

France at the Crossroads

In Lieu of an Introduction to the Second Edition of "In Defense of Terrorism"

By LEON TROTSKY

(Concluded in this issue)

To pretend that Herriot-Daladier are capable of proclaiming war against the "200 families" that rule France is to dupe the people shamelessly. The 200 families do not hang suspended in mid-air but are the crown of the system of finance-capital. To cope with the 200 families it is necessary to overthrow the economic and political regime, in the maintenance of which Herriot and Daladier are just as interested as Flandin and de la Rocque. The issue here is not a struggle of the "nation" against a handful of magnates as l'Humanite pictures it but the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. It is a question of the class struggle which can be resolved only by revolution. The strikebreaking conspiracy of the People's Front has become the chief obstacle on this road.

It is impossible to say in advance how much longer the semi-parliamentary, semi-Bonapartist ministries will continue to succeed one another in France and in general through what concrete stages the country will pass in the next period. This depends upon the world and national economic conjuncture, upon the degree of strategy of Italian and German fascism, upon the course of events in Spain, and last—but not least in importance—upon the awareness and the activity of the advanced elements of the French proletariat. The denouement can be brought closer by the convulsions of the franc. A closer collaboration between France and England can postpone it. In any case the death-throes of "democracy" may drag out for a much longer period than the duration in Germany of the pre-fascist period of Bruener-Papen-Schleicher; but this does not stop it from being the death-throes. Democracy will be swept away. The only question is: by whom?

The struggle against the "200 families", against fascism and war, for peace, bread and liberty, and other beautiful things is either a

le, or the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. The toilers of France are faced with the problem of the revolutionary conquest of power not as a distant goal but as the task of the unfolding period. Meanwhile, the socialist and communist leaders not only renounce the revolutionary mobilization of the proletariat, but resist it with all their strength. Fraternizing with the bourgeoisie, they hound and expel the Bolsheviks. So greatly do they hate the revolution and dread it! Under these conditions, the worst role is played by those pseudo-revolutionists of the type of Marceau Pivert who promise to overthrow the bourgeoisie, but only with the permission of Leon Blum! The entire course of the French labor movement for the last twelve years has placed the task of creating a new revolutionary party on the order of the day.

The question whether events will allow "sufficient" time for its formation is to engage in the most fruitless of all occupations. History has absolutely inexhaustible resources in the domain of different variants, historical forms, stages, accelerations, and retardations. Under the influence of economic difficulties fascism may venture prematurely and suffer a defeat. This would imply a long respite. Contrariwise, it may occupy a temporary position too long and thereby increase the chances in favor of the revolutionary organizations. The People's Front may go to smash against its own contradictions before fascism is able to engage in a general battle; this would signify a period of regroupments and splits in the parties of the working class, and a rapid fusion of the revolutionary vanguard. Spontaneous mass movements as in Toulon and Brest may attain a wide sweep and create a reliable fulcrum for the revolutionary lever. Finally, even the victory of fascism in France, which is theoretically not excluded does not mean that it will reign for 1,000 years as Hitler prophesies, or

that it is even assured to endure as long as Mussolini has been able to maintain himself. Beginning with Italy or Germany, the twilight of fascism would quickly spread into France as well. To build a revolutionary party in this, the least favorable variant, is to bring nearer the hour of vengeance. The wisecrackers who shy away from the unpostponable task with the words, "the conditions are not mature", merely reveal that they themselves have not matured for the conditions.

Building the Cadres

The Marxists of France, as well as those of the entire world, must, in a certain sense, begin at the beginning, but on an infinitely higher historical level than their predecessors. Progress is at first rendered extremely difficult by the fall of the Communist International, more infamous than the fall of the social democracy in 1914. The new cadres are being recruited slowly, in a cruel struggle against the united front against the reactionary and patriotic bureaucracy in the working class. On the other hand, these very difficulties, which did not descend upon the proletariat accidentally, constitute an important condition for the correct selection and the firm tempering of the first detachments of the new party and the new International.

Only a very tiny section of the cadres of the Comintern began its revolutionary education from the outset of the war, prior to the October Revolution. Almost all these elements, without a single exception, are now outside the Communist International. The next oldest stratum joined the already victorious October Revolution. This was much easier. But only an insignificant portion has remained even of this second draft. The overwhelming majority of the present cadres of the Comintern adhered not to the Bolshevik program, not to the revolutionary banner, but to the Soviet bureaucracy. These are not

fighters but docile functionaries, adjutants, errand boys. It is by reason of this that the Third International is putrefying so infamously amid the historical situation so rich in great revolutionary possibilities.

The Inevitable Regroupment

The Fourth International rises on the shoulders of its three predecessors. It is subjected to blows from the front, the sides and the rear. Careerists, cowards, philistines have nothing to seek in our ranks. The percentage of sectarians and adventurists, inevitable at the beginning, is winnowed away as the movement grows. Let pedants and sceptics shrug their shoulders about "small" organizations that issue "small" papers and fling a challenge to the entire world. Serious revolutionists will pass contemptuously by the pedants and sceptics. The October Revolution also once began with its swaddling clothes. . .

The mighty Russian parties of Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who made up the "People's Front" with the Cadets, crumbled into dust, in the course of a few months, under the blows of a "handful of fanatics" of Bolshevism. Subsequently the German social democracy, the German Communist party and the Austrian social democracy died an ignoble death under the blows of fascism. The epoch which is drawing close for the European peoples will sweep out of the working class without leaving a trace all that is equivocal and rotten. All the Jouhaux's, Citrines, Blums, Cachins, Vanderveldes and Cahalleros are only phantoms. The sections of the 2nd and 3rd Internationals will ingloriously leave the stage one after another. A new regroupment in the workers' ranks is inevitable. Young revolutionary cadres will gain flesh and blood. Victory is conceivable only on the basis of the methods of Bolshevism, to the defense of which this volume is dedicated.

March 26, 1936.

In the Dark of Night the C.I. Prepares The New Betrayal for China

Members of CP Are Kept in Ignorance

By LI FU-JEN
(Translated from "Struggle," Organ of Communist League of China)

SHANGHAI.—Conversations between some of our comrades and five Stalinists here recently showed that at least some of the rank-and-file of the Chinese Communist Party are not finding it easy to swallow the "new line" for China—the re-establishment of the "bloc of four classes" which led to the catastrophic defeat of the Chinese revolution in 1925-27.

They cannot stomach the idea of being harnessed once again to Chiang Kai-shek's chariot. The bureaucrats at the top, it seems, are trying to comfort the dissenters by the well-known method of deception. But to do this they have had to conceal from the membership of the party large portions of the Seventh Comintern congress documents!

Our comrades quoted to the young Stalinists Wan Min's offer to give Chiang Kai-shek an opportunity to "atone for his crimes" against the Chinese people. ("Bolshevik," Moscow, November, 1935.)

Only a "Maneuver"

"Ah," they retorted, "that's only a maneuver." That is what the bureaucrats are telling them, that the new offer of a "united front" is being made "only to expose Chiang as a traitor who is not prepared to fight for China's independence."

We asked them if they had seen the documents of the Seventh Congress. They had not! The leadership, we learned, hands down to the rank and file only carefully selected excerpts. So we quoted to them from Manuilsky's speech, which has been used by Wan Min abroad in several of his recent articles elaborating the "new line," notably the following:

"The setting up of such a program for a broad anti-imperialist fighting front of the Chinese people is not a maneuver on the part of the Communist Party. It would be a crime to maneuver with such a serious matter as the defense of the people against imperialist robbery. One may maneuver with and against the enemy but not at the expense of the people whose national liberty and freedom the Communists defend selflessly."

To which Wan Min added: "Moreover, if you say that our policy is a maneuver, then why do you not try to expose our maneuver by your honest participation in the anti-imperialist united front?"

Staggered by True Facts

Our young Stalinist auditors gasped at these quotations. They were at first so incredulous that they thought we had cooked them up—(cooking up quotations being part of every Stalinist's education!)—but we showed them exact sources, chapter and verse. They were visibly staggered. No, they did not think we were counter-revolutionaries, but they did not yet fully grasp our views or agree with them. They asked for more discussion and of course we readily assented.

We showed them our paper, "Struggle." This impressed them greatly. It seems that the Stalinists are publishing absolutely nothing here now, except occasional leaflets containing simple slogans. And here, our small group, without the financial aid of Moscow, was bringing out an excellent, printed, four-page bi-weekly. Our first meeting ended with all five digging into their pockets and collectively contributing five dollars for the paper.

Thus it has fallen to the Chinese Bolshevik-Leninists to inform the ranks of the C.P. of the Seventh Congress speeches and reports in all their full glory! The Stalinist bureaucrats here interpret the new policy as a "maneuver" in order to get their followers to swallow it, while the Comintern pundits in Moscow (Wan Min, Manuilsky) designate such a conception as a "crime."

Wan Min's Crooked Calculations

Wan Min's exegesis in justification of the "new line" proceed, with characteristic contempt for revolutionary cadres, on the two assumptions which have become the common yardstick for all the Stalinist falsifiers. First, he assumes that the older generation of Chinese revolutionists is for the most part dead, while those who remain have fallen into passivity and no longer participate in the revolutionary struggle. He expects no challenge from that quarter. Second, he knows that the younger generation of revolutionists did not participate in the events of 1925-27, any more than Wan Min himself did. (Wan Min was a young student at Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow from 1925 to 1929. He went there originally as a Kuomintang member, not a Communist.) He banks on the fact that the present-day Communists have no personal recollections of that period and Stalinist

An Unnoticed May Day Funeral

A funeral, unnoticed and unremarked, marched with the May Day parade. It was the funeral of the myth of "Soviet China."

The "Friends of the Chinese People" who have been the foremost "defenders" of Soviet China on the American Stalinist-liberal front, marched on May Day without a single placard for the Chinese Soviets, not a single placard that even mentioned the workers and peasants of China, nor a single placard against the Kuomintang!

"Support the liberation movement of the Chinese people," "Support the patriotic movement of the Chinese students," "Support the People's Republic of Outer Mongolia," "Withdraw the American forces from China," these were the slogans under which the "Friends" marched. The "Soviets," which are now to give way to a new "bloc of four classes" were silently interred.

With what contempt Chinese workers would regard these "friends" if they knew anything about them!

literature has not enlightened them, to be sure, as to the true character of the policies pursued and the reasons why a great revolutionary movement ended in one of the most vicious and destructive counter-revolutions in modern history.

Wan Min therefore feels quite safe in perpetrating the most blatant falsehoods, in poisoning the political atmosphere and thereby preparing the destruction of the third Chinese revolution. Between Wan Min and the accomplishment of his rotten aim stand the Bolshevik-Leninists, organized in the Communist League of China. We shall teach the workers to turn their backs on this lying traitor and the corrupt masters whom he serves.

Covering Their Criminal Past

The Stalinists can only cover their shameful present by covering their criminal past. Thus, in referring to the criminally false line pursued in 1925-27, Wan Min ascribes full responsibility to the "opportunists in the leadership" of the Chinese Communist Party, "headed by Chen Tu-hsiu." Wan Min is careful to point out that in 1927 "it was not the anti-imperialist united front tactics themselves that were at fault . . . the opportunists who were incorrect."

But Wan Min prefers not to turn back to Stalin's famous Theses on the "Problems of the Chinese Revolution" in which he declared, among many other similar remarks: "The student youth (revolutionary youth), the working youth, the peasant youth—all these are a force which can advance the revolution with seven league boots, if it should be subordinated to the ideological and political influence of the Kuomintang."

Does it appear from this that it was Chen Tu-hsiu who "renounced the revolutionary struggle of the working class"? On the contrary, it is not abundantly clear that Chen Tu-hsiu was faithfully carrying out the class collaborationist policy formulated by Stalin and the Comintern?

For Wan Min and his similars to state this fact and all the other

Bolshevik Leninists Point The Way

verifiable facts concerning the subordination of the interests of the proletariat to those of the bourgeoisie under the direct aegis of the Comintern would indict the real authors of the catastrophe and strike a blow at the Stalinist cult of infallibility. Hence the blame was placed on the C.P. leadership, especially Chen Tu-hsiu, who today stands in the ranks of the Fourth Internationalists, and is a prisoner of the Kuomintang.

Comrade Chen Tu-hsiu has for years been hounded and defamed by all the hacks of Stalinism because he refused to become a silent scapegoat, because he insisted on analyzing openly the reasons for the great catastrophe and drawing lessons from it for the future. He was and is traduced and vilified and slandered, not because he committed mistakes fatal for the revolution, but because he would not agree to deceive the workers and act as a cover for Stalin and Co.

The facts of history cannot forever be concealed. In the interests of the Chinese toilers we shall drag them out into the light of day and warn all honest revolutionaries to be on their guard against the Stalinist falsifiers. We shall neglect no means to expose their lies and their slanders.

The Real Culprit: Then and Now

For Bolshevik-Leninists have nothing in common with the methods of Stalinism. It is our policy to tell the whole truth, concealing nothing. Only this way can past experiences become useful lessons for a victorious future. For the Stalinists, truth is dangerous. They were prepared to forgive Chen Tu-hsiu "his" opportunist errors and even invited him to Moscow "to talk things over." They defended Chen Tu-hsiu against the Opposition during the revolution precisely because Chen was carrying out Stalin's instructions. His real crime in the eyes of the Stalinists consisted in his refusal afterward to cover up the role of the Comintern in the catastrophe of 1927, his refusal to bend the knee and take the rap.

The "new" opportunist line of Stalinism in China will lead to new disasters. It runs counter in every line and syllable to the interests of the Chinese revolution. The Moscow bureaucrats think they will "defend the Soviet Union" by having the Chinese Communists renounce the revolutionary struggle and join Chiang Kai-shek in a "People's Government." But this would be disastrous not only for the Chinese revolution but for the Soviet Union, for such a government not only will be unable to stem the tide of Japanese imperialism but will, on the contrary, compromise with it and drown in blood the third Chinese revolution, in which the real defense of the Soviet Union resides.

Against this perfidious attempt at betrayal every Chinese revolutionist must be on guard. Down with Stalinism! Build the new revolutionary party of the Fourth International, the only guarantee of triumph for a revolutionary China!

From Pacifism to Social - Patriotism BRITISH WORKERS AND WAR Stalinism: Yesterday and Today

By T. C. (London)

When the workers of Britain abandoned their rifles in the year 1918, a tremendous peace psychology seized hold of the British working class movement. Old jingoists like Blatchford and Hyndman were pushed to the back of the stage and the pacifist elements came to the front. Year after year, at Labor Party Conferences and Trade Union Congresses, resolutions against war were endorsed to the accompaniment of long, windy speeches usually delivered by MacDonald, Snowden, or Lansbury. The League of Nations was extolled as an instrument of peace and security. The wicked Russian Bolsheviks were rebuked for their abuse of the League and their refusal to join the imperialist robbers.

On their left flank, the Laborites were attacked by the Communist Party and other left wing groups who declared that the policy of the Labor Party was a betrayal of the working class, while on the right, the young Tory die-hards sneered at the Socialist pacifists and alleged that they were seeking cushy jobs at Geneva.

Pledge to Support Gov't

As the years rolled on and from time to time the war danger threatened to explode the reformist paradise, the speeches grew longer, louder, and more fiery, but so long as it was only Russia, China, or South America that was threatened then the usual protests to the League were made and that was all. Hints of a general strike were sometimes made but by 1934 this proposition was definitely scrapped and the Trade Unions and the Labor Party were pledged to "unflinchingly support our government in all risks and consequences of fulfilling its duty to take part in collective action against a peace-breaker."

This line was followed up a year later, when the Italian-Ethiopian war crisis was debated, by a steam-rollered resolution at both the Trade Union Congress and Labor Party Conference calling for sanctions against Italy to be operated through the League of Nations. These decisions went far to assure the return of the National Government at the General Election and they also produced a tumult inside and outside the ranks of the Labor Party.

There are three main groups at work inside the Labor Party upon the question of sanctions, and many of their members are also against the League as being a sham and a fake. The Christian Socialists, personified by Lansbury are against sanctions but not against the

League while the Trade Union bloc, which is the backbone of the Labor Party, is wholehearted in its support of the League and Sanctions and only criticises the policy of the National Government because it does not go far enough to satisfy Sir Walter Citrine, Bevin, and company. Outside the Labor Party all the Socialist groups are against the League and sanctions with the exception of the Communist Party.

Stalinist Policy

The latter body is now pushing for affiliation to the Labor Party under cover of a policy that approximates to that of the Labor and Trade Union bureaucracy so far as the League and sanctions are concerned. This remarkable position is worth studying. Whatever fault could be found in the propaganda of the British Communist Party between the years 1920 and 1935 none could be found in their rigid denunciation of the League of Nations as a "League of Bandits."

The propaganda organization of the League, known as the League of Nations Union was declared to be "an excellent agit. Prop. department for the Imperialists." (Communist Review, July, 1927.) Even the revised programme of the Communist International, produced in 1928 and still circulating in Britain as the Communist Programme refers to the League as "a counter-revolutionary Holy Alliance of imperialist powers." Stalin, himself, in "Leninism" describes the League as "an organization designed to mask war preparations" and as late as August, 1934, the Young Communist League at a Youth Conference held at Sheffield issued a Manifesto in which they state that "the League of Nations is not an instrument for stopping war but is a means of preparation for war." But the last blow for the Lenin line was struck by no less a person than R. Palme Dutt, leading theorist of the British Communist Party. In his editorial notes in the "Labor Monthly" for January, 1935, Dutt criticises the Southport Conference decisions of the Labor Party. In the light of what has happened since, these comments are worth quoting in full.

Dutt Answers Dutt

"The greatest danger lies in the pacifist and imperialist confusionist maneuvers and its channels of influence in the working-class movement to disrupt the united working-class front and replace it by support of rival imperialist policies. It is here that lies the whole significance of the role of the Labor Party Executive, not only in its international fight against the united front, but in its whole Southport line of sup-

port of imperialist war in certain contingencies, in the case of war against an aggressor", in the case of war for the 'collective system' of imperialism, in the case of war to preserve the nation and its democratic institutions. It is here that lies the significance of the attempt to exploit the fact of Soviet participation in the League of Nations in order to revive the weakening illusions in the League of Nations as a guarantee of peace, or to preach the obligation of the working class to subordinate itself to the leadership of the League of Nations. It is here that lies the significance of the preaching of a hypothetical war of 'democratic defense' against Fascism. It is here that lies the significance of the spreading trust in a future Labor Government as an instrument of peace. What is our answer to these 'left', 'pacifist', 'democratic', 'anti-fascist', arguments in support of future imperialist war. Our answer remains the Leninist line, the line of international Socialism from Marx and Engels, from Stuttgart and Baste up to to-day. (We need more than ever to warn the workers never to become entangled in the line of imperialist policies, but to judge every question of war solely from the standpoint of the working-class revolution. The workers under capitalism have no Fatherland. Must we not defend our country against Fascism? Is not pacifism in such conditions equivalent to surrender to Fascism? The revolutionary answer is clear. We hold nothing

in common with the pacifist line. We do not for a moment exclude military defence against Fascism—on one condition—and one condition only, namely, that we have a country to defend. We shall defend Workers Britain, as an integral part of the World Worker's Republic, of the future World Soviet Union, against Fascism with every means in our power. But until then we shall fight our own exploiting class; we shall not let ourselves be dragged into warring for one set of masters against another. This is the Leninist line."

Last of Leninist Line

That was the last of the Leninist line so far as the British Communist Party is concerned. Within a few months, Dutt and his party were in full cry for the League of Nations, for sanctions against Fascist Italy, for a Labor government as an instrument of peace, for one set of masters in France against another set of masters in Germany, for the democratic capitalists against the Fascist capitalists. The British Communists have found new allies in the Christian organizations, the Liberals and even the Tories, with whom they have now a united front functioning through alleged Peace Councils. The Communist member of parliament, Gallacher, in his maiden speech, called for "a People's Government composed of the best elements in all parties," and in the struggle within the Labor Party and Trade Unions, honest left-wing workers have to fight against the reformist bureaucracy but also against the new line of the Stalinists who are even more enthusiastic for the League and sanctions than the old timers themselves. All this confusion favors the war-makers but despite desperate efforts on the part of the social-patriots, the British working class is still against war.

- BOOKS -

Biographies of Revolutionists.

FREDERICK ENGELS: A Biography by Gustav Mayer. . . \$2.50
The long awaited study of the life of Karl Marx's close co-worker by his official biographer. The first and only study of Engels in English.

KARL MARX: The Story of His Life by Franz Mehring. . . \$2.95
Completed in 1918, this book has long been considered the most exhaustive study of Marx' life and words. It appears now for the first time in English with an appendix by an old co-worker of Mehring, Eduard Fuchs, which summarizes the findings of D. Riazonov and the Marx-Engels Institute since 1918.

VIE DE LENINE: Jeunesse by Leon Trotsky. . . \$1.75
The first volume of Trotsky's biography of Lenin. Not available in English.

MY LIFE: An Attempt at an Autobiography by Leon Trotsky. . . Published Price \$5.00; Our Price \$2.50
The political biography of the great revolutionist written five years ago and recently subjected to a "psychological" treatment by Malcolm Cowley.

JOHN REED: The Making of a Revolutionary by Granville Hicks. . . \$2.50
The only study of the life of the brilliant author of "Ten Days That Shook the World."

LABOR BOOK SHOP
28 East 12th Street, New York City

Milwaukee Labor Council Urges Unions Aid News Strike

MILWAUKEE, Wis. Apr. 27.—Calling upon the whole labor movement to support the strike of Hearst's Wisconsin News editorial workers, on the ground that the right to organize and bargain collectively is its main issue, the Milwaukee Federated Trades Council today issued a formal statement for the information and guidance of union members and friends.

The statement is signed by members of a committee appointed by the Council to investigate and report on the strike of the Milwaukee Newspaper Guild against the Wisconsin News. The committee members are J. F. Fredrick, general organizer of the Council; Herman Solde, general secretary of the Council; and Otto Jirikovic, member of the executive board.

The report states flatly that the Wisconsin News has assumed an "open-shop" anti-union attitude toward its editorial employees. The local management of the paper, evidently acting under the instructions of the head management of the Hearst Publications, has taken the position that editorial workers shall not organize and that the management will not recognize or officially deal with any organizations of such workers, the statement continues.

Refutes Hearst Charges

Convinced by its investigation that "the management has consistently endeavored to belound this main issue" and "mislead the public" the committee takes up point by point the management's statements and its own conclusions, as

follows:

"First: While wages, hours and working conditions are involved, differences on these points are not so great that they would stand in the way of a settlement, especially in view of the fact that the Guild has assumed a very reasonable attitude of compromise on these points.

"Second: As to the statement of the management that it has not interfered with its employees' joining the Guild, the fact is that while they may not in so many words have stated that its employees should not join the Guild, it has let it be generally known that it does not favor the organization of the editorial workers.

"Third: As to the statement that it has met with representatives of the Guild to discuss demands and grievances, the fact remains that it has refused to carry such meetings to a logical conclusion by refusing to consider entering into any sort of agreement. Such an attitude is a denial of the principle of collective bargaining.

"Fourth: While it is true that the Wisconsin News has a union shop agreement with local unions covering employees in its mechanical departments, such agreements constitute a distinct discrimination against other categories."

In supporting the strike, the statement concludes, it is complying with the request of William Green, president of A. F. of L. Affiliated local unions are urged to give moral and financial support, and to participate in picketing before the Wisconsin News building.

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