are only secret agents of the fascists. These two must be destroyed. 3. The Communist opposition groups become not only full grown Mensheviks but worse, police agents, having no place in unions or other working class organizations. Any action against them up to complete physical extermination is justified. 4. The line between Communism and fascism theoretically becomes very thin for overnight; no matter how tested and loyal before, any Communist can become a police-agent Menshevik or fascist. Therefore the greatest violence and terror is theoretically justified not only against the "open police-agent Mensheviks" but against the members of the party, the possible police-agent Mensheviks of the future. 5. Since every tested member tomorrow can be a police-agent Menshevik, revolutionary behaviour in mass work is no longer a test for leadership. Any faker or apparatus follower can be a leader. Leaders are cheap and easily made. Distrust for the leadership follows. Cynicism not revolutionary idealism pervades the party. Double-book-keeping (see the hypocrisy of those who

put forth the C.I. Address of 1929) becomes the rule. Correspondingly a contempt for the membership grows. Political sterility increases. No policies except those printed in Moscow with a militarization and robotization (Stalinization) of the Party. In this connection the quotation from the recently adopted "C.P. Thesis" which declares "The need of the hour is clarity of instructions and promptness of executions" is illuminating of the process now going on within the party.

There can be no doubt but that the conscious holders of these theories, (Erowder, Johnstone, Dunne and the rest of the Company) if they carry these theories to the logical conclusions and practices inevitably flowing from them, must degenerate to become the real renegades from Communism, indeed the real fascists of tomorrow!

(Concluded in Next Issue)

Slander Won't Win

BOSTON—

At an outing of the Needle Trades Industrial Union that was held the week-end of July 4 at Boston Camp Nitgedaiget, we had a mass meeting with Ben Gold. We all expected to hear him speak on trade union problems which are so vital to us, but instead he took up a discussion on the Trotskyists. He tried to prove that the Trotskyists bring poison and splits into the union and naturally this hinders the good work.

Let us see who does more damage. All the comrades in the union in Boston (and Gold, too), know that comrade Eva Weiner and myself were among the first to build the N.T.W.I.U. The workers trust us, know that we are always on the job to carry out all decisions which are passed by the members. Gold knows that the Communist League (Opposition) is for a Left wing policy. We never brought in any other kind of policies and always demanded from our leaders that they carry out a real Left wing fight.

So what is Gold's motive in bringing this question up and saying that we don't build the Left wing union? To discredit us among the workers. Everyone knows that this is false and that it will not do any good for the union. We must draw in all active workers who are honestly carrying out our policy and helping to build the Industrial Union.

No one can split the union more than tactics like Gold's. If he wants to prove that we did any harm to the union, let him call an open forum and invite the Trotskyists. Let him prove that we are doing harm because we are Trotskyists. He said that we were dead. Then how can we do any harm? Dead ones do not do anything. If the Trotskyists are dead everywhere why do the Stalinists come and break up their meetings like they did in Cleveland? What are they afraid of?

You will not be able, comrade Gold, to kill our prestige among the Boston workers because they know we always work for a good Left wing policy and will do everything to build the N.T.W.I.U. as we have in the past.

—J.CHIPLOWITZ

Φ

A Revolutionary «Social Fascist»

A few days ago, the Daily Worker went into positively frantic ecstasies over as anti-Heywood Broun-S.P. cartoon by Ryan Walker. It hailed Walker as a noble revolutionist who was revolted by the scoundrelism of the Socialist Party. The Daily became so maudlin in its enthusiasm that toward the end of the article it was literally slobbering over Walker. It appears however, that Walker is the staff cartoonist of the Illinois Miner, official organ of the Howat-Fishwick-Germer miners' union, which as even a casual reader of the Daily Worker knows is a pure and simple "social fascist" organization, covered with a Left phrase or two, but "social fascist" nevertheless. Walker, according to the third period jargon, is therefore a paid agent of "social fascism". Or rather he was, for after the praise with which the Worker greeted him he most probably falls into a new category, the "Revolutionary Social Fascist". Personally, we advise the Worker to stick to Jake Burck.