

Toward Another Wave of Revolutionary Struggles.

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PART II.

The Chinese Revolution.

THE Chinese Revolution is the most significant historical event since the Proletarian Revolution in Russia in November, 1917.

The problems of bourgeois revolution in any of the so-called backward or economically under-developed countries are naturally tied up with the question of the struggle against imperialism. The pivotal point of the proletarian campaigns for working class supremacy is the fight against imperialism. The Chinese masses have been struggling against their native feudal militaristic oppressors and foreign exploiters. The Chinese masses have been battling for the establishment of a united democratic republic of workers and peasants. Hence, it is clear that the main tasks of the Chinese Revolution are an integral and an inseparable part of the international proletarian revolution.

The basis of and the key to the Chinese Revolution is to be found in the agricultural problem. The overwhelming majority of the many millions of peasants masses in China is landless. Side by side with the modern large-scale capitalist methods of production introduced in China, there have existed semi-feudal conditions of the exploitation of the peasantry by the native landed aristocracy. Compulsory labor, a vicious tax system, extensive pauperization, an exodus from the rural to the urban sections are the fruits of this feudal tyranny. It is primarily because of these oppressive conditions to which the great mass of Chinese peasants have been subjected, that the militarist overlords have been able to attract such large numbers into their mercenary armies.

And turning to industry in China we find that the most important sections of manufacturing, transportation, commerce and finance are dominated by the foreign imperialists. The biggest coal developments and the great textile industry, particularly in the Hankow and Shanghai districts, are in the grip of British and Japanese capitalists. There is a growing American influence in Chinese banking. China is a dazzling prize for the world imperialists as a source of raw material, as a huge market for manufactured goods, and as a giant source, an unlimited reservoir of cheap labor power. Chinese workers have, for a long time, been forced to accept even

lower wages than the worst exploited workers in the imperialist countries.

There are all kinds of jealousies and conflicts of interests among the various imperialist powers which have struggled for privileges in China. We need but recount how energetically British imperialism is trying to overcome American imperialist maneuvers and policies in China. Likewise British imperialist diplomacy is working overtime to have the Japanese exploiting interests fall in line with Downing Street's proposals for "law and order" in China. Yet all the imperialist powers have had this in common; they have all resorted to buying out war lords and financing their counter-revolutionary armies against the aspirations and hopes of the Chinese people.

Obviously militarism in China is not a purely military force but is also a faithful ally of foreign capitalism and the most effective guarantor for the imperialist penetration and domination of China. The Chinese industrial bourgeoisie is very little developed. The native commerce and finance bourgeoisie are somewhat more developed. In the cities, the petty bourgeoisie, are the main social force next to the proletariat. In the rural sections the vast bulk of the peasantry are engaged in a constant bitter struggle against the village usurer, the gentry and the big landowners. The most cruel enemies of the peasants are the militarist generals and their agents.

With this sketch of the background of class divisions in China we are able to have a better understanding of the main demands of the Chinese Revolution. First of all comes the struggle against the foreign imperialists. Here there can be and there have been united the interests of the broadest masses with the interests of even a section of the native industrial bourgeoisie. This battle against imperialism is inseparable from the struggle against the militarists who are serving as the agents of the foreign imperialists. The principal object of this struggle is to abolish the feudal limitations which have proved a fetter upon the development of industry and the unification of China under a democratic government.

Though this basic character of the Chinese Revolution is bourgeois, the sharp struggle against imperialism unavoidably involves a sharp attack on imperialist private property. Imperialism cannot be destroyed in China or elsewhere without undermining and destroying the very roots of its existence and vitality. In the logic of the class war this simply means the workers and peasants taking over and nationalizing the basic wealth and resources of the country—the railways, the banks, the big factories and the concessions. Thus we see the dialectic process in which out of the very struggle

to attain the bourgeois limits, the Chinese Revolution goes away beyond the capitalist bounds.

When we understand this theoretical basis of the Chinese Revolution and class relations we can readily and clearly comprehend the most recent phases of the Chinese struggle, the swing to the left and the consequent tendency towards a sinking of differences among the imperialist powers for a concerted attack on the revolutionary Chinese masses and the Soviet Union.

The agrarian revolution runs like a red thread thru the whole Chinese conflict. The land to the peasantry—is a living demand, an inspiring slogan, a rousing battlecry. Months ago General Feng commanding the People's National Army paid the price of disastrous defeat when he failed to give the land to the Honanese peasantry. Peasant rebellions behind his lines with the consequent disintegration of his army were the primary causes of his undoing, rather than the military prowess of Wu Pei Fu and his other reactionaries. The overwhelming mass of the Chinese peasantry is struggling for the abolition of feudalism, for the removal of the intolerable taxes, for the eradication of militarism, and for the distribution of the land among the peasantry by the state. An integral part of these demands is the insistence on the abolition of the entire feudal-bureaucratic apparatus and the substitution therefor of organs chosen by the peasants themselves to serve as fundamental parts of the revolutionary national government.

On the basis of the report of Comrade Tan Ping-schan, leader of the Communist Party of China and now Minister of Agriculture in the Chinese Revolutionary Nationalist Government, the Seventh Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International adopted its program of action. This report dealt at length with the dynamics of the Chinese Revolution and its transition from one stage to another.

In each of the stages thru which the Chinese Revolution has gone there has been a class which has served as the driving force. The Leninist policy has been and is to mobilize every section of society for the revolutionary struggle wherever and whenever it can be of dynamic value for the revolution. We are now in a new stage of the Nationalist Revolution in which the native industrial bourgeoisie are beginning to discard their relatively progressive role. Now only a bloc between the proletariat and the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie can serve as the driving force. We must at all times in the class war against the imperialists be careful not to drive away too early any section of the population which is still willing and ready for the struggle.

With the middle bourgeoisie being pushed back and the big bourgeoisie more and more in the camp of the enemy, the counter-

revolutionary, the leadership of the national revolutionary struggle falls more and more to the proletariat as the driving force of the afore mentioned bloc. This means that the proletariat must assume the leadership of the peasantry and vigorously push through the land program of the revolution—the land to the peasantry. This shift of leadership of the Chinese Revolution to the proletariat, and not the “manipulations” of those whom the imperialists choose to call “crafty Russian advisers”, is the force behind the recent events in China. The strikes at Shanghai, the vigorous anti-imperialist movement sweeping even the cities occupied by Chang Tso Lin, the increasing importance of the trade unions, the rising influence of the Chinese Communist Party and the strengthening centralization of the very fabric and structure of the Kuomintang Party are all evidences of the new stage which the Chinese Revolution has entered.

A word or two about the Kuomintang whom the capitalist press the world-over has reported and editorialized and headlined split into many ungatherable pieces sometimes ago. In essence the Kuomintang is that party representing the joint interests of all the revolutionary forces fighting against imperialism and feudalistic reaction. The petty bourgeois revolutionary democracy is represented largely by the left wing of the Kuomintang. Consequently close co-operation between the left wing of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party is essential to the unity of this broad party and to the success of the Chinese Revolution.

The Communist Party of China is now correctly concentrating on the task of training the proletariat for its role of leadership, is vigorously insisting on defending proletarian interests such as realizing the Eight Hour Day, the right to organize, building up powerful trade unions, energetically supporting the demands of the peasantry, increasing its own membership, especially increasing its following in the revolutionary army, and gathering together in one mighty state organization all the revolutionary forces. The youthful Communist Party of China is confronted with a difficult and complicated situation. It is fighting international imperialism. The success of our brother party depends on the one hand on its ability to lead the revolution to a higher stage without delay and on the other hand to avoid forcing steps artificially in an effort to skip inevitable and unavoidable phases and stages of development.

The significance of the Chinese Revolution for the world's working class is inestimable. China is today a nemesis to capitalist stabilization, a mighty reservoir of revolutionary spirit for the whole East. As the victorious Chinese Revolution sweeps away its foes, the logic of events leads more and more to the formation of a bloc between the national-revolutionary forces of China and the Soviet Union. This is the only answer to the threats of the imperialist

powers to intervene and crush the Chinese Revolution. Therefore it becomes the primary task of all Communist Parties to mobilize the greatest possible proletarian forces in defense of the revolutionary Chinese masses fighting imperialism.

The Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The recent struggle in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is not the first struggle in the ranks of the leading party of the Russian proletariat over the tasks of maintaining a correct Bolshevik line. There had been going on a sharp conflict with the Mensheviks up to and during the Revolution of 1905 over the problems of organizing a strictly centralized proletarian party and for the hegemony of the proletariat. From 1905-1910 there was the struggle against the Otsoivists and the Liquidators for the maintenance of a revolutionary party and a revolutionary mass movement. Then came the fight with the August Bloc (1912) which was a merger of the liquidation trends of the Right and the Ultra-Left. In the August Bloc, it is interesting to note in the light of the events, Trotsky's platform was a "revolution against the old Party". If one wants to get an idea of the unprincipled and adventurist character of this Bloc, then let him read Lenin's estimate and characterization of it.

When have Oppositions arisen in the Bolshevik Party? What are the roots of these Oppositionists? Let us recall such moments as the time of the October revolution, the Brest, Litovsk Peace, on the eve of the New Economic Policy, the contest over Trotzkyism 1923-24, and the last controversy. In each of these cases a change of tactics was involved as a result of changed class forces and relations. And in each of these instances the Opposition is a reflex of the effects of petty bourgeois environment on the proletariat as a class and on its party. We must always keep in mind that the revolutionary party of the proletariat consists not only of the most advanced sections of the working class but also of the forces on the border of the working class. These forces are either only recently proletarianized or petty bourgeois.

The last Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was a Bloc Opposition. It was an Opposition which had room for all kinds of elements which were "against"—against, of course, the correct Leninist line, the correct line of the Central Committee. That is why there was comfortable room in the New Opposition for Trotzkyism, the Workers' Opposition, and Zinoviev. The creation of an unprincipled Opposition to the Central Executive Committee takes a similar course in all Communist Parties.

Let us trace briefly the development of the New Opposition. It will prove a source of great enlightenment for the members of

every section of the Communist International and help them in their work in their own parties. We will recall that at the Fourteenth Party Convention the Leningrad Opposition charged the Central Committee with having followed a "kulak policy" and with a failure to carry out the policy of industrialization. At the same time, though surreptitiously, it accused the Central Committee of Trotskyism. Next came the Plenum of the Central Committee in April, 1926. Trotsky and Kamenev now and then supported each other. By the time of the June Plenum there was already one Opposition Platform. Zinoviev and Kamenev surrendered completely to Trotsky.

Between this Plenum and the Fifteenth Party Conference there came with lightning rapidity the frontal factional assault against the Central Committee by the Opposition, the complete repudiation of the Opposition's factionalism as indicated by the overwhelming majority of the membership being for the Central Committee, and the retreat of the Opposition in the declaration of October 16, 1926. At the Seventh Plenum of the Comintern came the camouflaged "appeal" of the Opposition. This "appeal" was in reality only an attempt to broaden the bounds of their factionalism and to secure an international platform for themselves. Of course, these plans and hopes failed dismally.

How is it that the Opposition bloc was concentrated under the leadership of Trotsky? The answer is plain. All the various factions, sections, groupings, grouplets, and individuals in the Opposition Bloc were united by a common denial of the Leninist understanding, Leninist conception of the character of the revolution. Only in Trotskyism as the most composite and complete expression or system of oppositional deviations could this bloc have unified expression. The peculiarities of the situation growing out of the transition from the first to the second phase of the New Economic Policy coupled with the tasks of Socialist construction in this transition served as the basis of action for the New Opposition. Fortunately both the strong and sound reaction of the proletarian membership and the very economic situation brought on the defeat of the Opposition through showing the correctness of the Central Committee policy.

Revolutionary phrases (from) covering up Right contents (substance); Trotskyism as a common basis; an eclecticism and unprincipledness serving as the binding force—these are the outstanding specific characteristics of the Opposition Bloc.

When we say that the question of the character of the Russian Revolution was involved in the last discussion and struggle in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union we are touching the kernel of the whole issue—the question of the construction of Socialism in one country. On the correct Leninist formulation of and answer

to this question depends everything. What do we mean by the construction of Socialism in the Soviet Union? This simply means the economic defeat by the Russian proletariat of its own bourgeoisie with its own forces. This means the successful obstruction of the sources for the development of new capitalist elements. Positively, the construction of Socialism in the Soviet Union means a continuous and quickened pushing aside of these capitalist elements by the Socialist elements.

But the question of the construction of Socialism in the Soviet Union must be kept aside and distinct from the question whether this process of building up Socialism in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics is synonymous with the defeat of international capitalism. Putting it more concretely we would say: "Whether the Russian proletariat with its own forces can overcome the entire world bourgeoisie". This latter question Leninists can answer only thusly: the international capitalists can be vanquished only by the forces of the international proletariat. The trouble with the Opposition bloc has been that it has always confused these two questions. The New Opposition has continuously confused the question of the Russian proletariat overcoming with its own forces whatever capitalist elements there are or presently may tend to develop in the Soviet Union with the question of the defeat of the international bourgeoisie.

Stripped to its narrowest sense the question may put thus: Is it possible to overcome the existing differences of interest between the proletariat and the peasantry within the framework of the Soviet Republic? Leninism says: YES. Trotskyism says: No. We must not forget for a moment that a strong, a firm alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is the very essence not only of the maintenance of the Soviet Power but also of the building up the new economic system—Socialism.

Socialism proposes the organization of urban industrial production and rural agricultural production into one organic economic whole. In this development, agriculture comes under the leadership of the Socialized urban industry. The relations between the two phases of society's production are based on a system of direct exchange of products and the prevention of the development of all private capitalist elements of production. The political basis for this development has already been created in the Soviet Union by the dictatorship of the proletariat controlling all the basic positions of industry, exchange and transportation, the planned organization of heavy industry and the nationalization of the proletarian state apparatus is impossible.

Towards this end the Soviet Union has been making marvelous progress on the road to industrialization. Since 1923 the rate of

increase of industrial development has been 76% as against 37% for agriculture. Of course, agriculture is not to be neglected and is not being neglected. Agricultural development—as a basis for the necessities of life, the production of raw material, and as a market for industry—is a prerequisite for the building up of Socialist industry. The proletariat having the leadership in the development of the heavy nationalized industry does not—as the bourgeoisie do in their countries—treat agriculture as a “colony of industry”. As the organization of co-operatives, as the organization of collective enterprises and the introduction of higher technique proceed in agriculture our goal is achieved to an increasing degree.

The Soviet Union's price policy of reducing industrial costs, the constant raising of the level of agricultural technique and production, the development of co-operatives, the elimination of private traders as middlemen between industry and agriculture are only steps taken by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the direction of the realization of the essence of Socialism.

Unquestionably there is a basic contradiction between the Soviet Republic and international capitalism. Here we touch the perspective of the world revolution. The existence side by side of the Soviet Union with the capitalist world for a long time is impossible. The numerous contradictions and conflicts of interest among the imperialist powers only to serve to postpone the fundamental contradiction between Socialism and capitalism. Sooner or later this can only and must be solved on an international scale in a struggle of the international working class against the international capitalists. The October Revolution in Russia was not the world revolution. It was a prelude to the world revolution. Yet it was more than that. The October Revolution has been and continues to be the base and center for the World Revolution.

The struggle of the Russian proletariat is bound up with the struggle of the international working class, with the struggles of the colonial peoples. Simultaneously the strengthening of the Soviet State means the hastening of the proletarian revolution in all countries and vice versa. The final victory of Socialism in one country (the Soviet Union) can only be assured after the collapse of capitalism in a number of the more highly developed bourgeois countries—after the defeat of the world bourgeoisie. Now it becomes very clear for us what serious consequences not only theoretically but also practically there have been involved for our brother party in the Soviet Union and for the whole international working class in the confusion of the above mentioned two questions—“the possibility of overcoming its own bourgeoisie with the possibility of overcoming its own bourgeoisie with the possibility of overcoming the world bourgeoisie by the forces of the proletariat of one country.”

At this point it is not necessary to go into further details but it can be and has been very clearly proven by the discussions in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and at the Seventh Plenum that the Trotsky's theory of "Permanent revolution" and his denial of the possibility of building up Socialism in one country, his denial of the possibility of solving the contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry in one country, are integrally part of one un-Leninist conception of the world revolution.

The New Opposition has maintained fallaciously that the Kulaks regulate Soviet Economy. At the Seventh Plenum the New Opposition Bloc evolved the theory that because the Soviet Union has increased its participation in world trade recently, that it is therefore more and more dependent on international capitalism. Here we have confusion worse confounded. The Opposition confuses the relations between Soviet Economy and capitalist economy as a fusion of the two. The fact of the matter is that those countries which participate most in world trade are most independent relatively. Likewise one cannot over estimate the importance of the Soviet foreign trade monopoly as a regulator of the Soviet Union's relations with world capitalist economy.

There was some slight repercussion of this Un-Leninist Bloc in some of the other sections of the Communist International. For instance, we had Souvarine in France, Ruth Fischer and Maslow in Germany. Korsch took some of his arguments from the statements of the Opposition Bloc. Everywhere the support for the Opposition Bloc came from a union of the ultra-left with the Right on the basis of one struggle against the line of the Communist International.

Of all the Parties in the Comintern, except the German Party, the Workers (Communist) Party of America was the most prompt and energetic in its realization of the dangers of the theories and proposals of the New Opposition Bloc not only for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union but for the entire Communist International. Our Central Executive Committee was quick to perceive these dangers especially for America, though in our Party there was practically insignificant support for the Opposition Bloc—showing itself locally only here and there.

Let us quote from the resolution on the Russian question presented by the American delegation to the Seventh Plenum:

Our Party opposed from the beginning Trotskyism not only as an international phenomenon, but also in its American variation, which was expressed in the gross Social Democratic deviations of Lore. Our Party deemed it necessary to continue the fight against Trotskyism also when it received the support of the leaders of the new opposition, Comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev, whose platform is a deviation from Leninism and a surrender to Trotskyism. In July and in October, and in its

last November Plenum, our Central Committee condemned severely the new opposition and the new oppositional bloc as we were convinced that their policies were wrong, and that this opposition imperilled the unity not only of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and thereby the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet republic, but was also detrimental to the most vital and important interests of the proletariat of all countries, as well as our American Party

Pessimism, skepticism, disbelief and overestimation of difficulties are the worst enemies of the Communist idea in America. In no other country do we find such a quantity of "ex-Socialists," "ex-champions of the class struggle," "tired radicals." Lassitude and pessimism sometimes show themselves even in our own ranks. It is one of the most important tasks to eradicate this evil. The American Party which struggles for the cause of Socialism in the most powerful imperialist country, which represents the capitalist pole of present society, looks with full admiration to the great Communist Party of the Soviet Union which created a powerful workers' republic and which is building Socialism at the other pole—the Socialist pole. We see clearly the connection between the disbelief in the possibility of complete construction of Socialism in the Soviet Union, and the disbelief in the final defeat of capitalism in America.

The American Party, which after many years of factional struggles from which the Party suffered so much, is now on the way toward inner consolidation, declares itself in complete agreement with the slogan issued by Comrade Bucharin: "Down with factionalism within the Communist International." It urges the Plenum to take up a definite attitude towards the international factionalism again proclaimed by the leaders of the opposition bloc within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as well as within the Communist International.

The American Party at the Seventh Plenum.

In a subsequent article the writer proposes to treat this question of the rationalization of capitalism and the tasks of the Comintern, particularly as applied to the tasks of the Workers (Communist) Party in trade union work, in the light of the deliberations and decisions of the Seventh Plenum. But before concluding we propose to sketch briefly the question of the American Party at the sessions of the Seventh Plenum of the Communist International.

This was the first Plenum of the Comintern in which American delegates participated, and at which there was no "American question," in the old sense of the word. For the first time in the history of our Party there was no American controversy before the C. I. for solution or settlement. This can be considered as evidence of great forward strides towards Party consolidation since the last convention.

Yet, never before was so much attention given to the concrete problems confronting the American Party as at this Plenum. Particularly is it true that at no time before did the leading and ablest comrades of the Comintern give as thorough consideration to the tasks which we are facing as they did at the Seventh Plenum. The

general opinion of the Comintern regarding the condition of our Party is summarized in the following.

Comrade Roy, the head of the American Secretariat of the Communist International, speaking at the Ninth Session of the last Plenum on November 27, 1926, said:

I want to inform the Plenum of the Communist International that the general opinion prevailing in the Communist International as to the power of the American Party is absolutely incorrect. The American Party is not a negligible factor. It has made very much progress in the last six months. And as the growing signs of the weakening of American capitalism go on, so, side by side, the revolutionary forces in America are also developing, and the American Party has known how to step forward in due time as the conscious vanguard of the ever-growing and developing revolutionary forces.

And in the thesis on the International situation, and the tasks of the Communist International, we find the following:

In spite of enormous difficulties, the Workers (Communist) Party of America has achieved considerable successes in the sphere of mass work. It has led a number of strikes, has made first attempts to organize the unorganized. It has penetrated into the Miners' Union. The weak sides of the Party still remain its inadequate influence among the real American workers and its organizational defects. The work of the Party in various spheres—for example, work among the Negroes, among women, etc. is still not well organized and the carrying out of the decisions of previous enlarged Plenums with regard to the establishment of a broad left wing in the trade unions has also been inadequate. It must also be placed on record that the Party has undergone internal consolidation, as a result of the considerable diminution of factional struggles. These create the premises for the further growth of the influence of the Party among the masses.

Never before was our Party so fortunate as to receive as much sharp and critical examination as it did at this Plenum. Particularly regarding our organization problems did our Party's work receive a complete analysis. We find as a result of this analysis that the organization department of the Comintern has constituted the following general estimates regarding the successes of reorganization of the American Party on the basis of shop and street nuclei:

... Through the reorganization of the Party on the basis of factory and street nuclei, the necessary organizational premise for a real Communist Party has been created. . . .

Despite the great difficulties which were even greater in the United States than in other countries, and despite the talk of the "impossibility of reorganization in America" (Lore) and the pessimistic attitude of some comrades within the Party, who in the face of the difficulties and of some mistakes and shortcomings in the process of reorganization, clamored for the "reorganization of the reorganization," the reorganization had been a great achievement for the Party. It has proven that reorganization is possible even under the most difficult conditions.

The activity of the Party membership is growing, as shown by the much better attendance at factory and street nuclei meetings, and in the publication of factory newspapers.

The American Delegation at the Seventh Plenum took a prominent part in all the deliberations and decisions of the Sessions. We were recognized as one of the principal parties.

Of course, with America playing the role it plays today in world politics, finance and industry, it is obvious that the importance of building a Communist movement here is inestimable. This is doubly true in the face of the present developments, indicating that we are heading for a world war. The deliberations of the Seventh Plenum, and the actions of the outstanding figures of the Comintern towards the American Party indicate that the party has moved forward considerably since the last convention and that despite all the difficulties in our path, we have the vitality, the energy, and the revolutionary consciousness to continue to move forward until there is developed in the United States a mass Communist Party that can and will lead the working class to victory.

