

# A Retreat in Full Disorder

In the anniversary number of *Pravda* (November 7), Manuilsky once more shows what the present leadership of the Comintern is worth. We will analyze briefly that part of his anniversary reflections devoted to China, and which amounts, in essence, to a cowardly, consciously confused, and therefore all the more dangerous semi-capitulation to the theory of the permanent revolution.

1. "A revolution-democratic dictatorship of the peasantry and proletariat in China", Manuilsky writes, "will differ essentially from the democratic dictatorship outlined [!] by the Bolsheviks in the 1905-06 revolution."

The democratic dictatorship was "outlined" by the Bolsheviks not only in 1905 but also in 1917 and in all the years between the two revolutions. But only outlined. Events served as a test. Manuilsky, like his teacher Stalin, does not reflect upon the points of resemblance and the points of difference of the Chinese revolution with the three Russian revolutions—no, with such comparisons they would be unable to preserve the fiction of the democratic dictatorship, and together with it, the fiction of their theoretical reputations. Therefore these gentlemen do not compare the Chinese revolution with the real Russian revolution, but with the one that was "outlined". It is much easier in this way to confuse and to throw dust in the eyes.

## Russia and China

2. In what respect then does the revolution taking place in China differ from the one "outlined" in Russia? In fact, we are taught by Manuilsky, that the Chinese revolution is directed against the "whole system of world imperialism!" It is true that this was the basis upon which Manuilsky yesterday depended for the revolutionary rôle of the Chinese bourgeoisie as against the Bolshevik position "outlined in 1905." Today, however, Manuilsky's conclusions are different: "The difficulties of the Chinese revolution are tremendous; and this is precisely why the victorious movement of the Chinese Red Army on the industrial centers of China had to halt at Changsha." It would have been much more simple and honest to say that the partisan peasant detachments, in the absence of revolutionary uprisings in the cities, found themselves powerless to take possession of the industrial and political centers of the country. Wasn't this clear to Marxists beforehand?

But Manuilsky must needs rescue Stalin's speech at the Sixteenth Congress. Here is how he fulfills this task: "The Chinese revolution has at its disposal a Red Army, it is in possession of a considerable territory, at this very moment it is creating on this territory a Soviet system of workers' and peasants' power in whose government the Communists are in the majority. And this condition permits the proletariat to realize not only an ideological but also a state hegemony over the peasantry." (Our emphasis.)

The fact that the Communists, as the revolutionary and most self-sacrificing elements, appear at the head of the peasant movement and the armed peasant detachments is quite natural in itself and is also extraordinarily important in the symptomatic sense. But this does not change the fact that the Chinese workers find themselves throughout their vast country under the heel of the Chinese bourgeoisie and foreign imperialism. In what way can the proletariat realize "state hegemony" over the peasantry, when the state power is not in its hands? It is absolutely impossible to understand this. The leading rôle of the isolated Communists and the isolated Communist groups in the peasant war does not decide the question of power. Classes decide and not parties. The peasant war may support the dictatorship of the proletariat, if they coincide in point of time, but under no circumstances can it be substituted for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Is it possible that the "leaders" of the Comintern have not learned even this from the experiences of the three Russian revolutions?

## Manuilsky's Democratic Tasks

3. Let us listen to Manuilsky further: "All these [?] conditions lead to the fact that a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship in China will be confronted with the necessity of a consistent confiscation of the enterprises belonging to foreign and Chinese capital." (Our emphasis.)

"All these conditions" is a commonplace whose purpose is to cover up the gap that was created in the old position. But the center of gravity in the phrase quoted above is not in "all these conditions" but in one single "condition": Manuilsky has been instructed to maneuver away from the democratic dictatorship and to cover up the

This is why Manuilsky so diligently, skillfully, wags his tail.

The democratic dictatorship can be contrasted only to the proletarian socialist dictatorship. The one differs from the other by the character of the class holding power and by the social content of its historical work. If the democratic dictatorship is to occupy itself not with clearing the road for capitalist development, as the Bolshevik schema "outlined in 1905" stated, but on the contrary, with a "consistent confiscation of the enterprises belonging to foreign and Chinese capital", as "outlined" by Manuilsky, then we ask: Wherein does this democratic dictatorship differ from the socialist? In no way. Then does it mean that Manuilsky, for the second time after a lapse of twelve years, has bitten into the apple of the "permanent" theory? He bit without really taking a bite: this will yet be seen.

4. We read one phrase after another. "The presence of socialist elements will be the specific [!] peculiarity of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry in China." Not a bad "specific" peculiarity!

The democratic dictatorship was always thought of by the Bolsheviks as a bourgeois-democratic dictatorship, and not as a super-class one, and was contrasted to the socialist dictatorship only in this—the only possible—sense. Now it appears that in China there will be a "democratic dictatorship with socialist elements". Between the bourgeois and socialist régimes the class abyss thus disappears, everything is dissolved into pure democracy, and this pure democracy is sup-

plemented gradually and planfully by "socialist elements".

## The Tutor of Manuilsky

Who did these people learn from? From Victor Chernov. It is precisely he who, in 1905-06, outlined such a Russian revolution as would be neither bourgeois nor socialist, but democratic and would gradually be supplemented by socialist elements. No, Manuilsky did not make much use of the apple of wisdom!

5. Further: the Chinese revolution in its transition from capitalism to socialism will have more intermediate stages than our October revolution; but the periods of its growing over into a socialist revolution will be considerably shorter than the periods outlined (!) by the Bolsheviks for the democratic dictatorship in 1905.

Our astrologer has drawn the balance to everything in advance: to the stages, to the periods, and the length of the periods. He only forgot the A B C of Communism. It appears that under democracy, capitalism will grow over into socialism in a series of stages. And the power—will it remain the same in this process or will it change? What class will hold power under the democratic dictatorship and what class under the socialist? If different classes will hold power then they can supplant each other only by a new revolution, and not through the "growing over" of the power of one class into the power of another. On the other hand, if it is assumed that in both periods one and the same class will dominate, that is, the proletariat, then what is the meaning

# A Ferment in the German Right Wing Group

BERLIN—

The more acute the crisis becomes in Russia, the quicker the Rights are forced to take an open position regarding the fundamental questions of socialist construction.

The leadership of the Rights has had to express itself on these questions only of late. After Bucharin had once more—perhaps finally—capitulated, Brandler and Thalheimer hastened to emphasize in loud and audible tones their approbation of Stalin's general line.

Brandler's perspective is very transparent. Departing from the view that a victory for fascism in Germany would mean an extraordinary aggravation of the war danger for the Soviet Union, he is hoping that thru the complete failure of the party leadership in the struggle for the masses, Stalin will be forced to drop Thälmann-Remmele-Neumann, or, at least, to form a coalition central committee of Centrists and Rights. All the preparations are now being made for this longed-for bloc. Brandler knows that the E. C. C. I. is ready to concede in purely German questions, provided the correctness of the Stalinist general line is acknowledged. Thus, for instance, a compromise has been concluded between the party leadership and the Ullstein nucleus, the strongest in the party. The nucleus was readmitted after it had remained outside the party for months. Such a compromise was possible—as the nucleus leaders in their consultations with us had declared from the first—only after their approval of the Stalinist general line had safe-guarded the retreat.

While Brandler-Thalheimer are adopting a course towards Stalin, there is growing, on the soil of the opportunism sown by them, a conception among the membership of the Rights that the C. P. G. can be considered as already lost. In a whole series of organizations throughout the country, the Rights are adopting a path towards a split in the left S. P. G. and for a new edition of the Independent S. P. G.—that is, towards capitulation. Fundamentally, these two tendencies are not to be distinguished from one another and will separate only when the hopes of Brandler are realized, when Stalin grants acceptable conditions for capitulation. Momentarily, this does not seem to be the case.

Of late, a third tendency has begun to crystallize among the Rights, in Berlin as well as in the country. Doubtless this tendency has come under the influence of our own clarification work. A tendency of Left conciliators is being formed which has not yet been consolidated into a group, which is as yet in itself incoherent, but whose development we must follow with the greatest attention. This tendency of Left conciliators which is represented in Czechoslovakia by Michalec, and in Austria by Isa Strasser, is represented in Germany by Frölich, Walcher and Enderle. Frölich goes a good bit further than the others. In the membership meeting of the Berlin Rights he stated:

"Our decisive mistake was the fact that we did not recognize the correctness of Trotsky's proposals in 1927, when he demanded a rational and appropriate tempo of industrialization and collectivization. Trotsky's pamphlet on the German situation contains a wealth of positive points of view. We must attempt to come closer to these groups."

However, in the resolution introduced by Walcher, Enderle and himself, the political shyness—shall we say—of the Left conciliators finds very strong expression. The loyal critics of the Thalheimer tendency do not even dare to declare that they consider the theory of socialism in one country to be false, but content themselves with talmudically diplomatic remarks.

"We must state that the realization of socialism is not only a social-economic and technical problem. The tasks of socialism can only be completed as the conscious work of the working class. The working class can become mature for this work only through its own conscious activity."

Thus the altogether too shy Left conciliators try to remove the question of socialist construction from the central question of perspective (national socialist society or solution of the contradictions by the international revolution), to the question of the internal régime of the party, in the factories, etc.

The professional opportunists of Brandler's or Thalheimer's cut naturally detect in this tendency a very serious danger. It is true that they do not particularly fear the "loyal opposition" (Walcher, Frölich, Enderle, Rosie Wolfstein, Erna Halbe, Jacob Schlör, etc.) but they do fear and rightly so, that the poison of "Trotskyism" will penetrate into the cadres of the Rights. And so Brandler again paints the specter of "anti-Bolshevism" on the wall and proves by old factional documents that he and Thalheimer had already in Moscow taken a position against Trotskyism without any reservations, and that the "Opposition now demands a revision of our basic views". The means by which Brandler-Thalheimer and Leo (Thalheimer's young man) proceed against their loyal opposition, are known from the days of the Brandler C. E. C., and have not changed in the least: banality, which masquerades as "proletarian bluntness" (Brandler, the building trades worker), the application of the clumsiest demagogic twists in order to distort the views of the Opposition.

At the plenum of the Rights on December 4, the Brandler majority received 91 votes while the minority numbered 43. At the national conference of the Right wing on December 13, the Berlin organization is to be presented by three delegates of the minority and two of the majority. These internal struggles of the Rights are partially reflected in their press. *Gegen den Strom*, No. 49, publishes a discussion article of the Brandlerite Hubert, who goes quite a bit further than even Frölich, nevertheless still dragging along

of the democratic dictatorship as against the proletariat? To this there is no answer. And there will not be. Manuilsky is ordered not to clear up the question but to cover up the traces.

In the October revolution, the democratic tasks grew over into socialist—under the unchanged domination of the proletariat. One can therefore draw a distinction (it is understood, only relatively) between the democratic period of the October revolution and the socialist period; but one cannot distinguish between the democratic and the socialist dictatorships because the democratic was—non-existent.

In addition, we have heard from Manuilsky that in China the democratic dictatorship, from the very beginning, will be confronted with a consistent confiscation of the enterprises, which means the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. This means that there will not even be a democratic stage of the proletarian dictatorship. Under these conditions, where will the democratic dictatorship come from?

Manuilsky's injudicious construction would be entirely impossible were he to compare the Chinese revolution with the Russian as it actually developed, and not with the one that was "outlined", and at that, to confuse and distort the outline. And to what purpose is all this? In order to retreat without retreating, in order to give up the reactionary formula of the democratic dictatorship or, as they say in China, to save face. But on the face of Stalin-Manuilsky have already written, first, Chiang Kai-Shek and then Wang Chin Wei. Enough! The face is already sufficiently descriptive. They will no longer succeed in saving it. Manuilsky's theoretical confusion is directed against the basic interests of the Chinese revolution. The Chinese Bolshevik-Leninists will reveal this.

all the trappings of Left conciliationism. At any rate, this comrade has read our literature—and not without profit—as his position on the Russian economic problems shows. Among other things, he says:

"No further clarification is necessary to establish the fact that collectivization can raise the productivity of agriculture only in the measure in which the state is able to provide the necessary technical basis.

"With an exaggerated tempo, the danger always exists that the prescribed quantity will be obtained at the cost of quality . . ."

At the same time, Hubert declares that "the shooting of three Trotskyists and the course towards the physical destruction of prominent Oppositionists" (Hubert, of course, means primarily Rakovsky, but does not mention his name) will have "disintegrating effects" on the party.

Hubert then turns in his article against "the demagogic polemics of Stalin against Trotsky, Bucharin, Rykov, etc., at the Sixteenth Party Congress" and demands:

"We non-Russian Communists must defend the point of view that the voice of the Oppositionists must be given expression on the basis of party democracy and that solitary confinement, expulsion, banishment, exile (Trotsky) must be revoked. . ."

Hubert does not differentiate between Lefts and Rights. He opposes Stalin's attack against the Lefts as well as against the Rights. That is the sheerest sort of conciliationism. We are not opposed in principle to the struggle of the party against members who hold different views, not even to organizational measures when there is no other way left. But we will resist with all our power a Centrist party bureaucracy which has been usurping power through force and unprecedented pressure, expelling and persecuting the revolutionary Bolshevik group. It was we who demanded the struggle against the Rights.

When we look with great scepticism on Stalin's struggle against the Rights, it is because Stalin, through his adventurist policies since the middle of 1928, has created a much stronger basis for a consolidation of the Rights than the purely administrative expulsion campaign contributes to weaken them. Bucharin may capitulate ten times over, Stalin himself is creating every hour the prerequisites for a new growth of less famous but nevertheless more substantial leaders of the Right. We must look these facts in the eye and draw the conclusions from them.

At any rate, this voice of an "unknown" in the paper of the Rights is remarkable proof that the wise doctors of the Thalheimer school have not as yet found an effective method against the "poison of Trotskyism".

We Left wingers nurture no illusions. But we are attentively observing these processes and we will leave no stone unturned to point out the road forward to the workers of the Right wing.