

A Statement of Views on Some Disputed Questions

(This is the final installment of the speech made before the Lovestone group plenum by comrade Weisbord in which he present his views. The reply of the Communist League is appended.)

By ALBERT WEISBORD

18. India. The basic slogans for the Communists today in India must be Lenin's "Three Pillars", that is, a basic slogan for the proletariat (say the eight hour day) a basic slogan for the peasantry (confiscation of the land) and the slogan of Democratic Republic. To these "three pillars" the slogan "Freedom for India" must be added. Only around all these slogans can the masses be effectively mobilized. It would be a gross error for the Communists to stress the slogan of Freedom for India alone as does the nationalist Indian bourgeoisie. The slogan for "Constituent Assembly" by itself is not incorrect but is incomplete and may be dangerous for it does not take into consideration the fact that British Imperialism can maneuver so as to make the slogan of Constituent Assembly a SUBSTITUTE for a democratic republic. The slogan Constituent Assembly can be used correctly only in conjunction with the slogan for a Democratic Republic.

The Slogan of Soviets

The slogan of Soviets can be appropriate only when a sufficiently acute revolutionary situation has been engendered around the "three pillars", when the class struggle and civil war rages in the villages and towns. In this connection it must be emphasized that Soviets can be built even with the slogan of Constituent Assembly. The two slogans of Constituent Assembly and Soviets need not be antagonistic at all times. But what must be stressed is the actual organization of civil war in the village and town and the leadership of the proletariat in this civil war. Only the dictatorship of the proletariat in India can make permanent its revolution.

The Communists must make plain to the masses the role of the nationalistic Indian bourgeoisie and the role of Ghandi as an agent of this class. Not only the experiences of 1921 must be gone over, but all the treacherous actions of the present Ghandi campaign (the salt campaign, the anti-machine movement, passive resistance, opposition to workers, record at the Nationalist Congress, etc., etc.) must be elaborated. Simultaneously mass movements in town and countryside against native usurer, gentry, kulak, bourgeois, must be effected. By no means must the Chiang Kai-Shek disaster be repeated. The criminal negligence of the C.I. in failing to build the Communist Party but in building worker-peasant parties instead must be speedily liquidated. It is clear it is not OUR business to organize peasant parties.

It is clear that the main task of the Communists must be the stimulation of the masses around the "three pillar" and freedom slogans. These movements are directed against both native and foreign rulers and bourgeoisie who may desire a nationalist revolutionary movement under the sole slogan of "Freedom of India" from the British. Nevertheless, and this is most important to understand, so long as a section of the nationalist Indian bourgeoisie is fighting British Imperialism under the slogan of Freedom of India from Imperialist rule, so long as this movement unleashes the energy of the masses which otherwise could not be unleashed and so long as the masses have not been actively mobilized around the correct slogans and while the exposure of the native bourgeoisie is but in its incipency, it would be manifestly incorrect for the Communists not to enter or to struggle for a national revolutionary front against British Imperialism even though this national revolutionary front would temporarily contain sections of the nationalist revolutionary bourgeoisie (whom the masses follow) even though the sole slogan were "Freedom for India" from British Imperialism and even though later the united front would have to be broken by the development of the class struggle in the villages and towns of India. The

center of attack must be against British Imperialism and its conscious reactionary agents within India.

The crime of the C.I. in China (and this opinion is not in contradiction with the basic opinions of comrade Trotsky, it seems) was NOT that the C.P. of China joined a national revolutionary front, but that the C.I. SUBSTITUTED the Kuomintang for the Communist Party, succumbed to Sun Yat Senism, introduced class collaboration against the class struggle, sacrificing the class struggle to this national revolutionary front against foreign imperialism, failing to raise the "Three Pillar" slogans and thus leading the civil war in village and town on concrete demands of the masses against the native exploiters as well. The policy today must be: a national revolutionary front which later will be broken by the progress of the class struggle in India under the leadership of the proletariat (through its Communist Party) in alliance with the peasantry on the road to the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Problem in China

14. Here too the slogan of the Constituent Assembly is still correct, although it is apparently incorrect to state that the Chinese revolution is still on the wane. Here the mobilization of workers and peasants on concrete issues can lead to such an acute revolutionary situation that Soviets can be formed.

It is dubious to say, as do some members of the International Left Opposition, that the present guerilla warfare going on in China today is wrong and not to be supported. Under the present conditions, if the facts are that masses of desperate peasants are ready to take up civil war in the countryside, the Communists must stimulate, support, organize and lead such a movement. On the other hand, it must be clear that no matter how much the Imperialists and native Chinese rulers may be weakened, armed peasant bands cannot take the place of mass peasant uprisings, the peasant movement can not take the place of a proletarian struggle, and peasant "Soviets" cannot replace the dictatorship of the proletariat.

15. The colonial revolutionary situations in China and India are of the greatest importance to the rest of the world, and to the United States especially. How can we foresee that the United States will "weather the economic storm" and "reach new peaks" unless we foresee already the complete and sudden crushing of the revolutionary wave in the Far East. It is the rankest opportunism to fail to connect in the most intimate way the revolutionary situations in the East with the immediate perspective of the United States. All of the Communist groups suffer from this opportunism more or less. Unless this view is corrected it will be true that the revolutions will be defeated, but it will be the Communists who will have aided unconsciously the hangmen both in the East and in the West.

16. The slogan Soviet United States of Europe today seems dubious. Lenin was opposed to this slogan. Today, it may tend to aid reactionary schemes like those of Briand. It should be remembered that among the capitalist nations the sharpest basic antagonisms are no longer between European nations but between Europe and America.

17. The situation within the Soviet Union, our fatherland, must be of the utmost concern for us. The difficulty and delicacy of the subject must not lead to less discussion but to more. There is no question but that, on the whole, here comrade Trotsky was correct both in stressing industrialization and the necessity of a "plan", and in proposing an intensification of the war on the kulak. When there is recalled Bucharin's slogan to the peasantry "Enrich yourselves" and how there was solemnly discussed in Russia the possibility of the "kulaks growing into socialism", when there is recalled the arguments that

any plan of industrialization was "too premature" and would lead to terrible catastrophes and "war in the village", when there is recalled how backward the original industrialization plans were and how far the masses outstripped the "Party leaders", then the conclusion is ripe that the attack on comrade Trotsky on this question only hid the Right opportunism of the Stalin-Bucharin regime.

The Five-Year Plan

The five year plan, belated as it was, and its speedy execution, mark a tremendous step forward. The industrialization of the Soviet State must tend greatly to strengthen the revolutionary movement and tend to hasten the end of capitalism. But the economic progress of the U.S.S.R. does not BY ITSELF NECESSARILY lead to an advance of the world revolution. If with such an economic advance there should be fastened upon the Communist Parties still more the theory of building socialism in one country, if this should lead not to an international but a nationalist viewpoint, if this should in turn lead the C.I. leadership to playing with and a sacrifice of foreign sections of the C.I., if this should fasten the hold of the bureaucrats still more, if this should lead to Trotsky deportations and Elumkin murders and violence to every Communist opposition movement, then indeed it is possible to state that unless the Communists throughout the world (aided by the very economic advance of the Soviet Union) can guard against this degeneration from Leninism it is possible to have an economic advance of the Soviet Union simultaneously with a setback to the world proletarian revolution. Trotsky's exposure of the elements of Thermidor generating within the Soviet Union is absolutely correct.

Section D. 18. The Comintern today is in a profound crisis. The narrowing down and great loss of prestige of the C.I. and the mass expulsions show how deeply opportunism was part of the Communist movement. The formation of three different separately organized international Communist groups speaks of the disintegration of the movement. But it also marks a step forward since such a situation exposes the rottenness in all groups, hardens the real Leninists and prepares the way for new advances.

We owe it primarily and above all to L.D. Trotsky for exposing the situation since Lenin died, for bringing to light the Testament of Lenin which the other leaders had deliberately hidden, for exposing the forgeries of Lenin's writings attempted, and for bringing to light many facts of Party history concealed by the bureaucrats from the membership.

However it, seems that comrade Trotsky is incorrect in designating the struggle between Bucharin and Stalin (and the national groups around them) as one between "Right" and "Centrist" tendencies in the Communist movement. It is in reality a struggle between two forms of the "Right". Both philosophically and politically the conception of a "Centrist" COMMUNIST wing is wrong. Centristism can be used as designating Socialists but not Communists. This was Lenin's usage of the term. Practically, it gives the illusion that the "Centrists" are more to the "Left" than the "Right" and that "Centrists" are more easily swayed and have no real policy of their own.

19. In the United States, the disintegration of the Communist Party has exposed three groups with definite Right wing tendencies. The putschism of the official Communist Party factionalists is not the wrong estimation of those too impatient and too eager to struggle, but a deliberate make-believe to conceal their utter Right wing bankruptcy. The theory of building socialism in one country, their attitude on colonial questions, their deliberate isolation from the masses, their conception that leaders of a Communist Party can be liars and fakers trying to bluff both Moscow and the membership, and can reach leadership without ever having been called to carry

out responsible mass work in a Communist manner before becoming leaders, their violence against Communist groups, these are some of the things that show on what road this clique marches.

The Communist "Majority" group (Lovestone) shows just as bad tendencies. The failure to analyze international questions (China, Russia, etc.) and to link up these questions in the closest degree with questions of the United States; the "Right" line when these questions are approached, the wrong estimation both of the whole present period of post-war capitalism and of the present situation inside and outside the United States and the complete failure to understand the many Right wing mistakes (including the methods of dealing with the Trotsky opposition) that were committed by the leaders of this group as leaders of the Party. These are but part of the evidence to show how firmly rooted the Right tendencies of this group have become.

The Communist League (Opposition) also has shown definite "Right" tendencies. But the Right tendencies have NOT flowed from comrade Trotsky and the International Left Opposition—now that the true position of the "Trotsky" opposition is known—but are peculiar to its American section. The May 1929 factional platform, the passivity and sectarian leanings, the absolute and complete lack of self-criticism and failure to see that the Cannon faction within the Party was as un-Leninist as any of the others, these defects flowed from the fact that the American section of the Left International Opposition was too close to but a reconstituted Cannon faction in the beginning of its formation. However there must be admitted the great service such a faction did render in the publication and popularization of the principles of the Left International Opposition.

The crying need of the hour today is absolute ideological intransigence, plus the working together of all Communist groups. One of the crassest forms of opportunism was the factional unity attempted in the Party in 1928 (and before) and which was only the obverse side of the unprincipled factionalism that had existed before merely in another form. The correct solution of the momentous questions of the day on the basis of Leninism stand above all questions of formal discipline.

At the same time all Communist groups must work together on the basis of the recognition of the Communist character of each group. The Communist "Majority" opposition group and the Communist League group by working together can help to re-establish mass work and to resist the violent tactics of the Party officialdom. They can help to separate the Communist movement as a whole from the Mensheviks and can deal a death blow to the theory of "fascism" and "social-fascism" thus winning the advanced workers to a Leninist conception of Party democracy. Only such a working together of Communist groups can raise those fundamental principles of Leninist organization that can reconstitute an International of Lenin.

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