

EDITORIAL NOTES

BOLSHEVIK ORGANIZATION

The revolutionary Marxists, who set for themselves the greatest of all historic tasks, have always prescribed commensurate forms of organization and methods of work. The principle of centralized party organization was laid down by Marx and Engels. Lenin, who stood on their shoulders, developed these conceptions to a higher degree and vindicated them in the living experiences of the Russian revolution. Bolshevism waged an irreconcilable war against every kind of looseness in matters of organization as well as in questions of theory and tactics. And rightly, for they are and must be inseparably united. It was not for nothing that a question of organization—Lenin's insistence on active work in a party organization as the qualification for party membership—was the occasion for the first split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. At the present moment these recollections have an exceptional importance for the adherents of the International Left Opposition.

The influence of the Marxist wing which declined with the depression of the movement will rise again with its upward swing. This development is already indicated by the situation in Spain. It will be reflected in the American movement and will impose new tasks and responsibilities on the Communist League. For this we must prepare. Our National Conference, now in the course of preparation, will confront the problem of hardening our organization for the coming events.

In recent months the New York branch has taken a number of steps which anticipate, we hope, the general decisions of the National Conference in this respect. A probationary period for new members, a stricter regulation of dues payments and a more precise definition of the individual duties of the members are among the motions adopted in the branch. In all of them a definite trend toward firmer Bolshevik forms and methods of work is expressed.

The Communist League did not begin by stressing organization forms and could not do so. Its primary engagement was to clarify in a broad discussion the great questions brought to the fore in the struggle of the International Left Opposition, and to popularize them in the Communist ranks. To have imposed rigid organization features in the first instance would have been to put the cart before the horse. Form cannot take the place of substance: it can only represent it. Now we can move on, for our work of education and preparation has not been in vain. The main lines of principle have been clearly established, and each successive attempt to muddle them has met with diminishing successes. It is not likely, therefore, that the Conference will be obliged to occupy itself with conflicts on the fundamental questions. It will be justified in the assumption that we can now proceed to emphasize those Bolshevik principles of organization which are necessary to bind our forces firmly together and develop their maximum effectiveness. The actions taken by the New York branch are to be welcomed as a push in this direction.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST "LEFT" REFORMISM

The Conference for Progressive Political Action, which has already condemned itself forever by its bootlicking subservience to the labor reactionaries, has begun to feel the new winds blowing in the labor movement and is beginning to dress for the occasion. The May number of the *Labor Age*, the official organ of the C. P. U. A., comes out with a red cover and a startling line of radical talk. In one issue we see a demand for the defense of the Soviet Union, a denunciation of "Karl Kautsky's sham Socialism", an appeal for "the building of industrial unions with a revolutionary outlook and aim," and similar words which cost nothing and mean less as a criterion by which to judge the character and future activity of the pseudo-progressives. Talk is cheap. He who believes in works is an idiot, said Lenin who knew how to estimate and deal with the Russian prototypes of Muste. A section of the social reformists always plays the part of weather cocks. There is no surer sign of awakening discontent than "Left" talk in the reformist camp. And never does reformism become more dangerous to the workers' movement than when it assumes the protective coloring of radicalism.

International experience has revealed a

unique division of labor among the bourgeois agents in the labor movement. We are witnessing now an American example. The black reactionaries, who are most closely and directly bound to the capitalists and the state, held open sway in the period of reaction. The conditions of the crisis, and the suffering and disillusionment of masses of workers resulting from them, are exposing these elements to the Communist attack. And in direct proportion as the outright capitalist slogans of Green and Woll lose their effectiveness, the "Left" reformists come into prominence to serve the same ends through deception.

This maneuver presents a real problem to the American Communists, who have yet to gain a serious influence with the workers. If the workers who are breaking away from their allegiance to the capitalist parties and the official labor reactionaries are captured by the "progressives" they will only end in a blind alley. Their revolt will not mature and raise them to the higher ground of the class struggle implicit in the present situation. That this danger is a real one, only a fool can deny. When we see the fraudulent progressives replacing the Communists at the head of the insurgent miners' movement—to mention only one case—it is time to wake up and examine the question and the answers offered by the three factions to it.

The best service to the Muste movement is that rendered by Lovestone. The Right wing of Communism paints up the "progressive" qualities of Musteism, and moderates criticism to a whisper. Thereby Lovestone deceives a section of the Left wing workers, and disarms them in the struggle against it. The official Centrist faction contents itself with routine denunciations and confuses the situation with the false and ridiculous formula of "social-fascism". This attitude is a direct service to the "Left" reformists, to which their undoubted advances testify. The correct way to fight the "progressive" agents of reaction requires in the first place a precise explanation of their function. From this must follow an unceasing criticism, with particular emphasis on their concrete actions, combined with the revolutionary tactic of the united front. This is the policy of the Left Opposition. Its adoption by the Communist workers is a pressing necessity of the struggle.

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

The doctrine of socialism in one country has been the platform of a revisionist war against Marxism since its promulgation in 1924. So far is Socialism in one country from the conceptions of the great teachers, that its exponents had to begin with a different definition of the word, a definition which robs socialism of the contents which the great teachers prescribed and makes fun of the revolutionary struggle to attain that goal. Stalin's well-known declaration that the Russian workers' under the Nep had already attained "nineteenths of Socialism" is a monstrous example of this perversion of ideas. And now we encounter the same brand of "socialism" in the Stalinist press of America.

The *Daily Worker* of May 16 calls for "the establishment of a socialist society under a Workers' and Farmers' Government!" Since this astounding slogan appears in the leading editorial is it not in place to ask these people to explain what they mean by Socialism? If the "Communist Manifesto" is not out of date, Social-

gels,—signifies the disappearance of the political state which is conceivable only as a class instrument, "the organized power of one class for oppressing another". How, then, is it possible to speak of a "workers' and farmers' government" in a Socialist society? Such an idea can establish kinship with reformist advocates of State Socialism, but it has nothing in common with Marxism.

Perhaps it may be explained that the editorial meant to speak, not of the Socialist society but of the transition period to it. But Socialism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat are entirely different social orders and cannot be used interchangeably by anyone who understands the difference between them. The workers' state is only a stage on the road to Socialism; it can-

The Eleventh Plenum of the Comintern

From the point of view of political ignorance, stupidity and ideological cretinism it is indisputable that the Tenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the C. I. broke all the records. The ridiculous theories of the "third period" (social fascism) the "ingenious" evaluation of the revolutionary situation in France surpassed everything that the party could have conceived of as platitude and theoretical decadence.

The Eleventh Plenum has abandoned the theories of the "third period". It has forgotten the "revolutionary situation" in France and recalled social fascism only in a very feeble voice, all of which may be counted as an ideological victory for the Left Opposition. Yet, the resolutions of the Eleventh Plenum give ample proof of the theoretical ignorance and the confusion that exists in the minds of the present leaders of the C. I. For whoever is not familiar with the history of the Comintern during the last few years, but is sufficiently familiar with Marxian methods, it is enough to go through the resolutions of the Eleventh Plenum to find innumerable contradictions in them and to be convinced of the low ideological level of the present leaders of the Executive. We shall occupy ourselves at length with these resolutions.

The Estimation on the U. S. S. R.

What does the Soviet Union represent at the present moment? A socialist state, or a Socialist society? Has the U. S. S. R. already entered into a period of socialism? That is the main question to which we shall reply. During the last few years the bureaucracy has been crying from the house-tops that the U. S. S. R. has entered into socialism. The Eleventh Plenum retreats in this question to which it replies: "In the U. S. S. R. the construction of the foundation of socialist economy is being completed."

Here the question arises: What do the foundations of socialist economy consist of? A house in which the foundation is socialism, but which needs walls and a roof. In a general way, Marxism assumes that the foundation of a socialist society is to be found in capitalism developed to its highest stage; without this, socialism is impossible. It is the task of the proletariat to transform the social structure of capitalist economy, by proceeding through various stages by means of the proletarian dictatorship with a methodical organization of economy leading up to a socialist society. From this it follows that those who claim that in the U. S. S. R. the foundations have been completed thereby say that no great progress has been made over capitalism, which is like saying nothing at all. In reality, Leninism has never pictured the development of socialism as a vertical development, but rather as a development step by step. In "The State

To make confusion worse confounded, in the characteristic manner of Stalinist revisionism, the editorial demands Socialism "under a Workers' and Farmers' Government!" But Socialism—again according to Marx and Engels—will abolish "the distinction between town and country". Agriculture will be conducted by cooperative social labor. The petty bourgeois basis of agriculture will be abolished—and with the farmers as a class (petty bourgeois)—before we reach the Socialist society and as a prerequisite for it. How, then, can we have a Socialist society under a workers' and farmers' government?

In the literature of Marxism such formulae are nowhere to be found. They belong exclusively to the school of Stalin. —J. P. C.

and the Revolution" the development of Communism is presented as follows: (a) war Communism; (b) Socialism; (c) Communism. This is the way Lenin pictures the development by stages. After the proletariat conquers power, it cannot immediately conduct the entire economy, that is, it cannot instantly institute socialism. It nationalizes the most important factories, then it extends this action to the minor industries and after it sets itself the task of socializing agrarian economy. That is what is going on in the U. S. S. R. and this would continue with ever greater success, if the leadership were to analyze the situation as it actually is. That is why the only correct formulation is that of comrade Trotsky on the nature of the Soviet state: "The U. S. S. R. has entered the first stage in the development of socialism". The formulation of the Eleventh Plenum is theoretically impotent, it is the formulation of people who have been frightened away from their slogans of yesterday, when they were speaking of having entered into socialism, at a time when milk was lacking for the children and for whom they had to justify their bureaucratic adventurism.

The Colonial Question in China and in India

Which class leads the liberation movement of the colonial masses in the colonies and the backward countries? The proletariat, allied with the peasantry and leading it, defeats the power of the ruling classes, fights against foreign imperialism, against native capitalism, against reaction and, supporting itself upon the peasantry, it institutes the proletarian dictatorship by means of the Soviets. This is what Lenin taught us. But Stalin has revised Lenin, presenting as an example of the Soviet system, the institution of Soviets in the agrarian regions in China. He has thereby declared that the peasantry can play an independent rôle and organize itself a Soviet government that will lead to the socialist reorganization of China. The Eleventh Plenum goes still further: "Due to the manifest experiences of the masses in the Soviet provinces, the Soviets and the red army, which have issued forth from the agrarian revolution, draw into the struggle the industrial centers." Not only is the peasantry, then, an independent class, but it is the class which actively directs and organizes the proletariat! It is clear that we have here a new theory that breaks completely with Leninism. It is pure Stalinism. . . . And we may rest assured that the originators of this theory have nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism. They do not understand its importance for the development of the colonial movements. But here we find a second point which completely destroys the peace of this dilemma, and that is the estimation on India: "The acquisition of the leadership of revolutionary liberation movement of the masses by the proletariat is at present the most important condition for the victory of the Indian revolution." Then, it is not the peasantry any more that leads in the revolutionary liberation movement; but the proletariat. But in what is India less favored than China? Why can the peasantry lead the revolution in China but not in India? Is Stalinism justified in China? Where is the difference? In the specific weight of the proletariat? Or in the character of the peasantry? Up to the present we do not know of any political and social differences aside from the fact that in China Stalin already has been able to ally himself with Chiang Kai Shek whereas in India that has not yet happened.

(To be Continued)

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