

DISCUSSION ARTICLES

The Party and the Opposition's Tasks

The problem of stating definitely the road the Opposition must travel in the tasks of restating the basic proletarian trends of the Communist movement must be made the first question of all discussion.

We started our organizational existence with certain definite experiences and traditions. It took this whole past period to iron out a set of common departures.

Unity and Differences

Some of the elements attracted to our banner during this period have found the soil strange (have not been able to orient themselves). Others never really belonged, and it took the organization some time to make this fact evident.

In the evaluation of our relations to the Right wing of the Communist movement, all are agreed that the question of a "united front of the Left and Right against the Center" (Weisbord) can in practice resolve itself into nothing but an unprincipled alliance with a petty bourgeois current against the basic revolutionary objectives of the Communist movement.

Our approach to all political currents within the movement must be conditioned by a scrupulous application of the Marxian dialectic, which postulates that in the examination of any phenomena we must take into consideration the sum total of factors, both objective and subjective.

The road of history for a time seemed to point definitely to the coming victory of the proletariat. Elements who by their whole past were prepared for the role of "windbreakers of capitalism" (Cannon) found the conscious evolutionary forces gaining definite headway in influencing the proletariat as well as the elements that developing imperialism reduced to the role of declassified elements.

The responsibility resting on the Left Opposition in the face of these developments is no less than that of assuming the task of once more forcing the Communist movement to put on the order of the day, the world revolution. Can this wholly and exclusively be performed by accepting the role of a faction of the Communist Party under any and all conditions or does it not devolve upon us the responsibility of a close examination of the Comintern?

The relative strength of the Opposition forces to that of the party. The ripeness of the objective factors within the class struggle in a given country. Can we, in the face of the developing class struggle and the failure of the

signancy to revolutionary principles paramount, gradually being weakened by a combined onslaught of both economically powerful World Imperialism, and its passive agent, vacillating Centristism.

Role of Centristism

Centristism had begun to play the traditional role of "philosophers of futility" (Lenin). "We have one-sixth of the world's surface, why risk it." The Utopian philosophy of "socialism in one country" with its illegitimate American offspring "exceptionalism" (which by the way is only a new cloak for the old Kautskian theory of "ultra-imperialism") so much spouted about during the war as a crutch for social chauvinism.

Is the soil of the Comintern "all sufficient" (Trotsky) for the immediate future? Unquestionably. The Comintern still represents the center created by the October revolution. Its base is still the first worker's government, postulated as the first installment on the world revolution.

The complete victory of the restorationist elements is still remote. The basic cultural gains from the standpoint of creating a basis of proletarian ideology is still the outstanding factor of the dictatorship. The very fact of Centristism having to play the adventurist role of revolution in the west (Third Period) is conclusive indication of that.

We accept that the role of World Imperialism with America at its head, has reached the stage of progressive decline. Expansion, which is the life blood of the system, can only be carried on on the basis of further incursion into the standards of living of the working class, and that on a constantly increasing scale.

Prospects for Future All further existence can continue at the expense of more systematic repression against the working class and other oppressed peoples. The prospect for the future is on the one hand systematic reductions of labor costs (wages) imposed upon the large number of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in basic industries in order to compete successfully in the shrinking world market, and on the other the more deliberate and systematic raising of a labor aristocracy, thereby helping the further maturing of the illusions of social reformism.

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The relative strength of the Opposition forces to that of the party. The ripeness of the objective factors within the class struggle in a given country. Can we, in the face of the developing class struggle and the failure of the

Stalinist bureaucracy to apply the needed lesson, content ourselves with the passive role of abstract criticism? Is it not the Leninist conception of a faction that its role must at all times be that of winning the confidence of the toiling masses by examples of objective application of real leadership in the every day struggles? That real political contact is built up only in this fashion. Examples of real Communist leadership in the unfolding class struggle in America will do more to help shape the forces of Communism both in the formal party and those out of its ranks than a thousand abstract formulations.

—S. M. ROSE.

Call the Troopers

A worker writes from the camp: An incident characteristic of the relationships between the worker-Communists and the Stalinist bureaucrats took place two weeks ago at Camp Woodloch which has created a scandal among the workers staying at the camp and in the ranks of the party as far off as New York.

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That is how agreement has been reached on the basis of one of the slogans of the Left Opposition. Needless to say, the S. C. O. continues to orient the movement for unity.

The Revolutionary Events Day by Day

(Continued from page 1)

Spanish Communism accepts our slogan, issued more than a year ago on the subject of the national congress for the unification of the Communist forces in Spain.

The "Batallists" of the C. B.-C. F. were the first to make our slogan their own. With unexampled impudence, the troops of Maurin and Arlandis wanted to have people believe that it came from them. They claimed it in order to pursue two different aims: to attribute to themselves the success obtained by the S. C. O. and to prevent being called "Trotskyists" because of accepting our slogan.

But there is something that interests us a great deal more than the position and the attitude of the C.-B. C. F. It is the organization affiliated to the E. C. of the official C. P. which ask for the celebration of a unity congress. These are the affiliates of the Bunot (Valencia) district and the Federation of Communist Youth of the Levant region who address themselves to all the Communist groups and factions including the S. C. O. and Communismo—the "Batallists" would not dare to do it—in order to have the unification congress take place within a maximum period of two months.

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PERSECUTIONS AGAINST US

The letters that reach us from our friends in Estremadura are truly alarming. In Estremadura there does not exist a single affiliate to the Spanish C. P. All the Communists of Estremadura belong to the S. C. O. Our friends are brutally persecuted by the authorities and by the socialists. The correspondence which they receive comes to them rarely. The newspapers and magazines openly arrive in their wrappers. A postal employee has been kind enough to warn our comrades so that they may find another way of sending their press mail. Our friends are threatened with being discharged from their work and being put into prison if they continue to propagate the ideas of the S. C. O. and to distribute Communismo.

All this takes place right under the republic regime. It is certain that the Stalinist underheads will continue to call us allies of the bourgeoisie. But our Estremadura comrades will not cease because of that, to propagate and to defend our ideas.

IN THE MIDST OF THE ELECTIONS

We are right in the midst of the elections to the Constituent Cortes, and yet one does not observe the slightest agitation of the political parties. We refer, of course, to external agitation, for within the political parties and inside of the Republican-Socialist coalition, the uneasiness is enormous. It serves no purpose for the leaders of the coalition parties to declare themselves firmly united and ready for the decisive battle against the defunct regime. The rank and file organizations take it upon themselves to show the contrary, sometimes out of ambition, and at others out of political disagreement. The socialists and the socialist-radicals have dissolved the coalition in certain localities and are preparing to intervene in the struggle independently.

The Socialist-Radical party has been divided into two, because the Madrid organization, the smallest in the party, differed from the point of view of the national leadership of the party which defends the unity of the coalition. Madrid, where the socialist-radical group embraces a large number of workers, has voted to break up the coalition and, since its opinion has been rejected, it has separated from the Socialist-Radical party and is preparing to enter into the struggle independently.

This circumstance substantially weakens the position of this party, which is the one that today counts the greatest sympathy among the electoral opinion.

The Communists also come forward dividedly. The independent Communist grouping of Madrid, after having proposed the united front to the official Communist grouping, a united front which the latter rejected, has decided to present its own candidates against those of the official C. P. This confused position of the Autonomous Grouping places it openly against the Communist party. It is not a question any longer of a struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy but of an open struggle against the C. P. We must combat those responsible for the division of the Communist forces, but never, still less in the present moment, must we defy the ranks of the party.

It is needless to say that the C.-B. C. F. is presenting its own candidates. Spanish Communism, absolutely disorganized, goes into the struggle divided and without any chance of success. The electoral struggle presents itself

In Spain

very clearly. The government will triumph with an overwhelming majority. The monarchists will get a not very important minority and that will be the case with the other independent political sectors.

Madrid, June 18, 1931

THE STRIKES

The strike movement for economic demands of the working class was rendered profoundly acute last week and has had its political repercussions for the country and for the government.

The fishermen's strike in Pasajes, strangled in blood by the Civil Guard was echoed in the solidarity strike proclaimed by the building trades workers of Bilbao who, at the same time, are fighting against the compulsory strike in solidarity with the unemployed. And in this solidarity strike too there have been worker-victims, wounded by the revolvers and rifles of the forces.

In Andalusia, upon the announcement of the strike of the peasants, the state of siege was extended throughout the whole region. Although the constitution in force declares that in election periods the propaganda of all ideas will be permitted, the captain-general of the region has declared that the declaration of the strike will be considered as a crime of high treason; he denies the peasants the right under the republican regime, to ask for bread or for work.

The strike of the Asturian miners may be considered as lost. But the revolutionary morale of the coal mine workers comes out of the strike strengthened. The union of all the bourgeois forces, and of their allies was realized against them in the region and in the province. The republican government dispatched the civil guard, in mass, to defend the interests of the capitalists. The social democrats organized their militia of strike-breakers armed by the government itself, flung into the struggle against the strikes. The strike entered a period of regression; the workers were almost decided upon a strategic return. The only means of saving the fight was the congress now being held by the National Confederation of Labor. But the anarcho-sindicalists too are more interested in fighting against the Communists than in supporting the Asturian miners and their trade union, adhering to the N. C. of L. but led by the Communists; whether the fight fails or not interests our anarcho-sindicalists very little.

Other strikes have broken out or are announced: Cordova, Malaga, Barcelona, etc. and the government is more and more determined, according to various declarations by its representatives, to proceed against the strike organizers with violence. Which is as much as saying that it proposes to deal

with violence with every movement of working class demands.

THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE N. C. of L.

An extended article will be devoted to the congress now being held with an extraordinary character at Madrid, of the Spanish National Confederation of Labor. But here are some details now for the readers of the Militant. After the first moments, a current was manifested against Communism. On the order of the day there stood a proposal recommending the expulsion from the N. C. of L. of all the Communists who appeared as candidates on any list of any political party whatsoever. In reality, it was a question of expelling from the N. C. of L. the outstanding Communists. But this proposal was not discussed by the Congress, still less approved. It actually proved the degree of anti-Communist phobia that emanated from the congress. But in spite of all the voice of all the organizations had to make itself heard. This did not happen without difficulty. A few delegates, Communist candidates in the elections of April 12, were challenged by the congress on the pretext that on the order of the day stood a proposal demanding their expulsion. When a delegate from the Asturias, an anarchist moreover, proposed that this vexatious question of expulsions be left for the end and that they pass over immediately to the discussion of the question of aid to the Asturian miners on strike, the delegates interrupted and insulted him without taking into account that he was an anarchist, until he exclaimed: "Long live anarchy!"

Thus, it is in this atmosphere, hostile to Communism with the most absolute lack of trade union democracy, that the second national congress of the N. C. of L. was opened. Madrid, June 21, 1931

—HENRI LACROIX

A Proposal to Gitlow

From the current number of Revolutionary Age we learn from an article by Ben Gitlow on the "Results of the July Plenum" of the Lovestone group that among the decisions adopted were the following two:

"2. To recommend to the National Bureau to change the name of the group. "4. To give full power to the National Bureau to change the name of the Revolutionary Age if it finds it necessary to do so."

Our shop manager, Kent, was the first one to welcome the decision. He is a steady reader of the Age, although he is somewhat timid and honest. In addition, he is always on the lookout for an old piece of change in these hard times, and under the impression that some prize may be awarded for the best substitute names, he is proposing to secretary Gitlow the following arguments for the changes he offers:

1. The name of an organization should really be a mirror of its political quality. His honesty is injured at the idea that the Right wing faction should call itself "Communist Party of the United States of America (Majority Group)". He proposes a change of name which has the double advantage of being a more accurate description of the Lovestone group and of not involving too much of a difference in the initials. Instead of "C. P. U. S. A. (M. G.)", he proposes the name "C. P. L. A. (M. G.)", that is, Conference for Progressive Labor Action (Minority Group). The name would enable the Lovestones to function more formally as the Left wing of the Minst group.

2. In this proposal, the consequences of Kent's timidity coincide with those of Lovestone's political conceptions. Lovestone believes our epoch to be a revolutionary age almost everywhere but in the United States. Besides, the name "Revolutionary Age" is a bit radical for such conservative people. So he proposes to change the name of the paper to the *Victorian Age*.

We pass on these proposals to Gitlow for what they are worth. Ourselves, we think that if any prize is to be offered for the most appropriate changes, it should go to Kent.

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How can you stand that sort of stuff? You know that since I saw you last the weekly Militant has been issued and still not one word about the government attack on our paper the Class Struggle.

We look upon any person holding such views to justify the Militant refusing to join us in restating the government's attack upon the Communist press as out and out agents of the bourgeoisie. We will deal with such elements with our fists and not with reason. The Cannons and the Shachtmans must be driven out of the entire Communist and labor movement when they can stoop to such actions as these. And it will be our job to do it too. Such people are not Communists. They are scum.

Please let us know how things are going on in Philadelphia, and what final disposition is made of your case and that of comrade Goodman.

Fraternally, (Sgd.) Albert Weisbord.

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