

The People's Front as Applied in China - 1927

Hitherto Unpublished Document Reveals Betrayal of Revolution Through This Policy

Editor's Note: We publish below, in part, the minutes of the Chinese Sub-Committee of the Executive Committee of the Communist International held in Moscow in May 1927. These minutes have been published for the first time in French by Albert Treint, former member of the E.C.C.I. and leader of the French Communist party.

The reader will clearly see "how things happened." The Stalinist leadership, in its endeavor to safeguard the interests of their bourgeois allies, the landed nobility among the generals, curbed the peasant insurrection, the rising of the oppressed.

The bourgeoisie, after having triumphed over the reactionaries with the aid of the exploited workers and peasants, drowned in blood the revolt of the peasants and the workers' insurrection.

The document below shows the tremendous responsibility borne by Stalin for the defeat of the Chinese Revolution. This document should be of especial value today when the People's Front propaganda of the Communist party and its actual realization in France repeats in broad outline, if not in detail, the Kuo Min Tang policy in China.

Analytic Report by Albert Treint

The Chinese Sub-Committee was composed of Bukharin, Ercoli, and Treint. Stalin, who was summoned by phone by Bukharin, took a decisive part at the end of the meeting.

Bukharin reported on the situation in China. The peasants are beginning to forcibly seize the land. This is frightening the Wuhan government (Left bourgeois government—Ed.). If we do not curb the agrarian movement, we will lose our left allies and it will become impossible to win a majority in the Kuo Min Tang. On the other hand, by curbing it, we will enlarge our influence in it; and when we will have become more powerful, we will go beyond our present allies and we will also have much more than we desired.

Treint: Maintains that the problem is not whether to sacrifice all the allies of the proletariat but of knowing which one to sacrifice: the insurgent peasants or the left national bourgeoisie. We will no more be able, tomorrow than today, to make the revolution in China by means of the constitutional decisions adopted in the Kuo Min Tang. The bourgeoisie will attempt to annihilate us by force of arms before we have been able to win a solid majority.

The discussion between Bukharin and Treint continued for some time, each of the disputants maintaining his position. Ercoli does not speak. He is obviously restrained, for if he leans towards Treint's thesis he hesitates to oppose the leadership of the Russian party.

Bukharin, finding himself in a critical position, demands that the sub-committee hear Stalin.

While Bukharin is out telephoning, a conversation ensues between Treint and Ercoli, in which the latter goes as far as to say that the policy pursued in China and the methods employed in the International are incompatible with the formation of a revolutionary vanguard.

Stalin arrives. He declares himself in agreement with Bukharin. Treint does not take the real situation in China into consideration. To fail to take a position at the present time against the peasant revolts would be to set the left bourgeoisie against us. That would mean civil war. But the armed Chinese are composed out of mercenaries and we do not dispose of adequate financial resources to have them on our side.

Treint remarks that the mercenary soldiers, by and large, are ruined peasants who will desert to participate in the division of the land if we support the agrarian revolution. It is not a question of paying them with money but of allowing them to pay themselves in kind at the expense of the landed proprietors.

Stalin declares that this thesis is correct in general but that it cannot be applied in the present situation. The left bourgeoisie is still powerful. Its armies will not disband in the twinkling of an eye and we will then be defeated in civil war before the insurgent agrarians are able to connect with the proletarian insurrection. Stalin reads several telegrams from Borodin showing that the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang has decided to struggle against the agrarian revolution even at cost of a split with the Third International. Stalin concludes: It is not a question of knowing whether the views of Treint are correct in general but of knowing whether they can be applied in the present situation. To fight or to maneuver? That is the question to be resolved. The sub-committee must give a clear answer.

Treint: We must fight! Stalin: To fight now means certain defeat. By maneuvering we gain time and the possibility of becoming stronger and fighting later on in conditions where victory can be counted on. Treint: I do not think that defeat is certain today. If we side against the agrarian risings, we will not have the peasants with us later; and the proletarian revolu-

tion, which cannot triumph without their support, will be relegated to the Greek Calends.

Stalin: One can maneuver without compromising anything. The agrarian revolution frightens the Kuo Min Tang only in the degree that it directly injures its members as well as the officers of its armies. I propose to send instructions to Borodin to oppose the confiscation and division of the land belonging to the members of the Kuo Min Tang or to the officers of the National Army.

Treint: A real revolution will know how to regard such "taboos." Bukharin: Why not? Besides there are no methods of doing otherwise.

Treint: And if, which is inevitable, the peasants in revolt pass beyond the limitations set by Stalin, must we also support the bourgeois leadership of the Kuo Min Tang which will not fall to resort to violence to make its will respected?

Bukharin: We are a revolutionary party and we have no fear of employing violence. We must utilize every method to put our decisions into effect. Treint: That was the policy of the Marquis de Bouille against the French revolution in 1792, it cannot be the policy of our revolutionary International in 1927.

Stalin: Bukharin carries the matter to its extreme logical conclusions. But things will not happen that way. We possess sufficient authority over the Chinese masses to make them accept our decisions. Once again I pose the question: To fight or maneuver?

Treint: I do not know the situation in China well enough to be certain that it would be impossible to maneuver without suffering a defeat. Let us admit that the maneuver is necessary and possible, which does not appear at all certain, then the maneuver must remain a maneuver.

Ercoli: Of course! Treint: Then, I demand that we oppose all attempts of the Wuhan government and the Kuomintang by force of arms to make respected the limitations of the agrarian revolution and that very strict instructions in this sense be attached to the directives which Stalin proposes to send to Borodin.

Stalin: We are basically in agreement; but it is useless to send instructions relating to this problem. I repeat that we have enough authority in China over the masses not to need to utilize coercion.

Ercoli: Since Stalin has declared himself in basic agreement, I believe that Treint can place his confidence in comrade Stalin.

Treint: You are the majority, you can decide what you like; but if the supplementary instructions which I have requested are not sent to Borodin, I will make public my reservations before the plenary session of the Executive.

Bukharin: The minority must be disciplined. I demand that comrade Treint renounce his plan (to make public his reservations—tr.). Stalin and Ercoli signify their agreement.

Treint: So serious a question is involved here that no force on earth will prevent me from formulating my reservations in such a manner that they will be heard. Or, are you going to employ physical violence against me? Stalin: Don't get dramatic.

With these words the session adjourned. Not long after the sending of Stalin's directives to Borodin, Tang Pin Shan, Communist minister of agriculture in the Kuo Min Tang, accepted the command of a military expedition against the agrarian revolution. The scandal was so great that Stalin had to send a telegraphic counter-order. Tang Pin Shan yielded with joy and ease. But the bourgeoisie had taken a step further. The Chinese peasants were defeated and the Chinese revolution annihilated.

A month before, the working class, then master of Shanghai, had refused Chiang Kai-shek's troops entry into the city. Stalin lifted this ban by a telegraphic order. Once inside Chiang Kai-shek closed the halls of the party

Anton Ciliga Describes Wrecking of Yugoslav C.P.; Tells of Opposition Struggle in the Soviet Union

1. Pages From Internal Life in Jugoslavia

In the years from 1925 to 1929 a strong colony of Jugoslavia Communists (about 120) gathered gradually in Moscow. In most cases they were responsible party activists, men with considerable revolutionary record, experienced and tempered in underground activity. These were not emigrants (with few exceptions) but in their overwhelming majority men who had been temporarily ordered to Moscow for party work. They arrived in Moscow from their active work in the Yugoslav party and were to return there. In the overwhelming number of cases they were workers.

Among these activists a sharp factional struggle was waged between the supporters of the Right and Left groups of the Yugoslav Communist party. From 1926 to '28, Moscow "entrusted" the leadership of the Yugoslav C. P. to the Right group (S. Markovitch) but in view of the fact that the more revolutionary elements predominated among those who came to Moscow, the Lefts were always very strong. During the above mentioned period the Right party leadership (the Political Bureau) had managed to compromise itself to such a degree that the irate plenum of the C.E.C. of the party (winter, 1927-28) removed the old Political Bureau and elected another, a Left Bureau (or, rather, a semi-left). But the C.E.C. was reckoning without its host. The host at that time was Bukharin, Gorkich, Manuilsky, and they annulled the decision of the C.E.C., dissolved the so-called Left Bureau, and since it was utterly impossible to restore the old Right leadership, they did some thing much worse.

The triumvirate of Bukharin-Gorkich-Manuilsky recruited some sort of a crew that had never had anything in common with the Yugoslav movement, some adventurers from all the five continents, and sent them as fully empowered emissaries ("mandatories") into the country. In order to complete this mockery of the Yugoslav party, this gang was entitled a "workers' leadership"; as a matter of fact, a couple of honest workers were included to serve only as props and victims (e.g. comrade Djuro Djakovic-Bosnich who was later murdered by the Yugoslav reaction). In order to facilitate the conquest of the Yugoslav flock by these Magi from the East, nobody from the Moscow party activists was permitted to leave for Jugoslavia. They did more than that. Anybody who in the least "suspect" in Jugoslavia itself was shipped to Moscow under various pretexts.

In short, the "mandatories" functioned. They already envisaged themselves as complete victors and what is more important—within a month or so, or a half-year, or a year they, who were people without any background in any sort of a movement, would soon be in possession of a record so necessary for underground activity. And a career in Moscow would be open to them. Everything would have gone smoothly had their fate depended upon Moscow alone. But, sad to say, Belgrade also has a word or two to say in Jugoslavia. And in Belgrade a military-Fascist overturn took place on January 6, 1929, and there ensued a bloody Balkan extirpation of every sort of opposition. A genuine underground activity now became necessary and the need was for men capable of going to their doom without the flicker of an eye. The "mandatories" were panic-stricken, terrified. They, like all adventurers, had estimated much too lightly their chances of success and of a career. Now what was in question were not their careers but their heads. And then there occurred an unheard of and a most infamous catastrophe. At this critical moment "the best section" of the mandatories left the party, the Y.C.L. and the workers' movement in general to their fate and fled as fast as legs, railways, and airplanes could carry them from Jugoslavia to Moscow. This squad of deserters was headed by the ideologist of the entire "course"—Gorkich. That is the way the "best of them" behaved. Those who were a little worse remained in Jugoslavia and passed into the service of the police. And the worse ones, it turned out, had been provocateurs all the time; they had insured themselves from both sides at the very outset. Among them was the chief "mandatory"—one Brezovich. It is worth while to dwell a little on him, because Brezovich is not an accidental figure in the present day Cominterns. Brezovich, as is well known, had also been a member of the Political Bureaus of the Chinese, Japanese, French, and many other parties. At a given moment, the bureaucratic degeneration facilitates the passage to provocateurs. The spirit of bureaucratic Byzantinism reigning throughout the entire Comintern makes it easy for the provocateurs to worm their way to the top. Brezovich never took any part in the Yugoslav workers' movement. During the Russian war he was captured by the world troops. During the N.E.P. he turned up in the Communist party, and after the annihilation of the Zinoviev opposition he made a career in Leningrad, becoming a district agitprop (in charge of agitation and propaganda). From there Gorkich-Bukharin-Manuilsky shipped him to Jugoslavia, placing in his hands the entire organizational and technical apparatus of the party. And in 1928 at the Sixth World Congress he was promoted to the Senior Convent (the ranking mem-

bers) of the Congress despite the fact that in accordance with the decision of the plenum of the C.E.C. of the Yugoslav C.P. an old worker had been slated for the post. In order to prepare completely for their machination, Gorkich-Bukharin-Manuilsky organized the matter in such a way as to delay the arrival of this worker to the Congress (he spent days waiting in one of the border cities for permission to depart) while the scoundrel Brezovich appeared in Moscow even prior to the Congress, and in this way, as if of necessity, he was elected to the Convent. As we see, Brezovich's progress indicates a very characteristic lawfulness. . . . Gorkich saved his hide. He had managed, together with Manuilsky, to pass in time to the service of Stalin. A few others also saved themselves. In their case, the matter was settled without a catastrophe: their careers were not broken off. But, in return, the Yugoslav workers' movement was betrayed into the hands of bestial reaction, it was disarmed and disorganized. In order to cover up their desertion, Gorkich and other leaders of the Comintern afterwards calmly sent tens and hundreds of men to their doom. In 1929-1933 the same thing was repeated in Jugoslavia which had occurred previously, but on a much larger scale, in China, and that which was perpetrated earlier and later in a number of other countries. When the working class will finally call the guilty to an accounting, it will be the day of dreadful judgment—a judgment not so much of the Gorkiches, Manuilskys and Co.—for they are only pitiable flunkies—as of the true masters, the true organizers and inspirers of all the extirpations and defeats of the international revolutionary movement from 1922-23 on: the Political Bureau of the C.P.S.U., the Bureau of the chief bureaucracy.

The unprecedented cowardice and villainess of the "Comintern leadership" after January 6, 1929 aroused a fearful indignation among the Moscow Yugoslav activists, especially among the Left group which numbered over 50. Among them, and at their head were the Trotskyist Opposition group numbering about 10, and working semi-illegally among the "national left." The Yugoslav national left, which arose back in 1921 on the basis of the demand for underground organization and activity and which grew in strength somewhat on the national and peasant questions, was and is still distinguished by its complete "national narrowness."

It is unable and it refuses (fundamentally) to tie up its own questions and struggle with the questions and struggles of other left groups of the former Comintern. The Yugoslav "Lefts" delude themselves with thinking that by such conduct they do not ruin themselves to impotence; and that by pursuing this "tactic" they do not give the trump cards to the Rights but prepare their own coming to party power with the assistance of and through the Comintern.

The Opposition group of Bolshevik-Leninists was formed only in 1928 in Moscow after the experience of the kulak bread strike, after becoming disillusioned with the Salinist "self-criticism" and disagreeing with the struggle "on two fronts." This opposition group, as has been said, headed the dissatisfaction which flared up sharply and elementally against the conduct of the "Comintern leadership," and at a general meeting in February, 1928, a resolution condemning this conduct received more than 90 votes as against five who voted for the leadership and who defended the leadership of this representation.

A few Russian comrades were members of our group (Glybovski, Zankov and others) and we had some contacts with factories and a small apparatus. The group consisted of a live center; of members who did not participate in the center and of candidates; and then there were also sympathizers, "liberals" who helped the group in various ways. At that time I had prospects of sending certain important Comintern material to comrade Trotsky abroad.

Immediately after the conference our group (the center) was arrested. It was established that an individual who served as the contact between our group and the district and the Moscow center had for some time been a provocateur (obviously, in order to escape exile). Members who did not participate in the center and candidates remained untouched because the provocateur did not know them but.

After such a demonstrative condemnation of the Comintern "leadership," the latter assumed a counter-offensive through the medium of a Commission of the "C.E.C. of the C.P.S.U. and of the Comintern" (headed by the notorious former Menshevik, Popov). Forty were censured; twenty were sent into "party" exile; three were expelled for "one year" from the party. A section of our opposition group remained in Moscow (Haebertling, Zankov, Glybovski and others); another section (Dragulich, Dadich and myself) went to Leningrad; a third section elsewhere. This took place in the summer and autumn of 1929.

Immediately before the arrest we were seized by alarm, sensing the danger. One of us, comrade Dragulich worked as a latheman at the "Elektrostia" plant and was on night shift at the time and therefore escaped arrest that evening; he went into hiding and was arrested only three months later. During this time he managed to take a trip to Moscow and contact, among others, the Spanish comrade Nin and to inform him about the arrest of our group. But we had no previous contacts with comrade Nin, nor, indeed, did we keep up contacts with several others (out of cautiousness); soon thereafter comrade Nin himself was deported from the U.S.S.R. and comrade Dragulich was arrested (during his arrest at night, on a street in Leningrad, the agents of the G.P.U. fired at comrade Dragulich when he attempted to flee from them). As for myself, although at that time I did think it necessary to demand permission to leave, I did not strive energetically enough for it. So many things were still unclear to me: both what is and whether things were heading; how reaction would take shape in the future, and how it had originally come about and what were the laws governing the Russian revolution. . . .

Instead, a number of innocent bystanders were arrested (several Yugoslavs and one girl, a Swedish Y.C.L'er). They were under suspicion because of some sort of external clue, i.e., they looked suspicious. Instead of a meeting with the representative of the Moscow center, the provocateur organized an interview for me with another agent of the G.P.U. I discussed our theses with him, and certain aspects of transmitting the above mentioned material to comrade Trotsky.

Immediately before the arrest we were seized by alarm, sensing the danger. One of us, comrade Dragulich worked as a latheman at the "Elektrostia" plant and was on night shift at the time and therefore escaped arrest that evening; he went into hiding and was arrested only three months later. During this time he managed to take a trip to Moscow and contact, among others, the Spanish comrade Nin and to inform him about the arrest of our group. But we had no previous contacts with comrade Nin, nor, indeed, did we keep up contacts with several others (out of cautiousness); soon thereafter comrade Nin himself was deported from the U.S.S.R. and comrade Dragulich was arrested (during his arrest at night, on a street in Leningrad, the agents of the G.P.U. fired at comrade Dragulich when he attempted to flee from them). As for myself, although at that time I did think it necessary to demand permission to leave, I did not strive energetically enough for it. So many things were still unclear to me: both what is and whether things were heading; how reaction would take shape in the future, and how it had originally come about and what were the laws governing the Russian revolution. . . .

Immediately after the conference our group (the center) was arrested. It was established that an individual who served as the contact between our group and the district and the Moscow center had for some time been a provocateur (obviously, in order to escape exile). Members who did not participate in the center and candidates remained untouched because the provocateur did not know them but.

Immediately after the conference our group (the center) was arrested. It was established that an individual who served as the contact between our group and the district and the Moscow center had for some time been a provocateur (obviously, in order to escape exile). Members who did not participate in the center and candidates remained untouched because the provocateur did not know them but.

Revolutionary Defeatism in Practice in the Ruhr in 1923

Several years after the war the French industrialists were in possession of iron, but they had no coal. And without coal there is no method of transforming iron into steel. The iron magnates looked greedily at the riches of the Ruhr (Germany), which had in its soil the very thing which would permit the French steel mills to operate at full blast.

The Comite des Forges (heavy industry monopoly in France) demanded this coal!

These "hidden material interests," cloaked by Poincare with deceptive words about security, peace, the maintenance of civilization, provoked the invasion and the occupation of Westphalia and the Ruhr. Plan of Action Formulated

The mass of the people accepted this marauding expedition. In the name of the proletariat, the Communist party and the Communist Youth in this period proclaimed its opposition to this new threat of war. In Germany, in the grip of nationalism and misery, the presence of French soldiers could not but ignite new causes of conflict. The delegates of the French and German proletariat met in Essen (Germany) for action amongst the proletarian masses. They formulated a plan of struggle against their respective governments. The task was not simple, propaganda for fraternization was difficult. It was necessary to struggle energetically against the chauvinist wave.

At the beginning of January, 1923, the French troops, penetrating into German territory, were astonished to read posters on the walls calling upon them to fraternize. This was the first time in history that the method laid down by Lenin

The army of the Ruhr began to disintegrate!

Poincare let loose a ruthless repression. About 200 arrests were made: German workers, wives, young girls, civilians, French soldiers and sub-officers were imprisoned.

But fraternization triumphed over the repression!

In Gelsenkirchen, a mutiny took place in a French aviation camp. Ten soldiers were arrested. In Neustadt, the 28th regiment of sharpshooters refused to fire on the German unemployed who had occupied the City Hall. In Duisburg, a patrol of Belgian soldiers placed themselves at the head of a demonstration, singing the Internationale.

In a frenzy, Poincare ordered all Communist headquarters raided and occupied. The German comrades were sentenced to more than 100 years of prison.

Repression and Evacuation

In the trial at Mayence, after a parody of justice, in true military style, tens of years of prison sentences were passed out (R. Sozeray, 10 years; Harduin, Lemire, Lingat, 2 years; the civilians Benkovick, Ben, Lekhal, Dyshe, Fife, etc. . . .)

But this did not in the least subdue the spirit of fraternization, which did more for the evacuation of the Ruhr than a hundred sittings of the League of Nations.

This fraternization was splendidly organized by the Communist youth of France as of Germany and the Ruhr. Let us remember their example at this time when the Y.C.I. of today is immersed in social-patriotism and in all likelihood has never even heard of the famous events of the Ruhr.

And let us learn well from the example of our French and German brothers in 1923 for it may not be long distant when we will be called upon to follow in their footsteps.

READ THE NEW MILITANT

"The Press Is the Collective Organizer" --Lenin

One of the most powerful weapons of a revolutionary Party is its press. Without literature which expresses the ideas and program of the party very little substantial progress can be made. On every important issue confronting the American working class such as the war danger, trade union problems, unemployment, the Soviet Union, the Party must get its program before the working class.

Especially today with the bankruptcy of the two old internationals, the second and the third, it is necessary to bring the revolutionary doctrines of the Fourth International before as large an audience as possible.

The war in Ethiopia, which threatens to engulf the whole of humanity, poses before the working class a life and death struggle. The social patriotic position of both the Socialist and Communist parties in the face of the coming war necessitates redoubled effort on the part of the Fourth Internationalists to meet the tide of social chauvinism which will sweep the nation at the outbreak of war.

For the task of educating the vanguard in the principles of revolutionary Marxism a strong press must be built which will issue pamphlets and books on the fundamental problems of the day.

Pioneer Publishers is making a beginning in this direction with the publication of THE SELECTED WORKS OF LEON TROTSKY, at popular prices within the reach of every worker.

The publication of this material upon which the movement for the Fourth International is based, will be of incalculable value to the Party in its work of preparing the American workers for the struggles to come. In these works are to be found a record of the whole disastrous policy of the Comintern in the last

ten years; the struggle of the Russian Communist Party; the suicidal policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy with regard to the peasantry; the disagreements over such burning problems as National Minorities, Industrialization, the alliance with the Kuomintang; which destroyed the communist movement in China, the Anglo-Russian Committee, the catastrophe in Germany, etc.

The first volume of the SELECTED WORKS OF LEON TROTSKY. The Third International After Lenin—fully annotated, will be ready in January. It will be a large volume of 400 pages, cloth bound, and will sell for the phenomenally low price of \$1.50.

Every worker who is interested in obtaining this great work is urged to send in his advance order immediately to Pioneer Publishers, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

LEWIS ROBS THE TREASURY

John L. Lewis gave another evidence of his "progressivism" by steamrolling a \$13,000 increase in pay for himself from \$12,000 to \$25,000 in the closing session of the miners convention. Other cronies of Lewis on the executive Board also had their rake-off doubled.

This sentiment of the rank and file toward this grand steal was grimly expressed by an Indiana delegate, J.W. Norris: "We have miners that are going barefoot. Isn't the present salary plenty to sustain any one in a standard of decency and health?"

SUBSCRIBERS ATTENTION! If the number following your name on the wrapper is

58

your subscription has EXPIRED. We urge you to send in your renewal by return mail, thus insuring the receipt of your copy without interruption.