

Stalin-Bucharin and the Chinese Revolution

A LETTER BY TCHEN DU HSIU

Continued from last issue

Comrades! The Central Committee has now created these false reasons in order to expel me from the Party and put the name of "counter-revolutionist" upon me without any proofs. I believe that most of the comrades are not clear about this case. Even the C. C. itself has said: "There may be some who do not understand it!" But they expelled me and said I went over to the counter-revolution when some comrades do not understand it. Nevertheless, I understand quite well why they falsely accuse us as "counter-revolutionists." This is the weapon created by the modern Chinese for attacking those who do not belong to them. For instance, the Kuo Min Tang accuses the Communists of being "counter-revolutionists" in order to cover their own sins. Chiang Kai-Shek tries to deceive the masses with the signboard of revolution, considering himself as the personification of revolution. Those who oppose him are "counter-revolutionists" and "reactionary elements."

Many comrades know that the above-mentioned false reasons given by the C. C. for expelling me are only the formal and official excuse. In reality, they have become tired of hearing my opinions expressed in the Party and of my criticism of their continued opportunism and putschism of the past and their execution of a policy of bankruptcy:

The Question of "Fendal Remnants"

In any number of the bourgeois countries of the entire world, there are feudal relics and methods of semi-feudal exploitation (Negroes and slaves of the South Sea archipelago are like those of the pre-feudal slave system), and there exist remnants of feudal forces. China is even more like this. In the revolution, of course, we cannot neglect this; but the Comintern and the C. C. unanimously recognize that in China the feudal remnants still occupy the dominant position in economy and politics and hold the ruling position. Therefore, they consider these relics as the object of the revolution and let the enemy, the oppressor of the revolution—the forces of the bourgeoisie—be passed over and regard all reactionary actions of the bourgeoisie as those of the feudal forces.

They say that the Chinese bourgeoisie is still revolutionary, that they can never forever be reactionary, and that all those who are reactionary cannot be the bourgeoisie. Thus, they do not recognize that the Kuo Min Tang represents the interests of the bourgeoisie or that the national government is the regime representing the interests of the bourgeoisie. The conclusion must be that besides the Kuo Min Tang, or the Nanking section of it, there is or will be, now or in the future, a non-reactionary and revolutionary bourgeois party. Therefore, in tactics and in practical actions, they simply follow the Reorganizationists at present, and do the military work of overthrowing Chiang Kai-Shek; in the platform they say that the character of the third revolution in the future must still be that of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, opposing any antagonization of the economic forces of the bourgeoisie and the issuance of the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Such an illusion concerning the bourgeoisie and such continual longing for it, are not only calculated to continue the opportunism of the past, but to deepen it. It must lead to a more shameful and sad failure in the future revolution.

The Slogan of Soviets

If we consider the slogan "Establish the Soviet regime" as the slogan of action, we can issue it only when the objective conditions have ripened into a revolutionary wave. It cannot be issued at any time at pleasure. In the past, during the revolutionary wave, we did not adopt the slogans "Organize Soviets" and "Establish the Soviet regime". Naturally, it was a grave error. In the future, when the revolution takes place, we shall immediately have to organize the workers', peasants' and soldiers' Soviets. Then we shall mobilize the masses to a struggle for the slogan of "Establish the Soviet regime." Furthermore, it would be the Soviet of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and not the Soviet of the workers and peasants democratic dictatorship. In the present period when the counter-revolutionary forces are entirely victorious and when there is no wave of mass revolutionary movement, the objective conditions for "armed uprising" and "Establishment of Soviets" are not matured. At the present time "Establishment of Soviets" is only the propaganda and educational slogan. If we use it as a slogan of action, and mobilize the working class at once to take practically for the "Establishment of the masses. we will certainly be unable to

In the present situation, we should adopt the democratic slogan of "Struggle for the convocation of the National Assembly". The objective conditions for this movement have matured and at present only this slogan can move large masses to issue out of the legal political struggle towards the revolutionary rise and the struggle for the "armed uprising" and the "establishment of the Soviet regime." The present C. C., continuing its putschism, does not do this. They consider that the rebirth of the revolution has matured, and re-proach us for regarding the slogan of the "establishment of workers and peasants Soviets" as only a propaganda slogan; thus, they logically consider it a slogan of action. Therefore, they constantly compel the Party members to come to the streets for demonstrations in workers' quarters, and compel employed comrades to strike. Every small daily struggle must be artificially enlarged to a big political struggle, making the working masses and working comrades leave the Party more and more.

More than that, at the Kiangsu representative conference recently, it was resolved "to organize the great strike movement", and "local uprisings". From last summer to the present day, there have been signs of small struggles among the Shanghai workers, but when they appeared they were crushed by the policy of putschism of the Party, and afterwards, of course, they will be constantly crushed. If the resolutions of the Kiangsu representative conference are executed, they will be destroyed. Our Party is already not the guide who helps the wave of the workers' revolutionary struggles to come, but is becoming the executioner rooting up the branches of the workers' struggles.

The present Central Committee, sincerely basing itself upon the bankrupt line of the Sixth Congress, and under the direct guidance of the Comintern, is executing the above bankrupt policy and capping the opportunism and putschism of the past by surrendering the party and the revolution. No matter if it was the Comintern or the Chinese Communist Party which committed the errors of opportunism in the past and made the revolution fail, it was a crime; now these errors have been pointed out plainly by the comrades of the Opposition, but they still do not acknowledge their past mistakes and consciously continue their past erroneous line. Moreover, for the sake of covering up the errors of a few individuals, they deliberately violate the organizational policy of the Bolsheviks, abuse the authority of the supreme party organs, prevent self-criticism within the party, expelling numerous comrades from the party for expressing different political opinions and deliberately splitting the party. This is the crime of crimes, most stupid and most shameful. No Bolshevik should be afraid of open self-criticism before the masses. The only way for the party to win the masses is to carry out self-criticism courageously, never losing the masses for fear of self-criticism. To cover up one's own mistakes, like the present Central Committee, is certainly to lose the masses.

Comrades! All we know is that whoever opens his mouth to express some criticism of the errors of the party is himself expelled, while the mistake remains uncor-

rected. But we should draw a balance. Which is more important: to save the party from danger or save ourselves from having our names dropped from the party list?

The Policy of Armed Uprisings

Since the "August 7" conference, which determined upon the "general direction of the armed uprising", and the uprisings were carried out in several places, I wrote many letters to the Central Committee at that time, pointing out that the revolutionary sentiment of the masses then was not at a high point, that the régime of the Kuo Min Tang could not be quickly exploded, that the unconditional uprisings only weakened the power of the party and isolate it more from the masses; that we should change the policy of uprisings into that of winning and uniting the masses in their daily struggles. The Central Committee thought that widespread uprisings were an absolutely correct new line for correcting opportunism, and that to estimate the condition of the uprisings and to consider how to insure the success of the uprising, is opportunism. Of course, they never took my opinion into consideration and regarded my words as a joke. They propagated them everywhere, saying that it was proof that I had not corrected my opportunist mistakes. At that time, I was bound by the discipline of the party organization, and took a negative attitude, being unable to go over the head of the organization to struggle determinedly against the policy of the Central Committee in destroying the party.

I am to be held responsible for this. After the Sixth Congress, I still had a false comprehension and still entertained the illusion that the new Central Committee had received so many lessons from events that they themselves would awaken to the fact that it was not necessary to follow blindly the erroneous line of the Comintern after all. I still continued my negative attitude and did not retain any different theories so as to involve a dispute within the party, though I was fundamentally dissatisfied with the line of the Sixth Congress. After the war between the Chiang Kai-Shek and the Kwangsi cliques, and the "May 30" anniversary movement, I felt deeply that the Central Committee would obstinately continue its opportunism and putschism, and manifestly could not change by itself: that except through an open discussion and criticism by the party members, from the lowest to the highest ranks, the seriously false line of the leading organ could not be corrected. But all the party members are under the domination and restriction of party discipline, in a state of "daring to be angry but not daring to speak".

At that-time, I could not bear to see the party (created by the warm blood of innumerable comrades) destroyed and ruined under the lasting and essentially false line. Thus I could do nothing but begin to express my opinion from August onward, in order to fulfill my responsibility. Some comrades sought to dissuade me, saying that the people in the Central Committee regard the interests of a few leaders as more important than the interests of the party and the revolution, that they attempted everywhere to cover up their mistakes, and could never accept the criticism of comrades: that since I was criticizing them so frankly, they would use it as an excuse for expelling me from the party. But my regard for the party compelled me to adopt resolutely the path of not caring for my own interests.

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Lovestone and the SI

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3. "... the present party and Comintern leaderships have abandoned Leninist tactics in the trade union field in favor of DeLeonism. Not only has this estimate been proven true, but it must be said that along the entire front, the official leaders of the Comintern and of the American Party are joining in the adulation of DeLeon which has up to now been the sole monopoly and incidentally the sole stock in trade of the sectarian S. L. P. . . . The whole course of the party leadership today is a departure from the principles of Leninist strategy in the direction of its direct opposite, DeLeonist sectarianism." (Rev. Age, No. 5.)

Since neither Zam nor his commissioners are particularly interested in writing abstract philosophical reminiscences on the respective historical merits of DeLeon's S. L. P. and Hillquit's S. P., it is plain that the comparisons have a very modern and practical purpose. Zam is not prepared to make it clear in all its implications—the Communist workers in the Right wing are not yet fully "prepared." But the implications are there for anyone to see. As for the dummy labelled "S. L. P.", with its "strict discipline", "centralized", "expulsions", "sectarianism"—why, that's not the S. L. P., it's the C. P. that Zam is punching at! And the S. P.? It's just as "loose" and "undisciplined" today as it was when these exemplary qualities enabled a revolutionary wing to develop within it. And what law of nature or politics is to prevent what happened once from happening again? If a revolutionary wing came out of the Socialist party, why can't it go in again? These are the only possible inferences to be drawn from the excursions of the Right wing politicians into history.

Our inference is fortified by a proposal, made three years ago by Lovestone while occupying the post of Communist party secretary, to send a number of party members into the Socialist party "for the purpose of working for our labor party policy in the socialist party" (Polcom Minutes, December 14, 1927). Lovestone's orientation towards the Socialist party did not begin yesterday. Nor did our opposition to it. At that time, comrade Cannon introduced a motion of principle declaring this "tactic" to be false and calling for a policy of frontal attack against the S. P. all along the line, with particular emphasis against the so-called "Lefts". Lovestone was forced to retreat on his proposal at that time, but not to give it up, as is now quite clear.

No, it did not begin yesterday. It is rooted in the whole past history of the post-Leninist régime in the Comintern, which is the history of the war upon "Trotskyism". It is not by chance that Lovestone and Co. were for years the official color-guards of this reactionary campaign against the proletarian wing of the International and the fundamental principles of Marxism it defended. It is not by chance that Lovestone was the one chosen to expel us from the Party, with the brotherly cooperation of Foster, and the papal blessing of Stalin. For a long time the issues were muddled and falsified. For a long time the Communist workers were confused and unable to orientate themselves upon a Marxist course. Lovestone is now helping to clear the atmosphere—in a negative sense—by his natural evolution towards unity with reformism. The Fosters, Browders, Bedachts and Stachels are still doing all they can to obscure the great problems of the Communist movement by their bewildering zig-zags, their unprincipledness, their ignorance. They occupy a no less menacing position today than Lovestone, who grew out of the same soil—the soil of the Stalin-Bucharin bloc—did yesterday. With their ultra-Leftist course, they continued to strengthen the Right wing even after Lovestone's expulsion, and to deceive the Communist workers with this counterfeit "radicalism".

The Communist workers understand the Lovestones and Wolfes better today than they did yesterday. They will understand the Fosters and Browders better tomorrow. It is our work to help them in this understanding in time—in time to preserve the foundations of the Communist movement which the Centrists are undermining, and to rebuild upon them.

In the article "What Next?" contained in the last issue of the Militant, a typographical error occurred which confused the meaning of the conclusions drawn. Where it says: "Without a deep internal struggle this is no longer possible; but we must do everything to exclude from this internal struggle a great service to the Party in the most critical moment. It is not the Bolshevik-Leninists who will assist such an agreement"—it should read: "but we must do everything to keep out of this internal struggle all elements of civil war. An agreement on this basis may do a great service to the party in the most critical moment. It is not the Bolshevik-Leninists who will resist such an agreement."

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