

THE RED FLAG

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VIENNA and the LONDON ELECTIONS

Is the British Labour movement fully awake to its danger and aware of its responsibilities? We think not: at the present time most of its leaders are denying that danger exists and shirking these responsibilities. Yet the workers must be roused, and quickly, for all signs point to this country entering the first stages of the political crisis which has overtaken other European countries and ended in the destruction of the organised Labour and trade union movement. Austria follows Germany. The Spanish workers face civil war. In France on the 6th of February the forces of Fascism made their preliminary appearance: their growth can be rapid. If France falls to Fascism then practically all Europe will be under the heel of the Fascist ruffian. Is it difficult to see how much is at stake? It is foolish to hope—criminal to hold out such hopes—that Britain can escape the same conflict. Only the blind or the deliberately treacherous can deny the need, at this late hour, for the abandonment of the old policies which have led to disaster and for the fighting call for the speedy mobilisation of all the forces of the British working class movement.

POWER WITHOUT POLICY.

In the past the movement has spent much time and energy in debating whether power would be won by force or by constitutional means. But to-day the movement is called to fight, not for power, but for existence, for its organisation, for its meetings, for its newspapers; for the defence of the meagre gains of the past. On all sides the enemy presses relentlessly and gains victory after victory, not because of its strength—the Fascist movement is incapable of meeting serious resistance by the powerful working class movement—but because of the bad leadership, the hesitations and the mistaken policies of our own movement. And in this country the leaders of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions continue to mouth the ethical abstractions which may have served nineteenth century Liberalism but which to-day only weaken the workers and deliver them bound hand and foot to the forces of reaction. The political and organisational looseness, the Liberal policy, the non-marxian and anti-marxian beliefs of the leaders—these are aids to the speedy and successful growth of Fascism in this country.

In our next issue the events in Vienna and their lessons for this country will be dealt with. Here we turn to the London County Council election results in the light of this growing threat, at home and abroad, to the workers movement. In 1925 the German Socialists won the elec-

toral majority in Berlin: for years the Austrian Socialists held Vienna. It is well that our movement reflects on this: already the London Labour Party leader, Morrison, is boastfully regarding the election gains as a sign of ever upward triumphs.

LONDON LABOUR VICTORY.

The Labour Party vote rose by 137,000 increasing the Labour Party's representation on the Council from 35 seats to 69. They now have a majority of 16.

This victory of the London Labour Party can play a big part in the rousing and awakening of the movement. Seen as the inevitable swing of the pendulum or as the result of superior organisation the elections can mean little: Morrison has spoken already of the need to prepare for the next L.C.C. election in three years time. As though the workers movement has facing it nothing but a series of elections divorced entirely from the object of these campaigns! But seen as part of the opening of the workers offensive against their enemies, of the beginning of a serious mobilisation of the workers in defence of their organisations and setting them on the road to the winning of power, the gain can be of considerable importance. Every step the Labour Council takes on behalf of the workers will help to raise the spirit and confidence of the workers just as every retreat without battle, every concession, every weakening will bring doubt and dismay to the movement. The Labour Council has to fight on issues that affect the London workers.

WHY THE LABOUR VICTORY?

What are those issues? They are clear enough. The workers voted Labour under the influence of such urgent questions as Unemployment, Public Assistance scales and administration,—at its worst in London—housing, and to a certain extent, education. The high sounding phrases about a "Nobler London" and the eloquent appeals to make London a "worthy capital city" of the Empire did not get five hundred votes. Working class anger against the National Government and its Means Test; the harsh treatment meted out to applicants for relief, the vital housing needs of the workers and the economies at the expense of their children's education—these were the issues which brought thousands of workers to the polls on March the 8th to vote Labour in an election to which they are usually indifferent. Whether it seeks capitalist support and toleration or whether it aims to fight on the very real and urgent issues which placed it in a majority on the L.C.C.—this is the choice before the Labour Councillors. To

"administer London" in the abstract is impossible: there are two Londons, the London of the rich with its luxury and comfort, and the London of the poor, with its slums, its poverty, its squalor and its bitter suffering under the lash of the Means Test. If the election gain is to mark a real step forward the Labour Council must place the needs of the workers above every other consideration.

LIMITS OF POWERS.

Naturally, there are limits to what the Labour Council can do. Our opinion always has been that real power, power won by force, power over the factories and the banks, power supported by millions of workers, is necessary to radically transform society. A Labour Council will find itself checked at every turn by the power of the capitalists, by their State. But the Council can show a fighting programme on unemployment relief, on housing and on education. True, any real steps taken on these questions will bring the movement into conflict with the Government. Even the housing question—upon which politicians of all parties are supposed to agree—cannot be dealt with in an adequate manner, especially in London, without striking at big property rights. But what alternative is there to this real struggle for the workers? To do only that to which the enemy gives consent is to make useless the election gain. Worse, it will bring doubt and bewilderment into the whole movement and strengthen reactionary and fascist forces.

WATCH OUT!

The opportunities, despite the very real obstacles and limitations, are considerable. But are the leaders of the Labour Party prepared to conduct a bold and vigorous fight for the London workers? It is not only the revolutionary section of the movement who doubt this: the experience of the last Labour Government has caused thousands of loyal Labour Party workers to realise the need for a closer watch on, and a firm control of, the Party leaders. Events abroad are showing how Fascism thrives on the weaknesses and hesitations of the leaders of Labour. The rank-and-file of the London movement have as their duty the critical examination of every action of the Council, the constant forcing upon them of the needs and demands of the London workers. To those who think we are unduly suspicious, in spite of past experiences, and who point to the promises of the London Labour Party we would point to the first actions of the newly elected. The choosing of P.A.C. leaders from above, against, in many cases, the wishes of the rank-and-file; the warnings issued to Relieving Officers

to keep on existing regulations and the widely broadcast reassurances that Labour will not spend "public" money on the unemployed "lavishly"—these are only too significant. For the sake of the whole movement this process must be checked at the outset, through the Trades Councils, the Labour Parties and the Unions. The needs of the London workers must be met. The militant workers within the London movement will set to work to arouse the rank-and-file to a sense of the dangers threatening. The movement must be strengthened, stiffened, prepared to meet the serious struggles ahead, aware of the implications of those struggles. It must be equipped anew by the establishing of a new leadership, not in the formal sense, but by securing everywhere groups of workers to whom the rank-and-file will increasingly look for guidance in the stormy days ahead. Only in this way can the road be cleared for the growth of the revolutionary party of the British workers and for their triumph.

COMMUNIST PARTY RESULTS.

We have received considerable criticism in the "Daily Worker" for our support of the Labour Party during the election. Actually the result of the election was a striking confirmation of the opinion previously expressed—that the anger of the workers against the National Government would find its expression, at the present stage, through the Labour Party: that the policy of contesting any or every constituency would only result in the further isolation of the revolutionary movement. We give below a list of Communist votes given for 18 candidates in 9 areas.

	Comm. Votes	Total Poll	Comm. per cent.
Whitech. & St. Geo's	807	16,099	5.0
S.W. Bethnal Green	1,159	13,279	8.75
Deptford	2,563	46,312	5.5
Battersea	1,103	26,770	4.0
Poplar South	814	22,835	3.6
Paddington North	721	21,091	3.4
St. Pancras North	632	30,019	2.3
Hammersmith North	488	23,408	2.05
Kensington North	430	24,158	1.77
Total	8,769	223,971	3.9

The number of workers who gave one vote to the Communist Party candidates was 4,745; of these 4,024 cast their second vote for the C.P. candidate.

The most striking aspect of these figures is that in places where previously the Party could rely on thousands of votes—e.g., Bethnal Green and Battersea—they now can rally only hundreds. In new areas such as Hammersmith, where we have been told for nearly two years, there is great support for a very strong Communist local, the vote is more or less the same miserable few hundreds. Our critics are confounded, as is usually the case, by the ghastly results of their policy.

March 16th, 1934.

R.G.

WAR THREATENS IN THE FAR EAST

Press dispatches from the Far East point to the imminence of a fresh military campaign by Japanese imperialism, intended to carry a stage further the grandiose plan of colonial conquest designed by the late Baron Tanaka. With the military accomplishment of each successive phase of this plan, which is the guiding plan of the Tokyo war lords, the danger of war against the Soviet Union approaches appreciably nearer.

With the signing of the Tangku truce last May 31, resulting in the "demilitarisation" of approximately 5,000 miles of Chinese territory south of the Great Wall, there ensued a period of comparative quiet. The Japanese army withdrew to the Great Wall but continued to hold all the strategic passes into Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, including the important gateway at Shanhaikwan. The past six months have witnessed intensive preparations for a fresh military drive. Heavy Japanese troop concentrations took place at Mukden and Changchun late in September on the time-worn pretext of "bandit-suppression." Now it is reported that Japanese forces have undertaken the conquest of Inner Mongolia, the next step from which is armed intervention against the People's Government of Outer Mongolia, meaning war against the Soviet Union.

JAPAN AIMS AT WAR.

All the facts of the present situation in the Far East point indubitably to the clear-cut intention of the Japanese imperialists to pit their military might against the Soviet Union without unnecessary delay. The Tanaka plans call not only for the conquest of Manchuria, sections of China proper and Inner and Outer Mongolia, but also for the forcible seizure of all Soviet territory east of Lake Balkal territory richer than Manchuria in such basic raw materials as coal and iron and possessing mineral and other riches which Manchuria does not possess.

The principal danger spot for the Soviet Union has shifted recently from Russia's western frontiers to the Far East. Germany, as the Left Opposition organ in that country *Unser Wort* recently asserted, is in no position to make war on the land of the Soviets. Years of preparation are required. To those who contend that Japan is not adequately prepared either it must be stated that, given the present balance or relationship of forces, Japanese imperialism is as prepared for war on the Soviet Union as it can ever hope to be. The different imperialist powers are never, in any absolute sense, prepared for war, but they embark upon war nevertheless. In the case of Japan, awareness of weakness in certain respects is lost in the general psychosis of invincibility, stimulated by the military campaigns of the last two years and the still-unfor-

Japanese Attack Imminent

gotten victory over Czarist Russia in 1905.

Japan is being driven along the road of war by her growingly critical internal situation, reflected in mounting budget deficits, falling revenues, the flight of capital from the country, currency depreciation, advancing unemployment and impoverishment of the peasantry, and an adventurist trade policy. Her ruling class, caught in the crisis of an economic crisis they cannot mitigate, much less liquidate, see their salvation from threatening revolution in war — in the forcible conquest of fresh markets and simultaneously a crusade to free the Far East from the "menace of Bolshevism."

EFFECT OF AMERICAN RECOGNITION.

American recognition of the Soviet Union has lessened the danger of a Japanese attack on the workers' fatherland, we have been told. This facile contention, embodied in the diplomatic jargon of Stalin-

credits, expected to follow recognition. This view was expressed successfully enough by George Bronson Rea, the £6,000 a year American adviser to the new state of Manchuko—that is, Japan—in a letter to the *New York Herald-Tribune* on November 18th. He declares that: "If recognition is followed by huge credits or loans which will enable Moscow to rush through its plans in central Asia and Siberia, then the outlook for peace is far from bright." As a result of such loans or credits, he goes on to contend, "the jaws of the Communist nut-cracker will begin to close and Japan will have to fight for her life."

SHARPENING JAPANO-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

American recognition, while tending to hasten a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union, will sharpen Japano-American antagonisms—in fact has done so already. It was announced from Tokyo on December 8 that the Japanese fleet is to be reorganised on a war basis. The

An Appeal.

Once again we have been compelled to miss an issue of *"The Red Flag"* through lack of money. With the growing danger of war, the victory of Fascism abroad and the impotence of the existing Internationals, our work becomes increasingly important. Within the C.P.G.B. there is bitter discontent and struggle: within the I.L.P. a struggle between at least three groupings for supremacy. Only *"The Red Flag"* can, under present conditions, show the way forward and rally the best revolutionaries around a clear programme. Help us to publish a bigger and better paper. All money to be sent to H. Dewar, 36 West Side, Clapham Common, London, S.W.4.

Litvinov and slavishly echoed by Stalinist scribes who seek to justify a Soviet "peace policy" that involves the desertion and virtual repudiation of revolutionary internationalism, will not bear the test of examination. American recognition of the Soviet Union, insofar as it affects Soviet-Japanese relations, will more probably hasten the onslaught of Japanese imperialism on the Soviet Union. There is no prospect of any improvement in Japan's internal situation, and the hopes of the Japanese imperialists of a successful war against the Soviet Union can only become dimmed by delay in delivering the attack (we are not discussing here the actual possibilities of Japan's winning out in a war on the Soviets in the Far East). Moreover, Japan cannot hope to forge a united imperialist front against the Soviets by the methods of diplomacy. Fifteen post-war years have proved that impracticable. But Japan does expect to find allies in the west once she has started the fight.

Japan will in all probability decide to strike the first blow before the Soviet Union has the opportunity to take advantage of American

fleet is not needed for war on the Soviet Union. Only a few ships would be employed for an assault on Vladivostok. The move is clearly intended as a "hands-off" warning to the United States. Japanese officials are said to have revealed that "secret conversations" have taken place in Tokyo with Manuel Quezon, leader of the Filipino bourgeois independence movement.

That Japan's first target is the Soviet Union and not America is indicated in a report from Mukden last week, which stated that the exiled Turkish prince, Abdul Kerim, is now en route from Tokyo to Sinkiang (Chinese Turkestan) on the Soviet borders, to head a puppet government that Japanese agents are trying to set up there. The prince has been the guest of the Japanese government for almost a year, being held in readiness to fill in Sinkiang the role that the ex-Manchu emperor, Henry Pu Yi, fills in Manchukuo. Japanese intrigues in Sinkiang are part of the preparations for the coming assault on Outer Mongolia. Hence, while it is indubitably true that Japano-American antagonisms are growing sharper, the reported reorganisation

of the Japanese fleet on a war basis, coupled with the whisperings concerning the Philippines, should be construed as a warning rather than as a threat.

If Japan is not yet fully prepared for a war with the Soviet Union, she is not even at the beginning of preparedness for a war against her powerful Pacific rival. A Japanese war against the United States is predicted on the completion of Japan's several contemplated land-grabs on the Asiatic mainland, including eastern Siberia. In other words, victorious emergence from a war with the Soviet Union is the condition precedent to a trial of conclusions with dollar imperialism.

The growth of Japano-American rivalry was emphasised in news items appearing last week. American imperialism is in particular seeking set-offs against growing Japanese influence in China. On the same day that reorganisation of the Japanese fleet on a war basis was announced from Tokyo, Thos. A. Morgan, president of the Curtis-Wright Corporation, announced in New York the signing of a contract with the Nanking Government for the erection at Hangchow, in Chekiang province, of a £1,000,000 airplane factory. The Nanking government has contracted to buy an initial total of 60 war planes a year. This latest deal was preceded a short while ago by an American £10,000,000 wheat and cotton loan through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Earlier, according to George Bronson Rea, a contract was concluded for the construction of a steel and munitions plant at Canton with American capital. The recently-concluded Mackay radio contract gives America virtual control of China's radio communications while Pan-American Airways are actively bidding for control of international sections of China's air communications.

DRIVE OF RIVAL IMPERIALISMS.

Thus American imperialism enters into the general drive for domination of China—a general drive of rival imperialisms in which Britain and France also have most important interests and roles.

But in the phases of this drive which reflect specifically Japano-American rivalry Japan is in the lead, diplomatically, economically and strategically. Tokyo's overtures to Nanking—to that government which time out of number has declared it would never enter into direct negotiations with Japan—have already produced concrete results. The Chinese bourgeoisie, represented politically by the Kuo-Min Tang government at Nanking, has moved steadily toward rapprochement with Japan during the year new closing. Hoping for much from renewed relationships with the Soviet Union, Nanking abandoned all such hope when, to its utter amazement, Moscow de-

(Continued on page 3.)

WILL THE I.L.P. BREAK AT YORK?

Last year at the Divisional Conference of London and Lancashire, the delegates enthusiastically endorsed the policy of approach to the Comintern. This year neither area sends forward to Annual Conference a resolution on this subject.

A year ago the vote of the I.L.P. Conference to approach the Comintern was carried by 83 votes to 79. In the short time since the operation of the United Front with the C.P. they have managed to kill this sympathy towards the Third International so completely that this year's preliminary Agenda for Annual Conference has not thrown up one single resolution for more intimate connection. On the contrary, so sickened have our I.L.P. comrades become that of the six resolutions on international associations, not one declares for sympathetic affiliation. Several months of loose working with the C.P. has had this drastic effect—how much more deadly would be the consequences on the militant membership if directly linked up with the C.P.G.B. through the Comintern. The loving embrace of the spider afterwards provides temporary nourishment and new life to the spouse, but the dry dead husk is all that remains of the once eager mate.

C.I. LOSES SUPPORT.

The political education of the I.L.P. has been accelerated by international events. The fatal policy of the Comintern in Germany, its description of the Social Democrats as "Social Fascists," its definite sabotage of the United Front of the workers against Fascism—so gleefully reported by Thaelmann at the Twelfth Plenum has outraged I.L.P.'ers. With reaction triumphant over Europe the smug satisfaction of the Comintern at the workers' heroism annexed as its own product becomes nauseating. The declaration of the 13th Plenum that the cry of Soviet Power should be raised throughout Europe falls upon the deaf ears of the workers, who now see only the need for a consolidation of their organisations and the defence of democratic rights as a barrier to Fascism.

Comrades of the I.L.P.—a year of indecision has passed since your last Conference, your Agenda shows only too clearly the result of much painful agitation. "To be or not to be." Such indecision must prove fatal. Decision and action behind a definite revolutionary policy can alone save the I.L.P. from disintegration. The situation in England finds its expression in the demand for a Labour Government. The L.C.C. election results prove this. No revolutionary upsurge, in spite of the Comintern's wishes, is at hand to lift the workers over this stage—1933 was the most peaceful industrial period for the last 40 years. The immediate tactic must be to march alongside the workers, helping in their present expression of hatred

Immediate Tasks of the Conference

against damnable conditions. To organise and give militant expression of their demands, to claim the immediate fulfilment of Labour Party pledges; to force the leadership, the Labour Government, to make drastic demands upon the owning class. Only in this way is it possible at the present time to carry the workers forward in a conscious, militant spirit, to develop their class feeling and consolidate them as an aggressive class. Their faith in reformism will wither as the result of practical experience of its futility and so help their political education, but will only find its true expression through the medium of a revolutionary party which has actively associated itself with every stage of the struggle. The present alliance with the C.P.G.B. destroys any possibility of effective united front work with the mass reformist organisations

TRADE UNION WORK.

This, together with work in the Trade Unions, assisting, educating and consolidating the membership, taking part in day to day struggles in the factories, and linking industrial and political demands, will develop all the time a spirit of class conscious militancy.

This task requires a thorough, organised and disciplined Party. The old I.L.P. failed in its contacts because it did not have a policy differing fundamentally from the Labour Party. Its membership fell comfortably into line with reformist theory and were consequently absorbed. The alignment of the I.L.P. with the 2nd International prevented the development of revolutionary thought. If the I.L.P. of to-day puts its hand to the task outlined without first establishing satisfactory international connections for the elaboration of programmatic and strategical questions, exchange of political experience and mutual practical support, then it is likewise doomed to failure. The basic questions confronting the workers all compel firm international association.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL.

The 2nd international is twice damned: the 3rd can no longer lead save to destruction: the seven left-wing parties, with whom the I.L.P. is in temporary contact occupy no position; their unsatisfactory elements can never determine a revolutionary programme. The only possible alliance remaining is that based upon the declaration of the four Parties for the formation of a new International.

We see the first duties of the Conference as:

1. The maintenance of I.L.P. independence.

FOR SALE.

Trotsky's History. Vol. 1 & 2. What offers? 37 Wellington Avenue, N.15.

2. The elaboration of revolutionary policy and its application to the present situation in Great Britain.

3. Break up of the alliance with the C.P.G.B. and ending of the overtures to the C.I.

4. Approaches to the groups working for the new, fourth, International.

From these will follow the im-

mediate policy, the nature of united front work and the necessary internal re-organisation.

The fate of the I.L.P. will be decided at this Conference. If a decision is avoided then only the rump of the I.L.P. will remain to drift. It would be both a national and international disaster if the I.L.P. ship crashes on the rocks of indecision and cowardice because the nerveless hands of its members cannot decide upon the correct revolutionary course.

WAR THREATENS IN THE FAR EAST. (Continued from page 2).

clared its readiness to sell the Chinese Eastern Railway to Japan. Ever since, with clumsy attempts at secrecy, Nanking has been dicker-ing with Tokyo.

NANKING'S DEAL WITH JAPAN.

It is plain that Nanking has made at least a tentative deal with Japan—a deal that is directed, obliquely at any rate, against the Soviet Union. This development is very largely the by-product of Soviet diplomacy, which retreated step by step before Japanese aggression during the past two years. The culminating act in this retreat was the decision to sell the Chinese Eastern Railway.

Current developments in the Far East demand the closest vigilance of the revolutionary movement and of the working-class movement generally. A war by Japan against the Soviet Union, in which the Kuo Min Tang government would be the ally of Japanese imperialism, would undoubtedly engender the profoundest repercussions in the ranks of the Chinese working class and in the broad layers of the population. The Chinese workers are still confused and disorganised, largely passive. They have not yet recovered from the catastrophe wished on them by the Stalinists in 1927. But there are signs of their revival, indicated in the rising strike movement in the industrial centres.

TASKS OF CHINESE COMMUNISTS.

The Chinese Communists are obligated by their revolutionary tasks to penetrate the ranks of the workers, aid in the work of re-organisation, give sound political direction to the movement. The official party still maintains its false course toward the armed uprising, predicating it upon the existence of Soviet districts and the continuance of peasant guerrilla warfare in remote rural areas in the heart of the country. The raising of democratic slogans around which the city masses can be mobilised for action is still denounced as "counter-revolutionary Trotskyism," although only nine months ago the Provisional Soviet Government at Juikin—that government of which Moscow is still not officially cognisant—advanced a series of democratic demands in an official manifesto. Pressed by political needs born of actuality, this peasant government, which the

Stalinists point to as evidence of the "mistakes" of the Left Opposition, advances a program of demands which the Chinese Communist Party and the Communist International even to this day denounce as counter-revolutionary.

DEMOCRATIC DEMANDS.

What were these demands? They are embodied in a declaration issued to the people of China on April 15th, 1933 over the signature of Mao Tse-Tung, president of the Provisional Government of the Soviet Republic of China. Toward the end of the declaration we read the following—note it carefully, you who denounce the democratic slogans of the Left Opposition as Menshevism:

"The Red Army is ready to enter into fighting operative agreements with any army or military detachment in the fight against Japanese invasion under the following conditions.

1. Cessation of the advance against the Soviet Districts.
2. Granting of Democratic rights to the people of China (free speech, free press, rights of assembly, demonstration, organisation, release of political prisoners, etc.).
3. Arming of the people, the creation of armed volunteer detachments to struggle for the defence, independence and unity of China.

FOR A NEW PARTY IN CHINA.

If we add the obviously requisite demand for the National Assembly there is nothing to cavil at in this program. Put forward by radio from the bottled-up Soviet government at Juikin it reached nowhere. As the program of the Chinese Communist Party, decayed beyond repair by its own vices. The Chinese oppositionists must construct a new party which will enter into its tasks correctly, seriously and conscientiously, mobilise the masses for the third Chinese revolution and simultaneously for the defence of the Soviet Union. These twin tasks converge and supplement each other. It must oppose itself directly to the Chinese ruling class and its government, enemies of both the Chinese masses and the peoples of the Soviet Union.

The Chinese workers are confronted by great tasks. They must receive the unstinting support of the workers of all countries.

LEON TROTSKY on CENTRISM

(1) The events in Austria, after the events in Germany, place definitely a tombstone over "classic" reformism. Henceforth, only the obtuse leaders of English and American Trade Unionism, their French imitator, Jouhaux, Vandervelde, the president of the Second International, and similar specimens of the political ichthyosauri will venture to speak openly of a perspective of peaceful development and democratic reforms, etc. . . . The majority of reformists now deliberately employ new colours. Reformism gives place to the innumerable shades of Centristism, which now, in the majority of countries, dominate the workers' movement. Thus an absolutely new situation presents itself, in a way unprecedented, for work in the spirit of revolutionary Marxism (Bolshevism). The new International has to develop itself chiefly at the expense of the tendencies and centrist organisations which are now dominant. At the same time the revolutionary International cannot form itself in any other way than that of struggle against centristism. Ideological intransigence and a flexible united front policy are, in these conditions, two weapons for attaining one and the same end.

(2) Above all a clear picture must be gained of the features most characteristic of present day centristism. It is not easy; firstly, because centristism, in view of its organic indefiniteness is difficult to define precisely, being characterised much more by what it lacks than by what it holds; secondly never has centristism reflected so many of the colours of the rainbow as now, for never before have the ranks of the workers been in such a ferment as now. The political fermentation from the very depth of its origin signifies a re-grouping, a displacement between the two poles, reformism and Marxism: that is a passage through the many stages of centristism.

(3) Difficult as a general determination of centristism—which has always, necessarily, the character of a combination due to crisis—may be, one can and one must separate, all the same, the principal traits and peculiarities of the centrist groupings which are consequent upon the collapse of the 2nd and 3rd Internationals.

(a) In the sphere of theory centristism is imprecise and eclectic. It shelters itself as much as possible from obligations in the matter of theory and is inclined (in words) to give preference to "revolutionary practice" over theory; without understanding that only Marxist theory can give to practice a revolutionary direction.

(b) In the sphere of ideology centristism leads a parasitic existence: against the revolutionary Marxists it repeats the old Menshevik arguments (those of Martov, Axelrod and Plekhanov), generally without re-valuing them; on the other hand it borrows its principal arguments against the "rights" from the Marxists, that is, above all, from the Bolshevik-Leninists, suppressing however, the point of the criticisms, subtracting the practical conclusions and so robbing criticism of all object.

(c) Centristism voluntarily proclaims its hostility to reformism but it is silent about centristism: more than that it thinks the very idea of centristism "obscure," "arbitrary" etc.: in other words centristism dislikes being called centristism.

(d) The centrist, never sure of his position and his methods, regards with detestation the revolutionary principle: state that which is; it inclines to substituting, in the place of political principals, personal combinations and petty organisational diplomacy.

(e) The centrist always remains in spiritual dependence upon right groupings, is induced to court the goodwill of the most moderate, to keep silent about their opportunist faults and to regild their actions before the workers.

(f) It is not a rare thing for the centrist to hide his own hybrid nature by calling out about the dangers of "sectarianism": but by sectarianism he understands not a passivity of abstract

propaganda (as is the way with the Bordighuists) but the anxious care for principle, the clarity of position, political consistency, definiteness in organisation.

(g) Between the opportunist and the Marxist the centrist occupies a position which is, up to a certain point, analogous to that occupied by the petty bourgeois between the capitalist and the proletariat: he courts the approbation of the first and despises the second.

(h) On the international field the centrist distinguishes himself, if not by his blindness, at least by his shortsightedness. He does not understand that one cannot build in the present period a national revolutionary party save as part of an international party: in the choice of his international allies the centrist is even less particular than in his own country.

(i) The centrist sees as outstanding in the policy of the C.I. only the "ultra-left" deviation; the adventurism, the putchism, and is in absolute ignorance of the opportunist right zig-zags. (Kuomintang, Anglo-Russian Committee, pacifist foreign policy, anti-fascist bloc, etc.).

(j) The centrist swears by the policy of the united front as he empties it of its revolutionary content and transforms it from a tactical method into a highest principle.

(k) The centrist gladly appeals to pathetic moral lessons to hide his ideological emptiness, but he does not understand that revolutionary morals can rest only on the ground of revolutionary doctrine and revolutionary policy.

(l) Under the pressure of circumstances the eclectic centrist is capable of accepting even extreme conclusions but only to repudiate them later in deed. Recognising the dictatorship of the proletariat he leaves plenty of room for opportunist interpreters: proclaiming the need for a fourth international he works for the creation of the two-and-a-half international.

(4) The worst model of centristism is the German group "New Beginning." Repeating superficially the Marxist criticism of reformism, it reaches the conclusion that all the proletarian calamities arise from splits and that salvation lies in the maintenance of the unity of the Social Democratic party. The organisational discipline of Wels and Co. is placed by these gentlemen above the historic interests of the proletariat. And since Wels and Co. submit the party to the discipline of the bourgeois, the group "New Beginning," disguising itself with a left criticism stolen from the Marxists, is in fact a mischievous agent of the bourgeois order, although an agent of the second degree.

THE LONDON BUREAU.

(5) An attempt to create a common meeting ground of eclectic centrists is constituted by what is called the London Bureau (now of Amsterdam) under a banner which attempts to unite those centrist groups, both right and left, which have not dared to choose definitely a direction and a banner. In this case as in the others the centrist attempts to lead the movement diagonally. The diverse elements which make up the bloc tend in opposite directions: the Norwegian Labour Party (N.A.P.) goes discreetly towards the Second International, the Independent Labour Party if England goes in part towards the Third and in part towards the Fourth International, the Dutch Independent Socialist Party (O.S.P.) and the German Workers Party (S.A.P.) move vacillatingly towards the Fourth International. Exploiting and conserving the ideological uncertainty of all its participants and seeking to oppose the work for the creation of the new International, the London Bureau plays a reactionary role. The collapse of this grouping is absolutely certain.

(6) The definition of the C.I.'s policy as bureaucratic centristism even to this moment retains all its force. Only bureaucratic centristism is capable of continual jumps from opportunist treason to ultra-left ad-

venturism: only the powerful soviet bureaucracy could for ten years give an assured place to this melancholy policy of zig-zags. Bureaucratic centristism—differing from the centrist grouping which springs from the Social-democracy, is a product of the degeneracy of Bolshevism retaining in the form of caricature, many of its features: still followed by an important number of revolutionary workers; controlling material means and extraordinary technique but in its political influence this variety of centristism is now the most inert, the most disorganising, and the most pernicious. It is plain to all the world that the political collapse of the C.I. signifies the extreme decomposition of bureaucratic centristism. Our task in this sphere is the saving of the best of its elements for the cause of the proletarian revolution. Side by side with the untiring principled criticism, the main instruments which will permit of use by us amongst the workers who still stand under the banner of the C.I. is the pushing forward of our ideas amongst the large masses, who in their overwhelming majority still hold apart from the influence of the C.I.

(7) It is just now—when reformism is constrained to disavow itself, in changing itself into centristism or in taking on that appearance—that some groupings of left centristism, on the contrary, halt in their development and even go back upon it. It seems to them that the reformists have already understood almost everything, that it is only necessary not to frighten them with extraordinary demands, criticism, or extreme phrasology, and thus one will be able with a single blow to create a "revolutionary" mass party.

In fact, reformism's renunciation of itself, made a necessity by the events, with a clean programme, without a revolutionary tactic, is only capable of lulling to sleep the advanced workers, by suggesting to them the idea that the revolutionary re-birth of the party is nearly realised.

AGAINST CENTRISM.

(8) For the revolutionary Marxist the struggle against reformism now changes itself almost completely into struggle against centristism. The mere empty opposing of legal struggle to illegal struggle, of peaceful means to violent, of democracy to dictatorship in the majority of cases now passes: for the frightened reformists, who must now disavow themselves, are ready to accept the most "revolutionary" of formulas, if only they are not obliged to-day to break with the hybridity, irresolution, "passivity" which are native to them. That is why the struggle against the hidden or masked opportunist must principally transport itself into the sphere of the practical conclusions from revolutionary premises.

Before taking seriously the fine words of the centrists concerning the "dictatorship of the proletariat" it is necessary to exact from them a serious defence against Fascism, a complete break with the bourgeoisie, the systematic upbuilding of a workers' militia, its training in a will to fight, the creation of inter-party defence centres, of anti-fascist main centres, the expulsion from their ranks of parliamentarians, trade-unionists, and other traitors, of bourgeois lackeys, careerists etc. . . . It is precisely on this plane that one must now deliver the principal blows at centristism. For carrying out this work with success it is essential to have one's hands free, that means not only maintaining complete organic independence, but also critical intransigence concerning the most "left" of the ramifications of centristism.

(9) The Bolshevik-Leninists of all countries must render to themselves the clearest accounts of the circumstances of the new stage of the struggle for the 4th International. The events in Austria and France give a powerful impulsion to the re-grouping in the revolutionary direction of the forces of the proletariat; but precisely the general substitution of centristism for reformism offers the development of a strong, powerful, attraction for the centrist groupings of the left (S.A.P., O.S.P.) which even yesterday made ready to unite themselves to the Bolshevik-Leninists.

This dialectical process, viewed superficially, may give birth to the impression

that the Marxist wing would from its beginning isolate itself from the masses. Profound error! The oscillations of centristism to right and left proceed from its very nature. We shall yet meet on our way some dozens or some hundreds of such episodes. To fear to go forward merely because the route is strewn with obstacles or because all our fellow marchers will not go the whole way with us would be most miserable cowardice.

CONDITIONS FOR FOURTH INTERNATIONAL.

When the new opportunist oscillations of our centrist allies find themselves to be conjunctural or defective (in fact they will have to be one or the other) the general conditions for the formation of the Fourth International upon the basis of true Bolshevism will have grown most favourable. The chase by the centrists of the "extreme right" of those who are plainly left, by those of the left after those of the middle, those of the middle after those of the right—a pursuit which resembles the efforts of the man to catch his own shadow—cannot create a permanent mass organisation: the sad experience of the Independent Party of Germany (U.S.P.) even yet retains all its force. Under the pressure of events, with the help of our criticism and our slogans, the advanced workers will pass over the hesitations of the most left of the centrist leaders and, if it must be, over the leaders themselves.

On the road towards the new International the proletarian advance-guard will find no allies than those already elaborated by the Bolshevik-Leninists on the basis of the international experience of ten years of uninterrupted theoretical and practical struggle.

(10) Our political influence in the last year is considerably strengthened. We can, with relatively little delay, extend and develop our success by observing the following conditions.

(a) Do not try to deceive the process of history, do not play hide-and-seek, but state that which is.

(b) Render yourself a theoretical balance-sheet of all changes in the general situation, which in the present period often takes the character of sharp turns.

(c) Lend an attentive ear to what the masses are saying, without prejudice, without illusions, without deceiving oneself; for upon the basis of a correct appreciation of the relation of forces within the proletariat avoiding as much as possible opportunism as for adventurism, leading the masses forward but not holding them back.

(d) Each day and each hour say clearly to yourself what must be the next practical step; untiringly prepare this step, and upon the basis of living experience explain to the workers the principal difference from Bolshevism of all the other parties and tendencies.

(e) Do not confuse the tactical tasks of the united front with the fundamental historic task: the creation of new parties and of the new International.

(f) For a practical demand do not disdain even the weakest of allies.

(g) Follow with a critical eye the most "left" ally as if a possible adversary.

(h) Conduct yourself with the greatest attentiveness towards these groupings which actually tend towards us: lend a patient and attentive ear to their criticism, to their doubts, to their hesitations; help their evolution towards Marxism; do not fear their caprices, their threats, their ultimatums (the centrists are always capricious and susceptible); do not make any concession of principle to them.

(i) Yet once again: do not fear to state that which is.

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