

Resolution on the International Left Opposition

1. The destruction wrought by eight years of domination by the epigones in the leadership of the Communist International is making itself felt most acutely at the present moment, when the objective conditions for revolutionary progress are almost universally favorable to the proletarian vanguard.

of the fact that great numbers of workers reacted honestly in the direction of the Right wing only because of the blunders and bureaucratism of the Stalinists, should make every effort to win over, by fraternal discussion, the revolutionary working class elements in the Right wing camp.

4. In spite of, and in a sense because of, the obstacles placed in the path of its development and the organizational defeats inflicted upon it by the apparatus, the International Left Opposition is today at the highest point yet attained in its ideological progress.

Against National Communism! (Lessons of the 'Red' Referendum)

By LEON TROTSKY

When these lines reach the reader, they will, perhaps, in one section or another, be out of date. Through the efforts of the Stalinist apparatus and the friendly collaboration of all the bourgeois governments, the author of these lines is placed in such circumstances under which he can react to political events only after a delay of several weeks.

How Everything is Turned Upon Its Head

The mistakes of the German Communist Party in the question of the plebiscite is among those which will become clearer as time passes, and will finally enter into the textbooks of revolutionary strategy as an example of what should not be done.

On July 21, the Central Committee addressed itself to the Prussian government with the demand for democratic and social concessions, threatening otherwise to come out for the referendum. Advancing its demands, the Stalinist bureaucracy in actuality addressed itself to the upper stratum of the social democratic party with the proposal for a united front against the Fascists under certain conditions.

If the social democracy is a variety of Fascism, then how can one propose to social Fascists a demand for the joint defense of democracy? Having entered upon the road of the referendum, the party bureaucracy did not put any conditions to the National Socialists. Why? If the Social Democrats and the National Socialists are only shades of Fascism, then why can conditions be put to the Social Democrats and not to the National Socialists? Or perhaps between these two "varieties" there exist certain very important qualitative differences in regards to the social base and the methods of deceiving the masses?

Is it true, however, that Thaelmann entered a united front with Hitler? The Communist bureaucracy called the referendum of Thaelmann "red", in distinction from the black or brown plebiscite of Hitler. That the matter is concerned with two mortally hostile parties, is naturally beyond doubt, and all the falsehoods of the social democracy will not compel the workers to forget it.

Do Not Make Mooney Case a Football

representative of the Mooney Committee is a partner to this movement—does not change the fact either, and the sooner it is realized the more swiftly the genuine united front movement for Mooney will progress. The purpose of the committee is "one effective demonstration in which all forces constructively and honestly willing to help, may do their part."

dums the right of designating their parties. All the voters are fused into one inseparable mass which, on the given question, gives one and the same answer. Within the limit of this question, the unity of front with the Fascists is an indubitable fact.

Thus, between midnight and dawn everything appeared to be turned on its head.

The "United Front", But With Whom?

What political aim did the leadership of the Communist party pursue with its turn? The more you read the official documents and speeches of the leaders, the less you understand this aim. The Prussian government, we are told, is paving the road for Fascism. This is perfectly correct. The federal government of Bruening, the leaders of the Communist party add, have actually been fascising the republic and have already accomplished a lot of work on this road.

The circular letter of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party to all the nuclei, on July 27, most mercilessly lays bare the inconsistency of the leadership, because it is the product of a collective elaboration of the question. The essence of the letter, liberated from confusion and contradictions, is reduced to the idea that, in the final analysis, there is no difference between the Social Democrats and the Fascists, that is, that there is no difference between the enemy who deceives and betrays the workers, taking advantage of their patience, and the enemy who simply wants to kill them off.

The only phrase in Thaelmann's speech of July 24, which resembles a serious motivation of the question is as follows: "The red referendum, by utilizing the possibilities of legal, parliamentary mass action, represents a step forward in the direction of the extra-parliamentary mobilization of the masses."

The Question of the Relation of Forces

It is only the following: We take the parliamentary vote as the point of departure for our general revolutionary offensive, in order to overthrow the government of the Social Democracy and the parties of the golden mean allied with it, by legal means, and in order afterwards, by the pressure of the revolutionary masses, to overthrow Fascism which is attempting to become the heir to the Social Democracy.

have refused to fight against Kornilov? This is probably how the Central Committee of Thaelmann, Hemmele, Neumann would have acted. But this is not how the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks acted. Lenin wrote at the time: "It would have been the profoundest error to think that the revolutionary proletariat is capable, so to say, out of 'revenge' upon the S. R.s and Mensheviks—for their support of the crushing of the Bolsheviks, the assassinations on the front and the disarming of the workers—of refusing to support them against the counter-revolution. Such a way of putting the question would have meant, first of all, the carrying over of petty bourgeois conceptions of morals into the proletariat (because for the good of the cause the proletariat will always support not only the vacillating petty bourgeoisie but also the big bourgeoisie); in the second place, it would have been—and this is most important—a petty bourgeois attempt to cast a shadow, by 'moralizing', over the political essence of the matter."

If we had not repulsed Kornilov in August, and had thereby facilitated his coming to victory, he would, in the first place, have destroyed the flower of the working class, and consequently, would have interfered with our victory, two months later, over the conciliators when they were overtaken by their Nemesis—not in words but in deeds—for their historic crime.

It is precisely "petty bourgeois moralizing" which Thaelmann and Co. engage in when, in justification of their own turn, they begin to enumerate the endless crimes committed by the social democracy.

With Blown-Out Lanterns

Historical analogies are only analogies. There can be no talk about the identity of conditions and tasks. But in the figurative language of analogies, we may ask: At the time of the referendum in Germany, was the question posed of the defense against the Kornilovism, or in reality, of the overthrow of the whole bourgeois order by the proletariat? This question is not decided by bare principles, nor by polemical formulae, but by the relation of forces. With what care and sincerity the Bolsheviks studied, counted and measured the relation of forces at every new stage of the revolution! Did the leadership of the German Communist Party attempt, when it entered into the struggle, to draw the preliminary balance of the struggling forces? Neither in articles, nor in speeches, do we find such a balance. Like their teacher Stalin, the Berlin pupils conduct politics with blown-out lanterns.

His considerations on the decisive question of the relation of forces, are reduced by Thaelmann to two or three general phrases. "We no longer live in 1923," he said in his report, "the Communist party is at present the party of many millions, which grows at a furious pace." And this is all! Thaelmann could not show more clearly the extent to which an understanding of the difference between the situation in 1923 and 1931 is foreign to him! Then, the social democracy was breaking up into bits. The workers who did not yet succeed in breaking away from the ranks of the Social Democracy, turned their eyes hopefully in the direction of the Communist party. Then, Fascism represented to a far greater degree, a scarecrow in the garden of the bourgeoisie, rather than a serious political reality. The influence of the Communist party on the trade unions and the factory committees was incomparably greater in 1923 than it is today.

The fact that the situation in 1923 was not utilized by the opportunist leadership of the Comintern and the German Communist Party is still alive in the consciousness of the classes and the parties, and in the mutual relationships between them. The Communist party, Thaelmann says, is the party of millions. We are very glad of that. We are very proud of it. But we do not forget that the Social Democracy still remains the party of millions. We do not forget that, thanks to the horrible chain of the epigone mistakes of 1923-1931, the present Social Democracy reveals far greater powers of resistance than the Social Democracy of 1923. We do not forget that present-day Fascism, nursed and reared by the betrayals of the Social Democracy and the mistakes of the Stalinist bureaucracy, represents a tremendous obstacle on the road to the seizure of power by the proletariat. The Communist party is the party of millions. But thanks to the preceding strategy of the "third period", the period of concentrated bureaucratic stupidity, the Communist party is still extremely weak today in the trade unions and in the factory committees. The struggle for power cannot be led by basing oneself only on the votes of a referendum. One must have support in the factories, in the trades, in the trade unions and in the factory committees. All this is forgotten by Thaelmann who substitutes strong words for an analysis of the situation.

To contend that in July-August 1931, the German Communist Party was so powerful that it could enter into an open struggle with bourgeois society, as embodied in both its flanks, the Social Democracy and Fascism, could be done only by a man who has fallen from the moon. The party bureaucracy itself does not think so. If it resorts to such an argument, it is only because the plebiscite failed and consequently it was not put to the further test. It is precisely in this irresponsibility, in this blindness, in this unscrupulous pursuit of effects, that the adventurist half of the soul of Stalinist Centralism find its expression! (To Be Continued)

2. The Centrist bureaucracy has not, however, succeeded in completely destroying the Communist International. The latter possesses a vitality, not derived from Centristism, but still sufficiently powerful to have withstood the fatal consequences of the corrosive influence of the epigones. The vitality of the Comintern has its sources in the existence and popularity of the October revolution and the Soviet Union, its traditions and its associations, all of which the advanced elements of the working class still connect and identify in their minds with the existing parties. The support still enjoyed by the official parties is given them by the workers as representing the ideas of the October revolution. In addition to this tremendous factor, the hopeless bankruptcy of capitalist society, the intensified exploitation and misery characterizing it in its last period of decay, plus the despicable and unaccounted treachery of the social democracy, drive more workers to the ranks of Communism than the mountain of blunders, defeats and crimes of the Stalinist apparatus can drive away. While this state of affairs cannot produce a permanent "equilibrium" in the ranks of official Communism, it nevertheless operates at the present stage with such force that it may be said that the bulk of the revolutionary workers are either in or around the official Communist parties or under its influence. Furthermore, the shifting of the apparatus from its Right positions to positions of ultra-Leftism, driven by the pressure of events, by criticism of the ranks of the party itself, are objective testimony to the possibilities which still exist to purge the party by radical measures of reform and to re-establish it upon a strong Marxian foundation.

These are the principal factors which determine for the International Left Opposition the role which it has assumed and which it must maintain: the Marxian wing of Communism, constituted as a faction of the Communist International which works for its regeneration and restoration. This historical task can be accomplished only by the most intransigent struggle against the Centrist bureaucracy and the reactionary ideas with which it has poisoned the movement.

3. The formal splitting off of the Right wing from the Comintern in a whole series of countries, particularly since the Sixth Congress, has served to clarify the struggle in the Communist movement. The Right wing represents the most consistently opportunist section of the ruling machine in the Comintern from 1923 to 1928 which, in the person of the Right wing, has now taken a giant's stride closer to the social democracy. In a number of countries, sections of the Right wing have already completed an organizational fusion with the Second International. In the main, however, it represents a bridge built towards social democracy. It shares the basic theoretical conceptions of Centristism (national socialism as against revolutionary internationalism), but otherwise it leads a parasitic existence, nourished by the cruder and more obvious blunders of purblind Centristism, which it criticizes with scraps borrowed from the platform of the Opposition. Liquidators, the ideological agents of the social democracy under the Communist banner who constitute the Brandlerist "International" must be fought relentlessly at every juncture. While it has and can have nothing in common with the Right wing liquidators, the Left Opposition, mindful

In a number of countries, great steps have been taken in the past period towards the accomplishment of this task. The International Left Opposition has succeeded not only in clearing its ranks of all capitulationist elements of the Zinoviev group, but also of ultra-Leftist dillettante and compromising tendencies, such as were represented by Urbahns, Paz and van Overstraeten. In addition, elements alien to the ideas and spirit of the Left Opposition, like Pollak in Czechoslovakia, Frey in Austria, the Landau group in Austria and Germany, have been dropped by the way-side. The Opposition, whose strength lies in its ideas and which constitutes a faction, has especially rigid requirements and cannot have any hesitation in enforcing them. For that reason, the American section of the Left Opposition also endorses the struggle conducted by our French section against the Right wing group of Gourget and against the ambiguous attitude of other members of the Ligue, such as Naville, who did not join in rejecting categorically the ideas and conduct of this group, and whose attitude, instead, confronted it, just as it comforted the Landau group in its destructive work in the ranks of the German Opposition. In the future, the American section must devote a greater amount of its attention to the developments in the other countries so that it may contribute the maximum possible clearing the road of progress of the International Left Opposition and helping to overcome those difficulties, and even crises, which frequently arise in the life of every active political organism and from which the Left Opposition is not immune. Any tendency in our own ranks to minimize the importance of the genuine internationalism which is constituted by an active and fraternal intervention in the life and work of the movement as a whole, must be sharply checked and corrected.

5. One of the difficulties which the International Opposition has encountered in the past period has been the defections of members of the Bureau which has so greatly incapacitated it as to compel the International Secretariat to assume functions other than purely administrative ones. This assumption of political functions has proved to be correct, and at the present moment, the Secretariat is the only effective center holding together the various sections of the Opposition, and, by grace of the support given it by the great majority of the sections, having the authority to intervene in any country for the purpose of defending the ideas of the Left Opposition. The fact that purely formal organizational attacks are leveled at the Secretariat precisely by those elements who are breaking, or never had anything in common, with the principle and political ideas of the Opposition,—elements like Landau, Frey, van Overstraeten, Urbahns, Weisbord, etc.—gives the measure of these criticisms. Until an international congress can take place, and a representative Bureau elected, we must give all our assistance towards strengthening the authority and the capacities of the Secretariat.

At the same time, the Communist League of America (Opposition) suggests that the International Congress be called for the Spring of the coming year, so that the international relations of the Opposition may be strengthened, a review of the past years undertaken, and the tasks for the coming period elaborated. We propose that all the main theses and documents for the congress shall be available for all the sections at least two months before its actual convocation.

M.N.Roy Arrested in India

Manabendra Nath Roy, the principal leader of the Right wing of the Indian Communists, has been arrested by the British authorities in India and charged with high treason. This is the second time Roy has been on trial, the first one having been during his absence from India, when the same charge was laid against him and other Communists. Labor and revolutionary organizations in a number of countries, and outstanding scientists, authors, artists and publicists,

have already adopted resolutions demanding his release from the Indian prisons of British imperialism and the British Labor Party, for it was during the Labor party cabinet's regime that he was arrested. The International Labor Defense, of course, has refused to do anything about the case Roy, who was one of the leaders of the Comintern in its early days, became an ardent supporter of the Stalin-Bucharin regime. He was expelled after the 6th Congress.

For a Genuine Movement Whatever strength the newly-formed "Mooney committee" may gain will come to a large extent from the blunders already made by the Communists, without whom, we repeat, no real movement is worthy of the name. What milk has been spilled cannot be gathered up again. But a new and better start can be made and must be made. The Hillman-Cohen-Muste-Balley committee is only the first installment on the payments the Left wing will get from the conservative and reactionary camp for its radically false

course. A timely correction will minimize or even conceal any future payments. Let everybody bear in mind: the Mooney case is no faction football, and whoever seeks to use it for this purpose will come a cropper in the end. The Stalinists can just as little use it for the prestige of their own false line as the labor skates can use it for their anti-Communist arsenal. It is up to the class conscious militants to make this idea prevail. —M. S.

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