

Perspectives and Tasks of the Chinese Revolution

(Continued from Page 1)

truth that their bourgeoisie can not, and does not want to, and never will fight either against the so-called "feudalism"—since the latter constitutes the most important part of its own system of exploitation—or against that imperialism, of which it is an agent and under whose military protection it operates.

As soon as it became evident that the Chinese proletariat, in spite of all the obstructions offered by the Comintern was eager to go on its own independent revolutionary road, the bourgeoisie, with the help of the foreign imperialists, demolished the workers, beginning at Shanghai. As soon as it was clear that the friendship with Moscow was not able to paralyze the uprising of the peasants, the bourgeoisie shattered the peasant movement. The spring and summer of 1927 were the months of the greatest crimes of the Chinese bourgeoisie.

Frightened by the consequences of its mistakes, the Stalinist faction tried at the end of 1927 to make up at once for what it had let slip up for a whole period of years. Thus was organized the insurrection in Canton. The leaders assumed that the revolution was still on the rise. In reality it was already completely on the decline. The heroism of the advanced workers could not prevent the disaster caused by the adventure of these leaders. The Canton insurrection was drowned in blood. The second Chinese revolution was completely demolished.

We, the representatives of the International Left Opposition, the Bolshevik-Leninists, were from the very beginning against joining the Kuo Min Tang and for an independent proletarian policy. From the very beginning of the revolutionary rise we demanded the organization of workers, soldiers and peasants soviets. We demanded that the workers should stand at the head of the peasant insurrection and lead the agrarian revolution to its end. Our course was rejected. Our supporters were persecuted, expelled from the Comintern and those in the U.S.S.R. were arrested and exiled. In the name of what? In the name of a union with Chiang Kai-Shek.

The Crushing of the Revolution

After the counter-revolutionary coup d'Etat in Shanghai and Wuhan we, the Left Communists gave insistent warning that the second Chinese revolution is over, that a period of temporary triumph of the counter-revolution had supervened, and that an attempt at an insurrection of the advanced workers in face of the general depression and weariness of the masses, will inevitably bring a further criminal extermination of the revolutionary forces. We demanded a transition to the defensive, the strengthening of the underground organization of the Party participation in the economic struggles of the proletariat and the mobilization of the masses under the slogans of democracy; the independence of China, the right of self-determination of the different nationalities in the population, a national assembly, confiscation of the land, eight-hour working day. Such a policy would have given the Communist vanguard the possibility to emerge gradually from its defeat, to re-establish connection with the trade unions and with the unorganized masses of city and country and be ready to meet later in full arms the new revolutionary rise.

The Stalinist faction denounced our policy as that of "liquidators" while itself, as has happened before in its history passing from opportunism to adventurism. In February 1928, when the Chinese revolution was at its extreme decline, the IX Plenum of the E.C.C.I. announced in China a course towards armed insurrection. The results of this madness was a further defeat of the workers, extermination of the best revolutionaries, a split in the Party and demoralization in the ranks of the workers.

The decline of the revolution and the temporary weakening of the fight between the militarists, made possible a certain economic revival in the country. Strikes began over again. But they were conducted independently of the Party, which, not understanding the situation, was absolutely unable to show the masses the new perspectives and unite them under the democratic slogans of the transitory period. As a result of mistakes, opportunism and adventurism, the Communist Party at present

counts in its ranks only a few thousand workers. In the Red trade unions according to the data of the Party itself, there are about 60,000 workers. In the months of the revolutionary rise there were about 3,000,000 of them.

The counter-revolution left its mark directly and much more ruthlessly on the workers than on the peasants. The workers in China are not numerous and are concentrated in the industrial centers. The peasants are protected to a certain degree by their numbers and their diffusion over vast spaces. The revolutionary years trained up in the country quite a few local leaders, and the counter-revolution did not succeed in exterminating them all. A considerable number of revolutionary workers hid themselves in the country from the militarists. For the last decade a considerable number of arms were scattered all over the country. In conflicts with local administrators or military units, these arms are produced by the peasants and companies of Red irregulars are organized. In the armies of the bourgeois counter-revolution, agitations often take place, and at times, open revolts. Soldiers with their arms desert to the side of the peasants, sometimes in groups, sometimes in whole companies.

The Peasant Uprisings

Hence it is quite natural that even after the defeat of the revolution, waves of the peasant movement continued to roll up to the various provinces of the country and at present have burst out with special force. With armed hands, the peasants drive out and exterminate the local landlords, as many as are to be found in their regions, and especially the so-called gentry and Tuchuns, the local representatives of the ruling class—the bureaucrat-proprietors, the usurers and the rich peasants.

When the Stalinists talk about a Soviet government established by the peasants over a considerable part of China, they do not simply show their credulity and superficiality, but obscure and misrepresent the fundamental problem of the Chinese revolution. A peasantry, even the most revolutionary, is not able to create an independent government. It can only support the government of another class, dominating in the cities. The peasantry in all decisive moments follow either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. So-called "peasant parties" can only disguise this fact, but they cannot annul it. Soviets are the organs of power of a revolutionary class antagonistic to the bourgeoisie. This means that the peasantry is unable to organize a Soviet system by its own force. The same is true of an army. More than once the peasantry has organized in China as well as in Russia and other countries, guerrilla armies, which fought with incomparable courage and obstinacy. But these were only guerrilla armies, attached to a local province and not fit for centralized strategic operations on a large scale. Only the dominance of the proletariat in the decisive industrial and political centers of the country creates the necessary premise for the organization of a Red army, and for the spreading of the Soviet system to the country. To those who are not able to understand this, the revolution has remained a book closed with seven seals.

The Chinese proletariat is just beginning to come out from the paralysis of the counter-revolution. The peasant movement is moving at present, in a considerable measure, independently of the workers movement, according to its own laws, and its own tempo. Meanwhile, the whole problem of the Chinese revolution consists of the political coordination and organizational combination of the proletariat and peasant uprising. Those who talk about the victory of the Soviet revolution in China, if even in separate provinces of the South only, in face of the passivity of the industrial North, ignore the dual problem of the Chinese revolution, the problem of cooperation of workers and peasants and the problem of leadership of the workers in this cooperation.

The vast flood of the peasant revolt might undoubtedly serve as an impetus to a revival of political struggle in the industrial centers. We firmly count upon it. But this would not mean in any case, that the revolutionary awakening of the proletariat would lead immediately to the conquest of power or even to the struggle for

power. The awakening of the proletariat might in its first steps assume the character of partial economic and political, defensive and offensive fights. How long a time would it take the proletariat, and especially the Communist vanguard, to grow up to the role of the leaders of a revolutionary nation? At any rate more than weeks and months. The command of bureaucratic leaders can not replace the independent growth of a class and of its party.

The Chinese Communists need at present a policy of far aim. Their task consists not in scattering their forces among the isolated fires of the peasant revolt. Small in its number and weak, the Party will not be able to get hold of this movement. The duty of the Communists is to concentrate their forces in factories and shops, in workers' districts, to explain to the workers the meaning of what is going on in the country, to raise the spirit of the tired and the discouraged, to form groups of them for the struggle to defend their economic interests, and for slogans of the democratic and agrarian revolution. Only in this way, i. e., through the awakening and the uniting of the workers will the Communist Party be able to become a leader of the peasant insurrection, which is to say, of the national revolution as a whole.

To support the illusions of adventurism and to disguise the weakness of the proletarian vanguard, the Stalinists say: The matter in question is only a democratic and not a proletarian dictatorship. In this central point adventurism is relying in full on the premises of opportunism. Not satisfied with their experiment with the Kuo Min Tang, the Stalinists are preparing for the future revolution a new means of putting to sleep and enslaving the proletariat under the name of the "democratic dictatorship".

The Slogan of Soviets

When the advanced Chinese workers promulgated the slogan of Soviets they meant by it: We want to do what the Russian workers did. Only yesterday the Stalinists replied to them: "No, you must not, you have the Kuo Min Tang, and it will do what is necessary" Today, the same leaders answer more cautiously: "You'll have to organize Soviets not for a proletariat but for a democratic dictatorship." By this they tell the proletariat that the dictatorship will not be in their hands. Then there is some other, as yet undiscovered force which will be able to realize the revolutionary dictatorship in China.

Thus the formula of the democratic dictatorship opens the gates for a new deception of the workers and peasants by the bourgeoisie.

To clear the way for the "democratic dictatorship", the Stalinists represent the Chinese counter-revolution as "feudal-militaristic and imperialistic". In this way they exclude from the counter-revolution the Chinese bourgeoisie, i. e., idealize it, as they did before. In reality, the militarists express the interests of the Chinese bourgeoisie, which are inseparable from the feudal interests and relationships. The Chinese bourgeoisie is too hostile to the people, too closely tied up with the foreign imperialists, too afraid of the revolution, to be eager to rule in their own name by parliamentary methods. The militaristic-fascist regime of China is an expression of the anti-national, anti-revolutionary character of the Chinese bourgeoisie. The Chinese counter-revolution is not a counter-revolution of feudal barons and slave-owners against bourgeois society. It is the counter-revolution of all property holders—and first of all bourgeois proprietors—against the workers and peasants.

The proletarian insurrection in China can and will come only as a direct and immediate revolution against the bourgeoisie. The peasants' revolt in China is much more than it was in Russia, a revolt against the bourgeoisie. A class of landlords as a separate class does not exist in China. The landowners are bourgeoisie. The gentry and Tuchuns, against whom the peasant movement is immediately directed, represent the lowest links of the bourgeoisie, as well as of imperialist exploitation. In Russia, the October revolution at its first stage opposed all the peasantry as a class to the class of the landlords, and only

after a number of months began to introduce the civil war into the peasantry. In China every peasant uprising is from its very first step, a civil war of the poor against the kulaks, i. e., against the village bourgeoisie.

The middle peasantry in China is insignificant. Almost 80 percent of the peasants are poor. They, and they only, play the revolutionary role. The question is not of uniting the workers with the peasantry as a whole but with the village poor. They have a common enemy: the bourgeoisie. No one but the proletariat can lead the poor peasants to victory. Their mutual victory can lead to no other regime but the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only this regime is able to establish the soviet system and organize a Red Army which will be the military expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the poor peasants.

The Stalinists say that the democratic dictatorship, as the next stage of the revolution, will grow later into a proletarian dictatorship. Such is at present the teaching of the Comintern not only for China but for all countries of the East. It breaks completely with the teachings of Marx concerning the state and with Lenin's conclusions as to the part the state plays in revolution. The democratic dictatorship, differs from the proletarian by being a bourgeois-democratic dictatorship. The transition from a bourgeois dictatorship to the proletarian can not nevertheless be realized by the way of peaceful "growing into". The dictatorship of the proletariat can come into the place of a democracy, as well as of a fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, only by way of armed insurrection.

The peaceful "growing" of a democratic revolution into a socialist revolution is possible only under the dictatorship of one class—namely, the proletariat. The transition from democratic measures into socialist measures took place in the Soviet Union under the regime of proletarian dictatorship. In China, the transition will happen much faster, as the most elementary democratic problems in China have a still more anti-capitalistic and anti-bourgeois character than they had in Russia.

The Stalinists evidently need one more bankruptcy, paid by the workers' blood, in order to make up their mind to say: "The revolution has reached the highest stage, the slogan of which is the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Towards the Third Revolution

At the present moment, nobody can say how much a reflection from the second revolution is combined in the present peasant insurrection with the far-off lighting of the third. Nobody can foretell now whether the hearths of the peasant revolt will be able to keep a fire burning continuously through all the long period of time which the proletarian vanguard will need to gather its own strength, bring the working class into the fight and coordinate its struggle for power with the general offensive of the peasants against their most immediate enemies.

What distinguishes this present movement in the country is the eagerness of the peasant to give it a soviet form, or at least a soviet name, and to make their own guerrilla armies as much as possible like the Red Army. This shows how intensely the peasants are seeking a political form which might enable them to escape from their scatteredness and impotency. On this foundation the Communists can build successfully.

But it must be understood beforehand, that in the consciousness of the Chinese peasant the vague slogan of Soviets does not by any means signify the dictatorship of the proletariat. The peasants in general can not speak for the proletarian dictatorship a priori. They can be led to it only through the experience of a struggle which will prove to them in reality, that their democratic problems can not be solved any other way except through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Such is the fundamental reason why the Communist Party of China can not lead the proletariat to the struggle for power, except under the slogans of democracy.

The peasant movement, although adorned with the name of Soviets, remains disintegrated, local, provincial. To lift it

(Continued on Page 8)