

# Proletarian Party Opposition

## Some Fundamental Problems of Its Future Course Discussed

The opposition Communists who were expelled from the Proletarian Party are now facing the important issue of the next step to be taken. This the group proposes to approach through a national conference preceded by a discussion. That method is, of course, quite as it should be. If, in addition, the group centers its discussion on the questions which for its particular position become the most essential, it should be able to further accelerate its development in a progressive direction.

So far this is already indicated in various views expressed by some of these comrades. There have for example, been recorded, views in favor of the organization of a new party. In our opinion, the building of a new party could not at all be considered a problem facing this group. Moreover, it would be entirely incorrect to set such an objective. For Communists, in respect to this question, the problem is not the building of a new party, but the one of building a single party which will embrace all Communists and which will be capable of taking up its serious tasks. A second question which already occupied a prominent position from the inception of this group was the one of its further attitude to the Proletarian Party. In this respect it is true the group has a certain duty to perform; primarily to win the rest of the membership for progressive development. As a third question arose the problem of approach to the working masses which are now manifesting signs of awakening because of the effects of the crisis. It assumed an added importance by virtue of the endeavors of this group to get away from the Proletarian Party sectarianism and its insistence upon a struggle for immediate demands.

For a Communist organization this is always a problem and particularly so today. It is to be taken for granted, so to speak. On March 11, 1889, in the period of formation of the Second International, Engels wrote in a letter to Sorge: "The workers will follow those that know what they want and how to get it". That, of course, for a Communist group, presupposes first of all that it defines its principle position and strategic objectives. And so it becomes necessary to conclude that the main issue just now confronting the Proletarian Party Opposition is the one of defining its principle position, that is, its orientation toward the existing currents in the Communist movement.

### Some Serious Progress Already Made

The emergence of the Proletarian Party Opposition we have already characterized as a genuinely progressive step. It arose out of a struggle against the sectarian sterility of the P. P. It demanded revolutionary activity first by insisting upon an attitude toward and a formulation of immediate demands. Concretely, in the unemployment situation, it proposed a struggle for measures of relief. It demanded a Left wing policy for trade union work not to exclude co-operation with the C. P. in certain practical tasks. Particularly in regard to the Communist International—and that is important—did this opposition group denote its progressive direction as distinct from the P. P. It recognized the necessity of functioning in revolutionary activities with the world Communist movement, simultaneously with criticism of and a fight against the opportunism of its leadership.

In this respect, the background and origin of this opposition group assumes considerable significance. The P. P., from which it came, proclaimed itself Communist. As such it should have recognized that there can be only one Communist party. It gave complete endorsement to the C. I. and found no fault with the Stalin leadership, but refused to give the slightest recognition to, or have anything but condemnation for the American section. Its endorsement of the C. I. policies and leadership should have made obligatory upon it to unite with the official C. P. on the conditions laid down by the C. I. But despite its endorsement, it remained a second party outside the Comintern. It sought to replace the official C. P. In reality this became the sharpest reflection of its sectarian sterility and its narrow nationalist position. The remnants of the Proletarian Party may still endeavor to seek comfort for this position in the national socialism of Stalin; in the theory of socialism in one country, but this, instead of helping in the least, merely emphasizes its contradiction.

Can this group of Communist opposition comrades now conceive of emulating the P. P., from which it broke away, by proposing to also become a second party—by building a new party? If so, it can only become doomed to the same contradictions it endeavored to extricate itself from. It can only remain sec-

tarian, separated and isolated from the revolutionary working class section. Evidently some of the members of this group have hopes of making the Workers' League, organized by them, a basis for a new party. But what is a pure and simple unemployment organization. Its proposed program envisages a struggle for unemployment relief to be secured exclusively by levy on capital and large incomes, with the elimination of the present charity character, administration of the funds to include representatives of the labor movement and co-operating in its attainment with working class organizations on the basis of the united front. This as a foundation of a part make-up for a new party could at best only become a reformist one, despite the fact that many good militants may be found within its ranks. The Workers' League should be properly conceived as a part of a general united front unemployment movement and as a bridge to the masses.

### Will This Group Continue In A Progressive Direction?

But let us again return to the vital issue of orientation. That there are three distinct currents within the Communist movement today these comrades know and acknowledge. The currents have their organized form in factions. Can their group remain ideologically independent or neutral of these currents and still remain Communist? Obviously this is quite impossible. For the Stalinists, the problem appears to be very simple—just denounce and calumniate the others without any argumentation or endeavor to prove one or the other wrong. But these comrades are not mere Stalin puppets. At least this is the very method to which they have taken exception. Hence, there can be only one conclusion. They must define their attitude. They must orientate toward one or the other current. Finally they must become organically a part of the current whose position they adopt.

Some of these comrades may want to follow the method of the little P. P. bureaucrats of merely brushing this issue aside, of not adopting any position, or of maintaining a double position, at any rate for the time being. We hear some of them say: These are international issues, or even: These are only Russian issues, we will come to them later, first we must build right here. But the all decisive question is—to build what?

If the issue of the currents in the Communist movement is only a Russian one of what enormous importance would it still be with the U. S. S. R. occupying the position of the only proletarian dictatorship? We grant it is essentially an international issue but as such it affects the very root and foundation of the movement no matter in which country the specific problems arise. It is fully and completely intertwined in every major question of principle, policy, strategic objective and tactic of the movement here. It becomes part of every revolutionary problem here. It determines the building of the revolutionary cadres.

There can be no doubt that the first and most essential question for the Proletarian Party Opposition to decide is the one of its orientation toward the existing currents within Communism. Ideologically the group is not so far a homogeneous one and could hardly be when we recall its compromised background. There is no advance guarantee that it can determine its orientation untidily and without splitting into various tendencies. But it has a revolutionary duty to put this issue at the very top of its pre-conference discussion agenda.

—ARNE SWABECK.

## The Anti-Trotsky Campaign

(Continued from page 3)  
Chinese masses after their crushing defeat by the Kuo Min Tang (with the direct aid of Stalin-Borodin-Martynov)—is a "counter-revolutionary thesis", our Don does not bother to explain at all. Nor does he as much as utter a word of explanation as to why the Chinese proletariat, up in arms against the imperialists in 1926, is not to be found leading the struggle against the Japanese plunderers. It is much more comfortable and a great deal less embarrassing to resort to the legend of a "Chinese Soviet Republic" and to exaggerate the strength of the "Chinese Red Army".

These slimy and excitedly incoherent attacks against "Trotskyism" are part of a renewed and wide-spread campaign by the Stalinist faction against an evil they have a thousand times over again declared dead and buried. It is Stalin's treacherous answer to our question regarding his attitude towards the White Guard murder plots against the organizer of the Red Army. It is Stalin's manner of encountering the mounting current of sympathy for the ideas of the Left Opposition everywhere, and especially in the Soviet Union. But he will not succeed. All the tens of thousands and even millions of posters "Against Trotskyism—the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie" will not stem the tide of rising revolutionary conviction in the Soviet factories. Great social developments, tremendous opportunities for Communist action are unfolding before the international proletariat. "Trotskyism"—Leninist Bolshevism will live and come into its own once more, despite the desperate and helpless efforts of the Stalinist revisionists. The new wave of the world revolution will sweep away the Stalinists and all the dunghoops of Dons and Browders with them.

—S. G.

## Pioneer Publishers Notes—WHITHER ENGLAND

Many of the younger elements in the Communist and general labor movement have not had an opportunity to read one of Trotsky's earlier works—"Whither England", as it was recalled from circulation by the International Publishers when they discovered (by order), that Trotsky was a "renegade". We are now able to get about 300 copies of this book from England. We will be able to get it out with a paper cover for fifty or seventy-five cents. If you are interested, write us.

### PAMPHLET ON GERMANY

If you have not yet bought your copy of the pamphlet "Germany, the Key to the International Situation—Shall Fascism Really Be Victorious?", be sure to get it before it is out of print, as it is selling very fast. In this pamphlet, Trotsky deals with the political situation in France, England, the Far East the U. S., Germany, and the possibility of a Fascist coup d'Etat there. In his usual keen and poignant manner, Trotsky analyzes the international political situation in this pamphlet, draws his conclusions and makes concrete proposals of policy to be followed.

### BOUND VOLUME OF PAMPHLETS

In the very near future, we are planning to bind 100 copies of all the pamphlets issued thus far in one volume. Watch for further announcements of prices and other news. If you are interested, let us know at once, as we will only be able to supply 100 orders. Some of our pamphlets are already out of print, but they will be included in this volume. We have set aside 100 of each for this purpose.

### HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The History of the Russian Revolution by L. D. Trotsky, published by Simon and Schuster, is now available through us. Members of the Communist League of America can secure it at \$3.50. Certificate holders of the Pioneer Publishers can have it for \$3.00. Send your orders and checks at once. Add 10c for postage.

### A NEW BOOK ON CHINA

By March 15th we expect to have Trotsky's manuscript on China ready for the press. It will be a 385 page book dealing with all phases of the Chinese Revolution and the role of the Communists. The book will sell for \$1.00 paper cover and \$2.00 cloth cover. Certificate holders will be entitled to a discount of 1-3 just as on all our publications.

## A Letter from a Militant

Dear Comrade:  
I hope this will reach you all right. I received your letter and receipt for The Militant subscription. I had to borrow the dollar in order to make it. I have not had a job for wages except about one month. Since you saw me last, I stayed around Fargo a number of months but it was hopeless trying to get work at any kind of wages, even the farmers are not hiring help any more.

I am certainly sorry that I am so helpless to do anything for the cause in the way of an occasional donation. I cannot even afford to get Trotsky's pamphlets. Up to now have kept the Daily Worker, but now must give it up too as I have no income at all. Anyway, it seems to be continually deteriorating in quality. I am taking the Western Worker on trial. I take the keenest interest in all that is going on in the movement everywhere and especially our own Opposition. I believe the Opposition has made gratifying progress in the last year—really I wonder how you manage to do so much in this period. For a time I wrote up conditions around Fargo, for the Daily Worker got bundles and smuggled them to the packing house workers. I wish I could describe the atmosphere of repression of fear, of the helplessness that grips the workers of Armour's plant there in West Fargo.

What I miss more than I can tell you is my organizational activities that I took part in, in Chicago. It seems like the best part of my life is missing. The way things look now I am not at all prepared to agree with those comrades who hold that this crisis is just another periodic capitalist depression. I believe it is entirely possible for the present depression to develop into social revolution and in that judgment I do not forget for one moment the backwardness of our workers in general. But as The Militant never tires of putting it, "Where is our Party to lead us if such a situation arises?"

—W. S. Wauburn, Minn.

## Paris Commune Celebration

A celebration of the Paris Commune is to be held by the New York branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition) on Saturday evening, March 19th at Irving Plaza, Irving Pl. and 15th St. It will be a mass meeting and entertainment.

An elaborate social program has been arranged which includes a chorus of about sixty singers from a Hungarian workers' singing society, and a series of revolutionary dances given by a group of our own comrades. It will also include dancing and refreshments.

Hold the date, Saturday evening, March 19th, open. Watch The Militant for further announcements.

# «Pravda» on the Second 5 Year Plan

## A National Socialist Utopia or the Leninist Conception of Socialist Economy?

The convulsions of the world crisis are tearing wide gaps in the edifice of international capitalism. A seismograph recording the economic and political eruptions of bourgeois society at the present moment would show jagged, spasmodic lines for every country like the fever line of a dying man whose blood runs hot and cold in turn. Everywhere the masters of a great tomorrow are awakening, becoming more rebellious, moving at various speeds towards the insurrection which is to destroy an outlived social structure. Revolutionary problems of the greatest magnitude confront the class conscious vanguard everywhere, Spain, Germany, China—here are only three of the countries which are reaching the boiling point. In all three—to mention no others—the Communist movement bends beneath the tremendously urgent historical tasks it is called upon to solve because no other movement is capable of even dealing with them, much less solving them.

More than ever is the Communist movement in sore need of guidance, of wise advice, of the lessons and experiences of the past. They are justified in looking for this guidance and advice to the country in which the theory and practice of the proletarian revolution were successfully tested in action, that is, to the Soviet Union and its Communist party.

The Disregard for the International And here lies the great tragedy. The leaders of the Soviet Union party not only fail to give them this advice but they do not even concern themselves with the burning problems of the rest of the international working class. In 1923, the Central Committee of the Russian party, keenly preoccupied with the impending revolutionary clashes in Germany, called together a special conference on the question, together with representatives of the largest local organizations. It adopted theses on the problems of the German revolution, mobilized the whole party, and through its representatives in the Executive Committee of the Comintern, organized an international conference. In 1932, with the tension of the class struggle far more compelling than it was nine years ago, the Russian party acts in a totally different manner. The cannon-roar in Shanghai may be the first thunderclaps of a world catastrophe of imperialism, Fascism and Communism may be coming to death-grips in Germany, the lava of the social revolution may soon inundate the Spanish bourgeoisie—but all this appears to be happening on a different planet so far as the present leaders of the Russian Communist Party are concerned.

That is the only conclusion one can come to after the accomplishments recorded by the just concluded 17th party conference in Moscow. Outside of agitational references to the contrast between the advances of industrialization and collectivization in the Soviet Union and the increasing misery of the workers under the world capitalist crisis, we do not know of a single problem of the international revolutionary movement that was given an hour of serious consideration at the congress. Not a single movement has yet emerged from this assembly of what was once Lenin's Bolshevik party, dealing with the tasks of the Communists in the capitalist countries.

To compare the proceedings of the present congress with one held under Lenin's leadership is to see at a glance how ruthlessly the party chiefs of today have chopped down one prop after another from under the bridge which, despite the assiduous efforts of the Stalinists, still traditionally connects the nationalistic degenerated apparatus of 1932 with the party of revolutionary internationalism which Lenin trained up for two decades. No more murderous indictment of a leadership speaking in the name of Marxism can be conceived of today than this: the waves of the international revolution beat upon the closed doors of the 17th congress of the Russian party without the bureaucratic congress managers allowing a single one of the hand-picked delegates to as much as get his feet wet.

The conscientious Communist worker to whom internationalism is something more real than a badge to be worn on holidays, will not only feel humiliated and mortified at his state of affairs in the ranks of the leaders he is instructed to obey blindly as "infallible chiefs", but will reflect upon the basic causes that make it possible, or rather, that make it logical and inevitable.

### The Second Five Year Plan

If the congress had nothing—absolutely nothing—to say about the problems of the international revolution, it had more than enough to say about the problems of the Soviet power. And on this point we witness the canonization in a veritable nationalistic orgy of the theory of "socialism in one country" which, we are now taught, is to spring

forth full-panoplied, like Minerva from the brow of Jove, at the end of the second Five Year Plan adopted at the congress. Whereas, according to the apostolic revelations of the time, the first Five Year Plan, which was to be completed in three, would merely end with the Soviet Union having "caught up with and outstripped" the most advanced capitalist countries, Pravda now informs us (Daily Worker, 2-23-1932) that, according to the report of the incomparable Molotov:

"The basic political task of the second Five Year Plan is the final liquidation of capitalist elements and of classes in general, the complete extermination of classes which tend to create class distinctions and exploitation, and the conquest of the remnants of capitalism in the economy and in the consciousness of the people; the transformation of the whole toiling population of the country into conscious and active building of a classless socialist society."

What is to happen in the rest of the world while this stupendous project is being accomplished in the brief span of five years (or will it be four or three?), its authors do not inform us, nor are they concerned. For whoever seriously believes that Russia will become a classless, socialist society, in which "the final liquidation of capitalist elements and of classes in general" has been achieved,—that it will do this before the workers in a culturally (techno-industrially) more advanced country have taken power and come to Russia's aid, has definitely turned his back upon the prospect and idea of the international proletarian revolution. Such an oleomargarine "Marxist" has an infinitely more optimistic view of the possibilities for capitalist world stabilization than is entertained by the average bourgeois statesman of mature intelligence. Despite all his fine holiday pretenses, he believes in his heart that the "foreign Communist parties would die without our wasted subsidies". He is convinced deep down that these parties and their leaders, whom he regards with scarcely concealed disdain and contempt, will never seize power in this generation, at least; and if that is the case, what is to be gained by this interminable din and agitation about a "world revolution", especially when it antagonizes the foreign bourgeoisie who must, above everything else, be prevented from intervening with troops to disrupt the bureaucratic Eden of a national socialism? Legion is the name of those decadent Stalinist bureaucrats whose conduct is animated by these ideas.

But despicable as their attitude is towards the international problems, the bureaucrats have an equally reactionary and far more Utopian standpoint towards the problems of Soviet economy. Here an objective consideration of its complex structure is replaced by administrative commands to race at top speed for new records which are not always as unblemished as they appear. In many, perhaps in the majority of the cases, the "records" are achieved at the expense either of a dangerous tensile strain on the physique and nerves of the workers or else of a marked inferiority in the quality of the product turned out. Frequently it is both. For a short period and under the pressure of a partial aim, such strains are conceivable. But to imagine that the workers can or will bear up under the concert pitch to which they have been tuned for the whole historical period that separates us from socialism in Russia, is to reveal a mad ignorance which threatens the existence of the workers' republic more than do a thousand deliberate saboteurs.

### What Socialism Means

This should be an obvious truth, unless one is a blind official whose idea of what constitutes socialism is different from everything we have learned from the teachers of our movement. To those for whom Marx, Engels and Lenin are not "outlived", socialism is not a social system in which everybody has been leveled down to a common low plane of a so-called "equality", but a society in which the classes have really been abolished, in which the distinction between "town" and "country" has been eliminated, in which agriculture no longer exists as an economic entity but has become an industry, in which such a rise has been accomplished in production that there can no longer be any comparison between the living conditions of the workers (i. e. of the whole population) under the new society and under the most highly developed capitalist state, and above all, in which the state power and coercion are beginning to die out and to be replaced by the administration of things.

But this assumes such a tremendous rise in the productivity of labor and the

national wealth based upon a highly developed machine technique—all of which must, moreover, keep pace with the concomitant absolute and relative growth of population—as has only begun in the Soviet Union and which cannot be brought to a successful conclusion on the basis of the efforts of Russia's economy alone. Pravda informs us that "the proletariat of the U. S. S. R. is in possession of absolutely all the possibilities, all the power, all the means and all the resources for the victorious fulfillment of this gigantic plan of construction of a socialist society in that period," that is, in another five years. But, bearing in mind the classic definition of socialism, such a contention is not only root false, but is based upon a reactionary outlook in the strictest sense of the word, particularly for the following reason:

### Socialism and World Economy

Socialism is a form of socio-economic relations that must rest upon a far higher plane than that occupied by the most developed capitalist unit. It is an advance from capitalism and in no respect a retreat to pre-capitalist relations. Now, not a single one of the important capitalist powers has developed its productive forces on a strictly national scale. The growth of capitalism in its classic cradle, England, was based essentially upon its world connections, that is, its ever closer interweaving with world commerce, world economy. The low point of capitalist strength in the United States—which has more internal resources than almost any other country—is nevertheless the period of its "isolation" from the rest of the world. Like every other country, it became the economic and political colossus it is today by its increasingly inextricable association with world economy. Indeed, the crisis rendering world capitalism today supervened, essentially, because the bonds that tie it all into the waters of international economy in which the most backward country is as much a necessary component part as the weaker, were cut at vital points by the contradictions inherent in commodity production itself.

Socialism, or even the transitional economy which prevails in Russia on the road to socialism, cannot be based upon an increasing withdrawal from world economy, but must be predicated upon an extended participation in it. That is why the second Five Year Plan, with its consecrated nationalist ideal is conceived in a reactionary Utopian spirit, not by accident, but as an inexorable result of the—by your leave—"theory" of socialism in one country. For it is based upon the fantastic idea of a complete withdrawal from what Lenin characterized as that "international market to which we are subordinated, with which we are connected and from which we cannot escape". (To refer to but one example: a striking rise in the crops, exceeding domestic needs would soon show in a glaring light how subordinated the U. S. S. R. is to the world market.)

It is, of course, impossible to deal in a short article with all the problems raised by the second Five Year Plan, most of which have already been analyzed in anticipation in the works of comrade Trotsky. It will suffice for the moment to point out that the plan and the whole environment surrounding its elaboration, once more reveal, perhaps more harshly than ever before, the catastrophic practical results of the nationalist theory of Stalin and the abyss he has placed between himself and the revolutionary internationalist essence of Bolshevism. It is easy to imagine in advance—it would even be easy to write them for the paid scribblers—the answers that will be made to our arguments, the accusations of "pessimism" and "counter-revolution" that will be flung at us because the Left Opposition which fought for years for plan in economy, for industrialization and collectivization, which was expelled while trying to convince the bureaucracy of the progress that Russia could make in socialist construction with a correct policy—nevertheless refuses to be a party to duping the working class with fatal illusions or drugging them with theoretical opium. These accusations about "pessimism" we can answer in advance, with finality, by the words of Lenin which are as applicable in every essential today as they were when written in 1922:

"We have not even finished the foundation for a socialist economy, this can again be taken from us by the hostile forces of dying capitalism. This must be clearly recognized and openly admitted, for nothing is more dangerous than illusions (and attacks of dizziness on high places). And in this recognition of the bitter truth there is nothing 'terrible', nothing that gives any just cause for even the slightest despair, because we have always defended that elementary Marxist truth, we have constantly repeated: that for the victory of socialism the joint efforts of the workers of several advanced countries are necessary". (Works, Vol. XX, part 2, page 487.)

—MAX SHACHTMAN.

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